

Nation

Man kills self in newsroom after taping 'plea for poor'

United Press International
CINCINNATI — A drug-crazed artist lamenting the passing of the "revolutionaries of the '60s" seized a television station, forced employees at gunpoint to tape his plea for the poor, admitted shooting his girlfriend, then turned one of his six weapons on himself.
James Ralph Hoskins, 41, was sprawled on the floor of the WCPO-TV newsroom when police stormed the building, ending the 12-hour drama Wednesday. He was dead of a gunshot wound to the head. An autopsy was set for today.
"I've been taking weird drugs. I'm out of my mind," he said in a taped interview broadcast over WCPO later in the day. "I've taken angel dust and Valium. I blew my girlfriend away tonight. She's dead. I'm a dead man. There is no hope for me. I'm slipping away. I'm gone."
Police found his girlfriend Melanie Finley, 30, a former nun who was an eighth-grade teacher at a Catholic school, dead of a gunshot wound where Hoskins said they would — in his fourth-floor apartment in the city's Over the Rhine section.
In hour-long phone negotiations with Hoskins, police by individual he expressed remorse over the death of his girlfriend but did not indicate a motive. However, in the TV interview, the out-of-work artist did say Miss Finley had once schemed with him to take over the station.
"We planned to do big things together," he said. "This whole thing was planned back in San Francisco. I could depressant say if it was the drugs."
Hoskins took over the station at about 2 a.m., armed with five handguns and an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle.

He had hundreds of rounds of ammunition "stuffed in his pockets everywhere," police said. "He was ready for anything."
Police said apparently Hoskins had just shot his girlfriend.
He stopped newswoman Elaine Green in the WCPO parking lot, saying he didn't want to hurt her but asking her to videotape an interview with him. Throughout the interview, Hoskins held his rifle in his hand, aimed at Green.
Hoskins lamented the "mistreatment of poor people," then rambled on other topics and his personal plight. At about 3:30 a.m., he cleared the station and barricaded himself in the newsroom.
Green notified police.
"When the police come and get me," Hoskins said in his broadcasts, "we're going to shoot it out. They've got their magnums. I've got my magnums."
But police talked to him instead. The phone conversation began at 8 a.m., and "at 9:15, the conversation abruptly ended," Police Capt. Edward Ammann said. "There was a noise that appeared to be a muffled gunshot."
Police waited four hours before entering the building. "We wanted to make sure it wasn't a ploy," said Ammann.
It wasn't.
Despite the siege, WCPO managed to continue broadcasting all day via makeshift equipment, with news director Al Schottelkotte periodically reporting the takeover of his own station in a parking lot two blocks away.

Carter: issues will be focus

United Press International
BOSTON — With Sen. Edward Kennedy campaigning at his side, President Carter Wednesday accused the Republicans of opposing "every great social reform" from the minimum wage to Medicare.
Carter, making his second of three trips to the vote-rich Northeast this week, also praised the Massachusetts senator and the Kennedy

family in a speech at the Christopher Columbus Community Center.
He said the Kennedy family has staunchly supported social programs to help the nation's poor and oppressed. Only a few months ago, Kennedy was running for the Democratic nomination against Carter and had labeled the president a "clone of Reagan."
Carter attacked GOP nominee Ronald Reagan and the Republicans in his talk at the community center.
"If you look back, here is what you will really find: Republicans opposed every great social reform — Social Security, the minimum wage, Medicare — and the list goes on," said Carter.

Actress' son dies of shotgun blast

United Press International
HOLLYWOOD — Richard Carlton Meeker, 24-year-old son of actress Mary Tyler Moore, died of a shotgun wound to his head Tuesday night, Los Angeles police reported Wednesday.
According to officers, Meeker, a CBS-TV employee, was "playing with a shotgun" in a home he shared with female students near the University of Southern California campus.
"We can't say yet whether his death was accidental or a suicide," a spokesman for the Los Angeles Police Department said.
Television producer Grant Tinker, Meeker's step-father said, "It was an absolute accident. Richard had talked to Mary by telephone a couple of hours earlier and he was cheerful and totally himself."
"According to Mary, he was perfectly normal and happy. It was a ghastly accident."
Detective Jerry Ferrin said one of the roommates, Judy Vasquez, 21, witnessed the shooting. The second roommate, Janet McLaughlin, 23, was in another room at the time the gun discharged.
Ferrin quoted Vasquez as saying, "He was loading and unloading the short-barreled gun when it went off. It was awful. He must have pulled the trigger. There was a big bang and he fell on the bed."
Vasquez said Meeker was talking on the telephone to his girlfriend in Fresno, Calif., when the gun was fired.
Ferrin said Vasquez ran to a neighbor to call for an ambulance at 11:10 p.m. Meeker was pronounced dead at Western Park Hospital 20 minutes later.
Tinker telephoned Moore, in New York on business, to tell her about the tragic shooting.
"I waited a couple of hours so the shock wouldn't come in the middle of the night," Tinker said. "Richard was a good guy. Calling Mary was the most difficult thing I ever had to do."
"The news absolutely destroyed her. She is catching a plane for Los Angeles this morning."
Tinker said he was trying to reach Meeker's father, whom he believed lives in the Sacramento area.

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