



In this Jan. 9 file photo, LaVoy Finicum, a rancher from Arizona, speaks to the media after members of an armed group along with several other organizations arrive at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns.

Rancher killed in standoff vowed to die before going to jail

BURNS (AP) — A member of an armed anti-government group who was killed in a traffic stop in Oregon vowed a few weeks ago that he would die before spending his life behind bars.

LaVoy Finicum, a 55-year-old rancher from Cain Beds, Arizona, died Tuesday after law enforcement officers initiated the stop near the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon.

It's unclear what happened in the moments before the shooting, or if Finicum or any of the other activists involved exchanged gunfire with officers. Authorities wouldn't say how many shots were fired.

Eight occupiers were arrested, including group leader Ammon Bundy.

Finicum also was a leader of the armed group that took over the refuge Jan. 2 to oppose federal land restrictions and object to the prison sentences of two local ranchers convicted of setting fires.

He was a prominent presence at the refuge and frequently talked with reporters. His affable but passionate demeanor made him a popular subject for on-camera interviews.

Finicum seemed to have made up his mind about how his role in the occupation was likely to end — with his death.

Just a few days into the occupation, he came barreling to the refuge entrance in a federal truck.

Rifle in hand, Finicum sat

"I have grown up loving the fresh air. I love the elements. And this is where I'm going to breathe my last breath. I'm not going to spend my last days in a cell. This world is too beautiful to spend it in a cell."

— **LaVoy Finicum**, Arizona rancher killed by law enforcement

in the middle of the driveway, telling the reporters gathered around him that he learned there was a warrant for his arrest and he wanted to make it easy for federal agents to find him.

At the time, he said he didn't know what the warrant charged him with, but he believed agents would try to arrest him soon.

"I don't think it really matters. There's enough things they could make a warrant for us, I believe," he said.

Finicum said he had neither threatened nor harmed anyone during the occupation.

"I have grown up loving the fresh air. I love the elements. And this is where I'm going to breathe my last breath," he said. "... I'm not going to spend my last days in a cell. This world is too beautiful to spend it in a cell."

He then gave a message to his family: "And kids, if I don't come, you know I love you and I'm proud of every damn one of you."

The rancher was media-savvy and tried to popularize and monetize his political beliefs on his website, www.onecowboystandforfreedom.com. He used the site to sell his book, a 252-page paperback titled "Only by Blood and Suffering," as well as T-shirts, bumper stickers and posters emblazoned with slogans like "Let Freedom Ring" and "Defend the Constitution Original Intent."

He described himself as a longtime friend of Cliven Bundy, and he participated in the standoff with federal authorities over grazing fees at the elder Bundy's Nevada ranch in 2014.

Finicum and his wife, Jeanette, raised dozens of foster children, though social workers removed the kids from the couple's home a few days after the occupation began.

Finicum said the foster kids were the family's main source of income. Catholic Charities paid the family more than \$115,000 in 2009 to foster children, according to tax filings. Foster parents are generally paid a small per-child amount by the government. It's intended to reimburse them for the costs incurred in fostering. The money sometimes is disbursed through nonprofit partners.

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Grant County resident witnessed arrests of occupation leaders at FBI roadblock

By **ERICK BENDEL**
EO Media Group

A Grant County resident was among the witnesses Tuesday as federal authorities cleared Highway 395 to confront and apprehend Malheur refuge occupation leaders on their way to a community meeting in John Day.

Dave Hannibal, of Dayville, didn't see the encounter between the man who was fatally shot by police, but watched as others were taken in custody.

The FBI and Oregon State Police closed the highway between John Day and Burns at 3:30 p.m., about an hour before the occupiers arrived. Ammon Bundy and four others were arrested, and one suspect died after being shot by police. According to multiple sources, the deceased is Lavoy Finicum, one of the protest leaders.

As of noon Wednesday, the highway remains closed from one mile south of Seneca to the intersection with U.S. Highway 20 near Burns as authorities investigate.

Hannibal was driving north on Highway 395 near the Devine Ridge summit, roughly 50 miles south of John Day on Tuesday after-



Highway 395 is blocked at Seneca between John Day and Burns by Oregon State police officers on Tuesday evening.

noon when he came across four government vehicles. An FBI agent told Hannibal he could not pass until they were finished. Later, Hannibal said he realized the FBI was waiting for the Bundy caravan to come by on Highway 395.

Hannibal was on a side street as the FBI waited for the Bundy group to show up. When the FBI pulled out onto the highway, he pulled out behind them.

He watched as travelers in the rear-most vehicle of the Bundy caravan were detained. Then Hannibal sat on the side of the road and watched from afar, taking photos.

He saw law enforcement arrest two people in the rear vehicle. There was no fight,

from what he saw. The detainees were handcuffed and sat on the highway. He saw two people he had seen on the news, but he couldn't name them with certainty.

Hannibal stayed there well into the night; they eventually let him drive through the scene at about 11 p.m. He was told there was a dead body ahead.

He saw a vehicle about a quarter or half a mile up the road and the passenger-side window appeared to have been shot out. That vehicle had left the highway and probably traveled 50 feet up into the snow.

"There were a ton of people there last night," both FBI agents and many state troopers, he said.

STANDOFF: 'The armed occupiers were given ample opportunities to leave peacefully'

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official duties through the use of force, intimidation, or threats."

The criminal complaint stresses that point. It states that the 16 employees at the wildlife refuge "have been prevented from reporting to work because of threats of violence posed by the defendants and others occupying the property."

Federal law officials and Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward held a news conference on Wednesday in which they called on the rest of the occupiers to go home. There is a huge law enforcement presence in the region, and the FBI has now set up checkpoints outside the refuge.

FBI agent Greg Bretzing said people could leave through checkpoints "where they will be identified." He did not say whether any of them face arrest. He said negotiators were available to talk if they have "questions or concerns."

Bretzing also defended the FBI-led operation that resulted in the arrest of Bundy and other leaders, and in the death of Finicum. "I will say that the armed occupiers were given ample opportunities to leave peacefully," he said.

Ward said multiple law-enforcement agencies

put together "the best tactical plan they could."

Bundy followers took to social media to offer conflicting accounts of Finicum's final moments.

In a video posted to Facebook, Mike McConnell said he was driving a vehicle carrying Ammon Bundy and another occupier, Brian Cavalier. He said Finicum was driving a truck and with him were Ryan Bundy — Ammon's brother — as well as three others.

He said the convoy was driving through a forest when they were stopped by agents in heavy-duty trucks. He said agents first pulled him out of the vehicle, followed by Ammon Bundy and Cavalier.

When agents approached the truck driven by Finicum, he drove off with officers in pursuit. McConnell said he did not see what happened next, but he heard from others who were in that vehicle that they encountered a roadblock.

The truck got stuck in a snowbank, and Finicum got out and "charged them. He went after them," McConnell said.

Relatives of Ammon Bundy offered similar accounts, but they said Finicum did nothing to provoke FBI agents.

Briana Bundy, a sister of Ammon Bundy, said

he called his wife after his arrest. He said the group was stopped by state and federal officers.

She said people in the two vehicles complied with instructions to get out with their hands up.

"LaVoy shouted, 'Don't shoot. We're unarmed,'" Briana Bundy said in an interview with The Associated Press. "They began to fire on them. Ammon said it happened real fast."

"Ammon said, 'They murdered him in cold blood. We did everything they asked, and they murdered him. We complied with their demands,'" she said.

McConnell had a different perspective.

"Any time someone takes off with a vehicle away from law enforcement after they've exercised a stop, it's typically considered an act of aggression, and foolish," he said in the Facebook video.

McConnell said he was questioned by authorities, and he believes he was not charged because he was not considered a leader of the group. Briana Bundy confirmed that McConnell was in the convoy on Tuesday.

The group, which has included people from as far away as Michigan, calls itself Citizens for Constitutional Freedom.

Wife of Illinois officer who staged suicide indicted

CHICAGO (AP) — The widow of a disgraced Illinois police officer who staged his suicide to appear he was gunned down in the line of duty, sparking an intensive manhunt, was indicted Wednesday on charges of assisting her husband in siphoning money from a youth program.

Melodie Gliniewicz, 51, turned herself in at the Lake County Sheriff's Office when she learned of the grand jury indictment, said Detective Christopher Covelli, a sheriff's office spokesman. She was taken to the county jail Wednesday afternoon. Her bond was set at \$50,000.

Her husband, Fox Lake Police Lt. Charles Joseph Gliniewicz, died Sept. 1. Authorities said he shot himself because he feared discovery of embezzlement from the Fox Lake Police Explorer Post.

The officer's death touched off a manhunt involving hundreds of officers and raised fears that several killers were on the loose in northern Illinois. Joe Gliniewicz was initially hailed as a community hero and praised for his work with the youth program. At the time, Melodie Gliniewicz's tearfully told hundreds of people gathered at a candlelight vigil that Gliniewicz had been her "hero" and her "rock."

Two months after Gliniewicz's death, authorities announced that he had killed himself after embezzling from the village's Police Explorer program for seven years, prompting tough questions about why it had



Melodie Gliniewicz, 51, of Antioch, Ill., appears at the Lake County sheriff's office after she was indicted in Waukegan, Ill., by a Lake County grand jury. The grand jury on Wednesday indicted Gliniewicz on felony counts of money laundering and disbursing charitable funds without authority for personal benefit.

taken so long to reach that conclusion.

The Lake County State's Attorney's office said in announcing the indictment of Melodie Gliniewicz that money from the police explorer's account was used for expenses including more than 400 restaurant charges, personal payments to a Starbucks and a local theater as well as a trip to Hawaii.

"The investigation revealed money was withdrawn from the police explorer account over the course of several years," Lake County Undersheriff Ray Rose said.

Melodie Gliniewicz was indicted on charges of money laundering and disbursing charitable funds without authority and for personal benefit.

Joe Gliniewicz had run the Explorer program for teens interested in possible careers in law enforcement. Authorities said Melodie

Gliniewicz served as an adviser to the Explorer Post and had a fiduciary role with the program's finances.

In November, an official with knowledge of the investigation provided to the media some of the text and Facebook messages exchanged between the officer and his family. In one message on April 14, a worried Joe Gliniewicz and his wife discussed whether someone would review the finances of the explorer program.

"...maybe we need to hide the funds some how," Melodie Gliniewicz said in one of those messages.

In a statement, attorneys for Melodie Gliniewicz vehemently denied that she took part in her husband's scheme. "Melodie is a victim of her husband's secret action and looks forward to her day in court to show the world her innocence," said the law firm of Kelleher & Buckley.

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