



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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FCSO Deescalates Two-High Risk Incidents in 48-Hours

On April 15, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) responded to 1730 Berrybush Street after dispatchers received a call from a neighbor who said they could hear gunshots coming from inside the home.



Sheriff Staly debriefs with the FCSO SWAT Unit on Breeze Hill Lane

The FCSO K9, SWAT, and Patrol immediately responded and established a perimeter around the home. Eventually, the SWAT team was able to enter the residence, make contact with the man, and detain him. A search of the house recovered multiple firearms, ammunition and a house that was riddled with bullets from inside the home. When questioned, the man told deputies that he was a military veteran and had "seen enemy in the tree lines" and that he was "ready to go to heaven."

Based on the circumstances and statements made on the scene, the man was secured under a Baker

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Act and transported to Halifax Hospital. Further investigation revealed he was a Vietnam War veteran and was having flashbacks.

Two days later on April 17th Flagler County dispatchers received a call from a woman saying that her ex-boyfriend, Joseph Bourke (DOB: 4/7/1987), was refusing to let her collect her belongings and was threatening to harm her via text messages and threatened to attempt 'suicide by cop' if she called law enforcement.

FCSO Deputies, K-9, and SWAT responded to Bourke's residence on 130 Breeze Hill Lane and established a perimeter. Negotiators made contact with Bourke on the phone and attempted to persuade him to come outside, to which Bourke replied, "I ain't going peacefully."

Throughout the incident, Bourke was taping on his windows, hanging out windows, and running in and out of his home in an attempt to engage with deputies.



Left: Sheriff Staly speaks to SWAT Unit during incident on Berrybush Street. Right: Joseph Bourke detained by FCSO Swat team outside his residence.

Bourke was finally, taken into custody when he came outside of his residence and was struck with a non-lethal round, immobilizing him. Bourke was then transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility and charged with Written Threats to Kill and Domestic Battery. He is being held on \$15,000.00 bond.

Video of Bourke's arrest can be seen here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/17wZhKdQt5p94G_ovlo-NZgGsdvoWuEyf/view?usp=sharing

This is not Bourke's first encounter with law enforcement. Bourke has a criminal history in Flagler County dating back to 2008 for multiple charges including Driving Under the Influence, Robbery, Resisting an Officer with Violence, Aggravated Assault, Possession of Cocaine, Possession of a Controlled Substance, and Sale of a Controlled Substance.

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“Unfortunately law enforcement has become the default mental health agency due to the lack of funding and resources available,” Sheriff Rick Staly said. “In these dangerous instances our deputies did a great job using their training to safely de-escalate these incidents and resolve them without anyone being injured. I’m very proud of our team and thank them for successfully resolving back-to-back dangerous encounters.”

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, seek help immediately. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24-hour by calling 800-273-8255. Locally, Stewart-Marchman Act Crisis Center is available. Their crisis line is 800-539-4228 and is available 24 hours a day. In the event of an emergency, call 9-1-1.

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