

SPD continue death investigation

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A 25-year-old Salem man, Nathan Baker, died early Monday morning from an apparent self-inflicted gun shot wound.

Salem Police Chief Scott Ratts said they were called to a residence on Water Street around 3:30 a.m. Sunday morning.

Ratts said he is certain the wound was self inflicted, but said he can't declare it a suicide.

"I don't know if I would call it a suicide," Ratts said. "It was definitely a self-inflicted gun-shot wound, but according to the witness who was there, (Baker) put the gun to his head and said, 'I have thought about doing this lot,' and then he was taking the gun away from his head and it went off."

Baker didn't die from the wound and was taken to University Hospital in Louisville. He was on life support until Monday morning.

Ratts said alcohol was involved.

"He had drank a fifth of Jäger prior to it, according to the witness," Ratts said. "He was very, very intoxicated and I am kind of wondering if it wasn't accidental. Of course, I don't know that, it will be up to the coroner down in Jefferson County (Kentucky). I am certainly not qualified to make that decision based upon medical evidence."

Ratts said the house was treated like a crime scene.

"That night, Troy and I went out and got a search warrant and looked through everything," he said. "We always treat everything like it's a crime scene until it's ruled something else. We had ISP crime scene investigators come up from Sellersburg and we couldn't find anything contrary to what the witnesses were saying."

Ratts said he won't know if it was a suicide or an accident until he gets the autopsy results from the coroner.

"Generally they'll run about four to six weeks to get autopsy information," he said.

Ratts said the case will continue as an on-going death investigation.