

DA: Suspect was high on meth at time of shooting

Hindi, Saja . Fort Collins Coloradoan ; Fort Collins, Colo. [Fort Collins, Colo]17 Nov 2018: A.4.

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FULL TEXT

The Larimer County district attorney on Friday cleared Sheriff's Office Deputy Matthew Bordewick of criminal wrongdoing in the shooting death of 25-year-old Travis Craven.

The letter from District Attorney Cliff Riedel stated that Craven's actions on Oct. 8 placed Bordewick and Craven's father in "reasonable fear for their lives," and "countless members of the public at risk as he recklessly attempted to elude police."

Craven reportedly told his parents to come visit from Greeley on Oct. 6. His mother left on Oct. 7, but his father stayed behind.

On the morning of Oct. 8, Craven's dad was on the phone with his wife when Craven reportedly entered the room and demanded his father reveal his "real name." Riedel said Craven's family told police that he'd become paranoid and delusional, believed the government was after him, and he thought his father was an undercover officer.

Craven then began punching his dad in the face and then grabbed a .410 shotgun and hit him in the face with the butt of the gun, according to Riedel.

Craven then allegedly threw his dad on the bed and choked him. When his dad landed on the ground, Riedel's letter says Craven hit his father in his back near his spine, then took a handgun and put it to his dad's head, spit in his face, kicked him and threatened to kill him.

Craven's father told investigators his son then told him he was "lucky this time," before he grabbed his dad's dog and left.

When he spoke with 911 dispatchers, Craven's father told them Craven had left the residence in a white Subaru while carrying a handgun.

After a deputy arrived at the residence and spoke to Craven's father, Craven reportedly returned and parked in the driveway. Deputy Nathan Rankin walked out of the house with a handgun drawn and gave Craven commands, but he did not cooperate, according to Riedel. Craven then reportedly released the dog and drove off.

Craven's father told investigators that his son said he would "shoot it out" with police and force them to shoot him. A pursuit began after another deputy saw Craven's white Subaru, and Bordewick joined the pursuit along Red Feather Lakes Road. The pursuit reached speeds topping 100 mph. As Craven approached Livermore Elementary School, he waved his arms outside his window. Knowing that Craven was armed and fearing he may try to shoot at them, deputies slowed down to put some distance between themselves and the suspect, Riedel said.

As Craven drove south on U.S. Highway 287, he continued to evade deputies. A lieutenant who was monitoring the pursuit attempted to deploy spike strips near Owl Canyon Road and County Road 7, but Craven avoided the spike strips and continued eastbound toward Interstate 25.

Craven reportedly turned southbound on the frontage road on the east side of I-25 and eastbound on County Road 66. Bordewick employed a PIT maneuver in which a police car contacts the back of a suspect's car, spinning the car and ending the pursuit.

Craven's vehicle spun, went down an embankment and landed in a field, about 25 yards from County Road 66. Both Bordewick and Craven got out of their vehicles with guns drawn. Craven reportedly had his finger on the trigger of his handgun.

Riedel said Bordewick repeatedly demanded Craven drop the gun, but Craven reportedly turned toward the deputy and squared up with his finger on the trigger.

"Measurements from the scene document that when Travis squared up on Deputy Bordewick, he was approximately 22 yards from Deputy Bordewick," Riedel wrote. "With every reason to believe that Travis was about to shoot him, Deputy Bordewick rapidly fired what he believed to be 4-5 rounds."

The shooting occurred about 10 seconds after the PIT maneuver.

Another deputy who arrived after Bordewick said he saw Craven "fixated" on Bordewick while holding his gun. Deputies and a Colorado State Patrol trooper rendered aid to Craven until emergency personnel arrived. Craven later died at Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland.

Craven died of three gunshot wounds, according to the Larimer County Coroner's Office, with the fatal shot above his left eye, and others to his shoulder and neck.

A toxicology report revealed that he had methamphetamine in his system.

According to Riedel's letter, Craven's parents said the man had substance abuse issues with methamphetamine and was living in a family home in Red Feather Lakes.

"Based on the totality of the evidence, I find that Mr. Travis Craven committed the only criminal offenses during this incident," wrote Riedel. "Had he survived, sufficient evidence exists to have charged Mr. Craven with multiple felony offenses; including attempted first-degree murder of a peace officer against Deputy Bordewick, second-degree assault and menacing with a deadly weapon against his father, and vehicular eluding."

This is the first police shooting in Larimer County in 2018, according to the Loveland Police Department. There were five police shootings in 2017, and there were three in both 2015 and 2016, according to Coloradoan records. Reporter Saja Hindi covers public safety, courts and accountability. Follow her on Twitter @BySajaHindi or email her at shindi@coloradoan.com.

Authorities investigate after a chase involving Larimer County Sheriff's Office deputies ended in a police shooting. Sady Swanson/The Coloradoan

CREDIT: Saja Hindi

DETAILS

Subject:	Methamphetamines; Shootings; Criminal investigations; Deadly force
Location:	Colorado United States--US
Company / organization:	Name: State Patrol-Colorado; NAICS: 922120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
Publication title:	Fort Collins Coloradoan; Fort Collins, Colo.
First page:	A.4
Publication year:	2018
Publication date:	Nov 17, 2018
Section:	News
Publisher:	Gannett Co., Inc.
Place of publication:	Fort Collins, Colo.

Country of publication:	United States, Fort Collins, Colo.
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--United States
Source type:	Newspapers
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	2134232202
Document URL:	https://search.proquest.com/docview/2134232202?accountid=14026
Copyright:	Copyright 2018 - FORT COLLINS COLORADOAN - All Rights Reserved.
Last updated:	2018-11-17
Database:	Global Newsstream

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