

Pike County sheriff IDs deputy who shot, killed - Dayton Daily News (OH) - February 11, 2018 - page B9

February 11, 2018 | Dayton Daily News (OH) | Holly Zachariah The Columbus Dispatch | Page B9

The Pike County sheriff's office has identified Erik Zirneskie as the deputy who shot and killed a man after a foot chase and struggle last week.

Zirneskie, 25, has been with the sheriff's office since August 2016, according to his personnel file.

As is routine in an officer-involved shooting, he has been placed on paid leave since the death of 35-year-old **James M. Burks**. Pike County Sheriff Charles Reader called in an outside agency to handle an independent investigation into the deputy's actions that night, which also is standard practice. The Franklin County sheriff's office is doing that.

Reader said last week that Zirneskie had seen a suspicious vehicle just before 4 a.m. Feb. 1 in the parking lot of a closed business on Ohio 124 in the western part of Pike County. The car pulled out and Zirneskie followed and tried to make a traffic stop.

Reader said the car pulled into a private driveway and three people inside scattered and ran. He said Burks was among them.

Zirneskie gave chase, and the two scuffled, Reader said. Burks was shot during the scuffle and died at the scene, the sheriff said. No information has been released on how many times Burks was shot. Zirneskie was treated at a local hospital and released.

Burks had a history of violence and two outstanding warrants for his arrest. An obituary said his survivors include five daughters and a son.

According to Zirneskie's personnel file, he has previously worked part time for the Put-In-Bay Police Department on South Bass Island on Lake Erie and held a couple of reserve posts elsewhere.

A department use-of-force log says that during his tenure, Zirneskie has used his Taser and pepper spray in separate incidents.

His file notes that his initial probationary status with the sheriff's office has been extended because of his being late for work, his personal appearance, and his inability to keep his cruiser clean and maintained.