

# Deputy Nate Carrigan shot and killed during high-risk eviction

Emily Clingman, editor Walter L. Newton, staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 10:33 am

Deputy Sheriff Nate Carrigan was shot and killed Wednesday morning carrying out a high-risk eviction with two other deputies at a home in Bailey around 9:15 am.

The home at 36 Iris Drive, in the Friendship Ranch subdivision, was formerly owned by Martin Wirth, who opened fire on the deputies.

The other two deputies Mark Hancock and Kolby Martin were taken to Saint Anthony's Hospital. Martin underwent surgery and is in critical condition at press time and Hancock was treated and released with a flesh wound to the ear.

There were a total of seven deputies on scene in addition to Sheriff Fred Wegener.

Wirth is also dead.

“Wirth came out on his deck, paused and then went back inside,” Undersheriff Monte Gore said in a press release. “Officers quickly followed Wirth inside the residence and as they entered, Wirth fired upon them. Officers returned fire.”

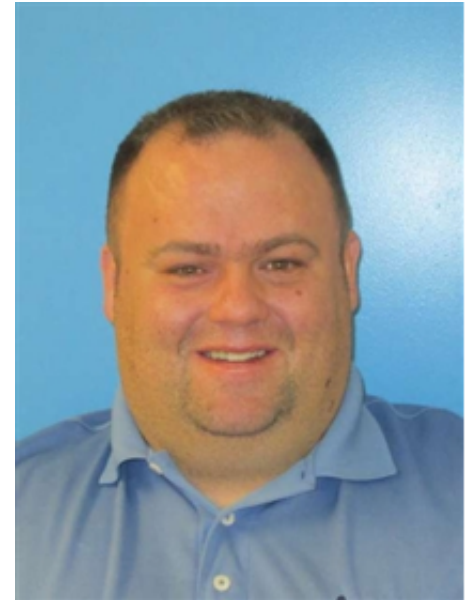
In the press release, it is reported that Wirth was pronounced dead at the scene.

Corporal Nate Carrigan, who was with Park County for 13 years, was shot and died at the scene.

Master Patrol Deputy Kolby Martin, who has 11 years with Park County, was shot multiple times in the lower extremities, and Captain Mark Hancock, who has 21 years with Park County, was grazed in the ear.

Deputy Martin was air lifted to Saint Anthony's Hospital and Captain Hancock was also transported by ambulance to Saint Anthony's Hospital in Denver.

Gore said he contacted the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and requested the agency take the lead in



Park County Sheriff's Office  
Deputy Nate Carrigan

Park County Sheriff's Office Deputy Nate Carrigan was killed by Martin Wirth during a high-risk eviction Feb. 24. (Courtesy photo)

the ongoing investigation.

“The response from our brother and sister law enforcement agencies, and our community, is truly heartwarming and overwhelming,” Gore said. “We do not require additional resources at this time.

“Sheriff Wegener would like to thank the Chaffee County Sheriff’s Office, the Colorado State Patrol, the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, the Fairplay Police Department, the Alma Police Department, and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation for their assistance on this dark day.”

## **Incident unfolds**

According to law enforcement radio transmissions, at 9:48 shots were fired. At 9:50, communications confirmed that the suspect was down. A few minutes later it was confirmed that three deputies were shot.

By 9:56, two Flight for Life helicopters were put in the air; one was to meet medical personal at Elk Creek Fire District Station One and the other headed for the Platte Canyon Fire Protection District Fire Station Two.

A little after 10 a.m., the Colorado State Patrol was on scene and communication confirmed that the suspect was dead. At 11:09, JCSO radioed PCSO and offered to take over the scene.

Susan Medina, public information officer at the Colorado Bureau of Investigations, confirmed during a press conference at 12:30 p.m., that one deputy with 10 years service to the PSCO was killed (which has now been confirmed to be Carrigan).

She confirmed that another deputy had non-life threatening wounds. The third deputy was slightly injured by the gunfire.

The CBI also confirmed that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were at the property, to make sure the property was safe for investigators.

The Flume visited twice with Wirth in June of 2014, including the day that an earlier eviction was scheduled to remove him from the home.

Wirth said in an interview with The Flume in 2014 that was an out-of-work machinist, who was fed up with “big banks” and what he considered the illegal mortgages that these banks held on property owners.

Wirth had a number of friends from the Colorado Foreclosure Resistance Coalition, an allied group of Occupy Wall Street, at his home on the day of the earlier eviction. They were going to resist any effort to have Wirth evicted. Instead of holding the eviction that day, the sheriff’s office gave Wirth a few more days to remove his property.

Wirth and his CFRC's friends decided against any resistance and helped Wirth move his personal belongings out of his home.

A message posted on the CFRC's Facebook page, at 1:54 p.m. today stated the following, "We are sorry to share that Martin Wirth, so long active working to end fraudulent foreclosures and evictions, is reported to have died in a shootout with police this morning in Bailey Colorado (sic)."

But in another Facebook post, June 24, 2014, the day of his original eviction, the CFRC posted the following message:

"Colorado Foreclosure Resistance Coalition is pulling its support of the ongoing action at Martin's house (36 Iris Drive, Bailey, Colorado).

"While we believe in Mr. Wirth's case and arguments, we cannot in good conscience, as an organization, support the tactics he is proposing.

"Any individuals wishing to participate in Mr. Wirth's ongoing foreclosure resistance are welcome."

The CFRC website states that its mission is to reverse the disastrous trend of foreclosures, evictions and sinking housing values.

### **A neighbor speaks**

Rich Gabrish, who lives two doors from the property Martin Wirth formerly owned, said Wirth had made numerous threats that he would shoot police officers if they tried to apprehend him or remove him from the property.

"I told him that's a battle he's not going to win," Gabrish said. "He didn't care. He believed life was treating him rotten, everyone was out to get him. He wanted to die. I think he wanted suicide by cops, too."

Gabrish said he called the Park County Sheriff's Office about six weeks ago to warn the department about the threats Wirth had been making. Gabrish said the officer he spoke with said they would watch Wirth and be careful.

The Flume contacted the sheriff's office for comment, but staff was unavailable to comment before press time.

After his initial eviction in June of 2014, Wirth moved to Brighton, said Gabrish, but it didn't work out there. Wirth came back to the property about four or five months ago with an RV and lived in it until he found bedbugs. Gabrish said he then moved back into the house.

He was facing all kinds of lawsuits," Gabrish said. I just took him to Fairplay two weeks ago to handle some paperwork. He was trying to confuse the courts."

Gabrish said although he was probably the closest friend Wirth had, he really didn't feel like they

were actually friends.

“I invited him over for Christmas because he had nowhere to go,” Gabrish said. “I felt bad for him.”

Gabrish said Wirth complained about not having any money for rent and gas, but he wouldn’t pursue job leads given to him.

Last month, Gabrish said that Wirth had a run in with police about a suspended license.

“He said they threw him on the ground and broke his front teeth,” Gabrish said.

On a Jan. 22 Facebook Post, Wirth wrote, “I went to Conifer to purchase insurance for my truck. Unbeknownst to me, my license had been revoked. Upon querying, this was because I refuse to pay extortion and my request for appeal has been put off on a bullsh... speeding ticket, one where I was accused of magically driving 85-mph in a traffic jam where no one was going faster than 45-mph.”

Wirth went on to say, “Because I ran for State Senate, I am a high value target ... cops want me dead ... One cop repeatedly punched my face and knocked two of my teeth out after others piled on. This was after aiming loaded pistols while screaming threats at me. I may have provoked them with a finger or gave them the skunk eye. Then I turned my back to go home.”

Wirth went on to write that a Jefferson County sheriff’s deputy followed him back to Park County.

“None of the Park County cops made any effort to help a citizen of their own county being attacked by a homicidal psychopath from the neighboring county over six miles out of his jurisdiction,” Wirth wrote. “In fact, they drew their own pistols to assist my assailant. Maybe they needed to dust off the old shooting irons, or missed that special camaraderie you can only have when you threaten to shoot someone for attempting to purchase car insurance.”

The Jefferson County Sheriff’s office was unavailable to comment on this before press time.

He was crazy,” Gabrish said. “Completely irrational about everything. I told other people that he needed professional help. I even asked him a few weeks ago for the names and numbers of his family members in case he winds up dead.”

Wirth, who visited his family in New Jersey a few years ago, according to Gabrish, never did provide contact information.

“Marty’s dead,” Gabrish said. “He was planning on dying, but I think this is a little sooner than he thought.”