

## **Dad watched as deputies shot son - Citrus County Chronicle (Crystal River, FL) - February 18, 2018**

February 18, 2018 | Citrus County Chronicle (Crystal River, FL) | CARLY ZERVIS

A Hernando man killed by deputies Saturday evening after ramming his car into a patrol vehicle told his mother he planned to kill his wife and himself, the man's family said Sunday.

**Ryan Batchelder**, 28, was armed when he was shot by two Citrus County Sheriff's deputies in the Hernando Plaza parking lot, sheriff's spokeswoman Lindsay Blair said Sunday.

Blair said Batchelder pointed his weapon at deputies prior to the crash but she would not say if he discharged it. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is investigating and the two deputies, Ryne Rainey and Mike Anger, were placed on administrative leave with pay as per agency policy. Both have been with agency a short time — Anger's hire date is Jan. 17, 2017 and Rainey was hired in July, Blair said.

Batchelder served in Afghanistan with the Vermont Army National Guard in his mid 20s prior to moving to Florida, and suffered from combat-related depression, family members said Sunday.

His mother, Lisa Batchelder, said Ryan told her he was driving to the Xtreme Games 3 in the Hernando Plaza where his wife Samantha worked to kill her and then himself.

Lisa Batchelder said she alerted authorities and her husband.

"I called 911 and gave them as much information as I could. They said that Samantha was safe and we didn't know where Ryan was," she said. "I had hoped that he would come back here, so I stayed here until Mike called me and told that Ryan was dead."

Michael Batchelder, rushing home from work after getting his wife's call, stopped at the plaza in Hernando. He saw Ryan drive into the parking lot and ram his car into CCSO cruisers. He said he didn't see his son fire a shot.

"I was 15 feet away from my boy. I could see every round hit his body," Michael said Sunday. "I even begged them to stop...I know he intended to do harm, but I thought that was a little extreme."

James Greer manages the internet cafe where **Ryan Batchelder's** wife works. She and a customer were in the cafe when **Ryan Batchelder** arrived in the parking lot early Saturday evening.

He told Samantha and the customer to get into rooms at the back of the building and get down low, Greer said Sunday.

"At the time I didn't even think about it," he said. "I just did what I thought I needed to do."

Greer said he thought he saw Ryan fire in the direction of the deputies.

Blair said both deputies were outside their vehicles in the parking lot when **Ryan Batchelder** drove in at a high rate of speed, crashing into Rainey's patrol car. Neither deputy was shot, though Rainey was injured in the crash and hospitalized briefly Saturday, Blair said.

Deputies were alerted from the 911 call to spot a blue Kia Sedona. They saw the car in Hernando and began to pursue Batchelder north on State Road 200 but they called off the pursuit due to Batchelder's rate of speed, Blair said.

Batchelder was then spotted driving south on County Road 491, then U.S. 41 toward Hernando. Attempts to stop his vehicle were unsuccessful until he slammed into the cars in the parking lot, Blair said.

Batchelder, who was divorced, married Samantha in December.

"He struggled a lot with PTSD and depression...but he was still family oriented," Samantha Batchelder said. "That was his life."

His parents knew he struggled, too. They moved to Citrus County from Vermont after Ryan did to "help him out," Lisa Batchelder said. Ryan and Samantha were living with his parents in Hernando.

"He didn't talk about it much," Lisa Batchelder said of her son's deployment at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan.

"He had swapped shifts with a friend because he was tired, and the gate at Bagram got raided," she said. "His friend who had replaced him and some other friends had gotten killed. He said that it should have been him."

**Ryan Batchelder's** wife and parents all spoke of his difficulties getting help. Samantha said he hadn't been to the VA clinic since last April.

"He said it always took too long," she said. "That he had to wait months for an appointment."

His mom agreed, recalling that after Ryan told her Saturday afternoon that he was going to kill his wife and himself, she asked him if she could get him some help.

"He said, 'Something happened yesterday and it just shut me off. I'm disconnected from myself,'" she recalled. "I said, 'Can I call the VA, the health department?' He said 'They don't help me.' The last time he was depressed it was six months before he got an appointment."

Ryan's wife and parents also agreed that he hadn't given anyone any indication that he could turn violent.

"He never laid a finger on me," Samantha said of her husband.

"There was no precursor," his father said.

"When we got home, we were looking in his room, to see that red flag, that something..." his mother added. "I'm hearing these different things and I want it to be known that my kid needed help."

Staff writer Mike Wright contributed to this report.

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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