

'He's sick of the pain,' mother of man shot - Citrus County Chronicle (Crystal River, FL) - February 20, 2018

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Lisa Batchelder's voice was frantic and desperate.

Her son Ryan had just stormed off, armed and threatening to kill his wife and himself.

"He's a veteran and he overdosed on his meds," she said. "He's not in a good state of mind. He almost ran me over when I tried to stop him."

That call to 911 came at 3:45 p.m. Saturday. Two hours later, her son was shot by Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputies after he ended a pursuit through Hernando by ramming his Kia minivan into a deputy's car parked in a plaza parking lot. He died on the scene.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is investigating the incident.

The sheriff's office released to the Chronicle recordings of five 911 calls it received Saturday. Although the names of 911 callers are exempt from public disclosure, Mrs. Batchelder told a reporter on Sunday that she called 911 after her son left their house.

During the nearly 19-minute phone call, Mrs. Batchelder told a dispatcher that her son served in Afghanistan and was being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder. She said he was unable to get timely appointments with the Veterans Administration clinic, and a recent marital problem had set him off.

"I tried to get him to tell me, 'What's your plan? If you don't have a plan, then it's just a thought,'" Mrs. Batchelder told 911.

The dispatcher asked: "What do you think Ryan's going to do if he sees the officers?"

Mrs. Batchelder replied she wasn't sure.

"He's a good kid," she said. "I don't perceive that he'll do anything. Then again, he's emotionally, 'Oh my God!' He's had a bad situation going to Afghanistan. Since he's come back, he's not the same."

Sheriff's deputies responded to the Hernando Plaza where **Ryan Batchelder's** wife, Samantha, worked at the Xtreme Games 3 internet cafe, waiting for Batchelder in case he showed up.

Deputies spotted Batchelder's car and began to pursue it north on State Road 200, calling off the pursuit because of Batchelder's speed, officials said.

A motorist on S.R. 200 called in to 911 a reckless driver.

"There's a blue minivan driving crazy," the caller said. "He had to be going 100 mph just weaving in and out. He ran two cars off the road. Ran us off the road."

The caller said the minivan turned south onto County Road 491, where deputies picked up the pursuit to U.S. 41 and south through Hernando. Sheriff's officials said Batchelder drove through Hernando to Parsons Point Road and made his way back to U.S. 41 heading north as attempts to stop the minivan were unsuccessful.

Officials said he drove at a high rate of speed directly into the Hernando Plaza parking lot at the S.R. 200 apex, slamming into a deputy's parked car.

They said Batchelder displayed the weapon to deputies during the chase, but would not say whether he fired it after the crash.

A witness told the Chronicle he heard three gunshots and deputies returning fire.

Batchelder's father, Michael, had arrived at the business prior to his son and said Sunday that he witnessed the shooting.

He was working and called 911 after receiving a call from his wife.

"I was going to see if I could head down and de-escalate the situation," he told a dispatcher, according to the recording.

Michael Batchelder said his son was in possession of a handgun.

"He's very proficient in weapons," he said in the 911 call.

(The sheriff's office would not confirm that Michael Batchelder made the call; however, during the call, he referred to Ryan's mother as his wife.)

Michael and Lisa Batchelder told a reporter on Sunday that their son served with the Vermont National Guard during his mid-20s. When Ryan moved to Florida his parents followed to help him out, they said.

Mrs. Batchelder told dispatchers that her son had trouble getting appointments with the VA despite his medical condition. His parents could not get through to him, either.

"He wouldn't let me call the VA to get him help," she said. "He said, 'They don't help. We risk our lives for the country and the VA doesn't do (expletive).'"

The two deputies involved in the shooting, Ryne Rainey and Mike Anger, were placed on administrative leave with pay as per agency policy. Both officers were outside their vehicles when Batchelder rammed the cruiser, and Rainey was hospitalized briefly Saturday with injuries from the crash, sheriff's officials said.

Mrs. Batchelder said she pleaded with her son to stay home.

"I told him if he left, 'You're not going to do something stupid. You need to figure this out,'" she said in the 911 call. "He said no. He's sick of the pain."

Contact Chronicle reporter Mike Wright at 352-563-3228 or mwright@chronicleonline.com.

Editor's note: This story has been updated to clarify that the deputies were placed on administrative leave with pay, not suspended.

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