



Manitowoc County bomb threat referenced justice for Steven Avery



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The federal government is now involved in the investigation into several bomb threats made against the Manitowoc County Sheriff's Office. Two separate threats were called in just hours apart Wednesday night.

At 6:37 p.m., 911 dispatch for Manitowoc County says a male phoned in a bomb threat targeting the Sheriff's Office. The caller said there were "bombs in the building" and that a vehicle in the Sheriff's Office parking lot was "packed with explosives." Dispatchers were told there would be a "massacre," police said.

A Brown County Sheriff's Deputy and his sniffing K9 partner joined Manitowoc Police, Two Rivers Police, and the Manitowoc County Sheriff's office in the response, sweeping for explosives.

After closing off area streets and checking the Sheriff's Office and Courthouse, it was determined no devices were present and the scene was secured about two hours later, around 9 p.m.

Only 20 minutes later at 9:20 p.m., a second very similar call was again phoned in to the dispatch center, Zimney said. The caller again indicated there was a bomb in the Sheriff's Office, and Zimney said the caller suggested there would be a "huge massacre."

"The same voice, same type of call that indicated that, there was a bomb in the building and that there would be, 'huge massacre tonight,'" Zimney said.

Manitowoc Police again responded to the scene and later determined that no suspicious activity or items were located in the areas outlined in the second threatening call.

Police say there's a good chance the calls came from out of state.

The caller made a statement about getting "justice for Steven." Steven Avery is currently serving a life sentence for the murder of Teresa Halbach more than 10 years ago, but his case recently gained national attention from the release of the Netflix documentary series "Making a Murderer."

"The caller made these statements and, obviously, in referencing Steven Avery, this situation has not died down yet, as far as for some people, there's a lot of polarization either way, whether you're pro-Avery or anti-Avery, we saw that the other day at our protest," Zimney said.

While the threats may not have been real, the consequences are.

"It is a very serious offense. And our department, our investigators are currently working with the Department of Criminal Investigations with the state, and working, as I speak here, to work this backward to find the origination of this call," said Capt. Larry Zimney, Manitowoc Police Department.

"It can be resolved quickly to find out the origination to the call, and we can work with whichever agencies we need," Zimney said. Zimney said of having federal assistance with the investigation, "All the better."

Action 2 News was originally told by law enforcement sources that the threat was directed at the courthouse, but later learned it was directed toward the sheriff's office and that the courthouse

was secured as a precaution.

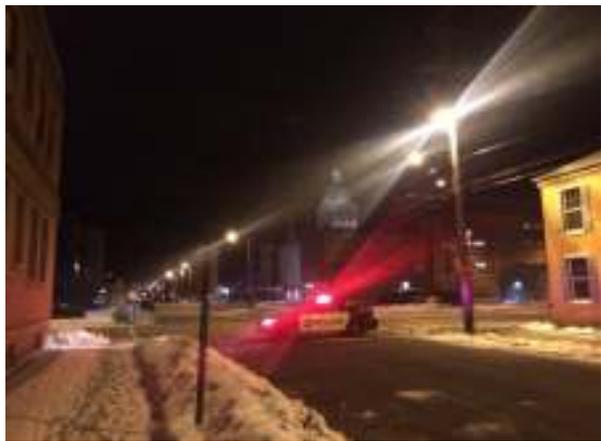
John Jagemann owner of the Courthouse Pub reported a large police presence around the courthouse and his business.

He closed his restaurant, which is across the street from the courthouse, around 7:30 p.m. because of the incident. Normally the business closes at 9 p.m.

Manitowoc Police are working with members of the Wisconsin Department of Criminal Investigation to trace the origin of the calls. They plan to prosecute the caller to the fullest extent of the law.

“Some of these other calls that are coming in, it’s very easy for a caller to sit in the comfort of their own home and make these kinds of threats,” Zimney said. “Is it totally unexpected? No. Obviously we don’t want this kind of attention, but it is something we take seriously for the citizens of Manitowoc.”

Anyone with information about this incident is being asked to call police at (920) 686-6500.



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