

FBI agents investigated over shots fired during standoff

By STEVEN DUBOIS
Associated Press



Rick Bowmer/AP Photo

Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum carries a rifle after standing guard all night at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns Jan. 6. On Tuesday, authorities said police were justified in killing Finicum during a traffic stop on Jan. 26.

ment's Office of Inspector General said it is investigating the FBI team's actions, working with Oregon officials.

High-profile figure

Finicum was a high-profile figure in the weeklong standoff at Malheur National Wild-

life Refuge, launched Jan. 2 by a small armed group demanding the government relinquish control of public lands and objecting to the prison sentences of two local ranchers convicted of setting fires.

His death became a symbol for those decrying federal

oversight, on public lands in the West and elsewhere, and led to protests of what they called an unnecessary use of force.

The FBI had said earlier that Finicum's shooting was justified because he was going for a gun.

On Tuesday, Oregon law authorities who were asked to conduct an independent investigation backed up that assertion.

During a news conference in Bend, Oregon officials played videos showing Finicum and others in his truck Jan. 26 during the initial stop by law enforcement. Finicum was driving one of two vehicles that were pulled over while carrying key occupation figures.

Video taken from the phone of one of his passengers shows the occupants panicking after authorities stopped the truck and ordered them to surrender.

With his window rolled down, Finicum yelled that he and the others were on the way to a meeting with the sheriff of Grant County. That sheriff is under investigation by Oregon authorities for contacts he had

with the occupation leaders.

Finicum repeatedly yelled at the officers to either let them continue on their way to the meeting or shoot him.

"Back down or kill me now," he shouted.

After a conversation with others in the truck, Finicum says "I'm going to keep going" and they sped off, leading authorities on a short chase.

Finicum was driving over 70 mph when the truck came to a roadblock, said Deschutes County Sheriff Shane Nelson.

A trooper fired three shots at the truck as it approached because it was a threat to law enforcement, he said. The truck plowed into a snowbank. Finicum got out, and someone from the FBI team fired two more shots, Nelson said.

As Finicum stood in the snow, authorities told him multiple times to lie on the ground and surrender. Finicum yelled "you're going to have to shoot me" while reaching into his jacket three times. Fearing he had a gun, troopers fired three rounds, all of which hit Finicum. A loaded pistol was found in his jacket pocket.

Oregon investigators said

Finicum posed a threat to officers by nearly running over one of them at the roadblock, and by reaching for a gun.

Occupation members in the other vehicle, including leader Ammon Bundy, surrendered.

Widow disagrees

Finicum's widow, Jeanette Finicum, on Tuesday rejected authorities' conclusion that her husband's shooting was justified and said she is talking with attorneys about taking her family's fight to court.

Speaking to reporters in St. George, Utah, Jeanette Finicum said she believes her husband was shot with his hands in the air trying to surrender. She argued he was reaching to his side as a reaction to the pain of being shot.

After Finicum's death and the arrests during the traffic stop, most occupiers cleared out of the wildlife preserve. A few holdouts extended the occupation to nearly six weeks before they surrendered Feb. 11.

Bundy and more than two dozen others with ties to the standoff have been charged with conspiracy to interfere with federal workers.

Trail: Giving people virtual access is a benefit to the park

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release. "We hope it inspires people to learn more about these sites and visit them in person one day."

Tom Pinit, a conservation ventures associate from the Conservation Fund's Portland office, trekked the Fort to Sea Trail over Labor Day weekend using Google's Street View Trekker, a 4-foot-tall, 40-pound camera and backpack.

The panoramic View Trekker creates a 360-degree digital view of the trail. The camera takes panoramic photos every couple of seconds.

Pinit hiked the trail with his wife. He said they were fortunate it was a clear day, since the View Trekker does not work in the rain.

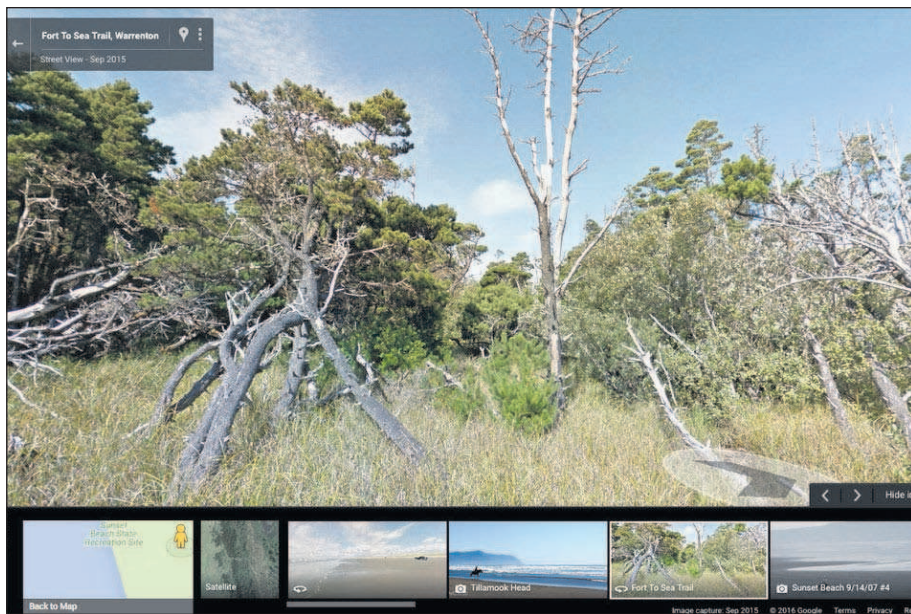
After the hike, Pinit sent the hard drives to Google.

"It was a fun activity to do together," Pinit said.

Scott Tucker, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park superintendent, said he was contacted by the Conservation Fund and Google last summer for a commercial filming permit. Oregon State Parks also had to approve a permit for the work.

Giving people virtual access to the trail is a benefit to the park, Tucker said. People from across the country can experience the trail, and those interested in hiking the trail can visually plan ahead.

"It's another great tool to tell the story of Lewis and Clark," Tucker said.



The virtual Fort to Sea Trail on Google Maps.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

Girls Basketball — Class 4A State Quarterfinal: Seaside vs. Mazama, 6:30 p.m., Forest Grove HS

Boys Basketball — Class 4A State Quarterfinal: Astoria vs. Seaside, 8:30 p.m., Liberty HS, Hillsboro.

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