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## 'Coward' kills two deputies

*\* Shooter identified*



Alachua County Sheriff's Sgt. Brett Rhodenizer (blue shirt) explains to Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz the plan for addressing so many TV and other journalists as the sheriff arrives at about 7:40 p.m. on Thursday.

### Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © April 20, 2018 at 12:28 a.m.

\* Updated April 20, 2018 at 7:58 a.m. - Shooter Identified

\*\* Updated April 20, 2018 at 2:08 p.m. - Longer Video

**GILCHRIST COUNTY** -- Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz in an interview Thursday evening (April 19) said the man who shot and killed two deputies was a coward.

<https://youtu.be/CaMmnXKeJYE>

**\*\* In this video, Sheriff Bobby Schultz conducts the press conference. This is the whole video. A shorter version was put up earlier.**

Video By Jeff M. Hardison, All Rights Reserved

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**In the background, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods and Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney William Cervone listen as Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum (red shirt) stand next to his friend, colleague and fellow Christian Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz.**

Gilchrist County Sheriff's Sgt. Noel Ramirez, 30, a seven-year veteran of law enforcement and GCSO Deputy Taylor Lindsey, 25, were killed at approximately 3 p.m. on Thursday afternoon, Sheriff Schultz said in the 7:45 p.m. press conference.

The conference was held in a grassy field across the street from where the two GCSO deputy sheriffs were shot and killed. The two men died at the Ace China restaurant, which is located on the southwest corner of East Wade Street (State Road 26) and Southeast 11th Street in Trenton.

\* John Hubert Highnote, 59, of Bell walked up to the business and shot both deputies through the window, according to a press release by Alachua County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Brett Rhodenizer, who is a public information officer for the ACSO.

As fellow deputies responded to the scene, they found the shooter deceased outside the business, and both deputy sheriffs had died of their wounds there, Rhodenizer said.

This case remains an active criminal investigation with no apparent motive or indications as to why this tragedy occurred, Rhodenizer said.

Sheriff Schultz held the press conference only after he personally spoke with the next of kin of the two fallen deputies.

Before Sheriff Schultz arrived, Sgt. Rhodenizer and Levy County Sheriff's Office Lt. Scott Tummond, who is also a public information officer, fielded questions and stationed the many journalists in the grassy field. Sgt. Rhodenizer and Lt. Tummond were some of the dozens of officers and other supporters who came to Trenton instantly

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after learning of the horrific act late that afternoon.

Darry D. Lloyd, the deputy chief investigator in the office of Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney William Cervone also assisted in guiding the media.



Emergency vehicles from Gilchrist, Dixie and Levy counties are seen at the city park in Trenton. This was an initial command center for the grieving brethren of the officers who were killed.



A couple of Chiefland Police Department cruisers are seen at the park in Trenton.



Alachua County and Trenton Police cruisers are seen at the park.

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**This is a view of the back of the Chinese restaurant.**



**Some of the multitude of media personalities prepare.**



**The Ace China restaurant is in the background as an investigator with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement walks toward the location of the double murder.**

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**One of at least three news helicopters buzzes the area.**



**Putnam County Sheriff Gator Deloach (left) and Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum await the arrival of Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz**

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**(from left) Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods and State Rep. Chuck Clemons are among the people who came to support Sheriff Schultz.**



**Darry D. Lloyd (left) of the Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office welcomes Marion County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Robert Douglas. LCSO Lt. Scott Tummond (background, left) looks on.**

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Florida Highway Patrol Troop B Commander Maj. Eileen Powell (center of picture) is among the many FHP leaders and troopers helping in every way at Trenton. FHP Lt. Patrick V. Riordan, a renowned public information officer, was also in the crowd.



Some of the many high sheriffs of Florida counties and other leaders of the law enforcement community are seen moments before Sheriff Bobby Schultz speaks.



**(from left) Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum, State Rep. Chuck Clemons, Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell and FHP Maj. Eileen Powell await the start of the press conference.**

During the press conference, Sheriff Schultz helped all people listening to him understand his perspective.

“You can never be prepared for something like this,” Sheriff Schultz said as he told



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about his visit with the surviving family members with whom he had spoken. "They understood that when their loved ones pinned on a badge and they strapped on a gun, that this was a possibility."

The sheriff went on to say it was his opinion that these two fallen heroes were "... the best of the best. They were men of integrity. They were men of loyalty; God-fearing and they loved what they did. I am very proud of them."

The sheriff said he is honored to work with all of the men and women in the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office – who just like those two. The sheriff said he is honored to serve the residents and visitors of Gilchrist County.

"They gave their lives so that we all can be safe," Sheriff Schultz said.

The sheriff has been involved in law enforcement for 26 years. Nevertheless, he said, nothing can prepare a person for senseless deaths.

Not only were these two gentlemen the quintessential deputy sheriffs of the highest degree, Schultz said, but they were also wonderful children, husbands, boyfriends, brothers and law enforcement brethren.

The sheriff said he knew both men personally, and he has no qualms in telling listeners that he loved them.

"And they were loved," Sheriff Schultz said. "And when I spoke with those families this afternoon, I told them that they could be proud of those men. They could be proud. I am proud to have been their sheriff."

He is thankful to God for the opportunity to have worked alongside them.

The sheriff said this investigation is in the hands of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. More information about the killer, if there was a motive that can be determined and other points may be released by the FDLE when that agency feels it is time to provide that insight, the sheriff said. For now, it is an active investigation.

These two deputy sheriffs, Schultz said, should not be remembered for their untimely deaths; but instead, they should be remembered as the good individuals that they were during their lives.

Standing beside Sheriff Shultz were Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum and Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell. Standing behind the Sheriff Schultz during the news conference were Baker County Sheriff Scotty Rhoden, Columbia County Sheriff Mark A. Hunter, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods, Putnam County Sheriff Gator Deloach and others. Also standing with him were representatives from the Florida Highway Patrol, Eighth Judicial Circuit State Attorney William Cervone, State Rep. Charles Wesley "Chuck" Clemons Sr. (R-Newberry, Dist. 21) and others.

At the Trenton City Park before the press conference, law enforcement officers, firefighters and other first responders from Alachua County, Gilchrist County, Dixie County, Levy County, Trenton, Chiefland, Williston and other counties and cities were consoling each other. There was a strong showing of law enforcement officers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as well as other state, county and local agencies.

Officials from the Levy County Sheriff's Office, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the State Attorney's Office all

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responded to the area to assist, as did too many other agencies and people from areas too many to list.

Sheriff Schultz said the outpouring of support from so many people in these professions results because they know there are heroes on the streets.

“They know what it takes to be a law enforcement officer,” Schultz said.

The sheriff said the GCSO is not going to make this a political issue, he did make a strong statement nonetheless.

“What do you expect when you demonize law enforcement to the extent that it has been demonized?” he asked. “Every type of hate – every type of putdown that you can think of. The only thing these men were guilty of was wanting to protect you and me. They just wanted to go get something to eat and they just wanted to do their job.”

The sheriff said all of the members of the GCSO team will honor their brethren by doing their jobs.

“We will honor them by doing what we are supposed to do,” he said, “because that is what our heavenly Father wants us to do, because to be a law enforcement officer is a calling – without question, without reservation.”

The sheriff said the service to the residents and visitors of Gilchrist County will not be interrupted. The GCSO accepts assistance from neighboring agencies, he said.

Gilchrist County is resilient, he said, and it is a family.

“We’re going to grieve,” he said. “We’re going to get upset. We’re probably going to cuss a little bit.”

He said the people will remember those two men, however, for what they were – and that is heroes.

As for the media coverage, every TV station from coast to coast sent camera crews, and at one point three news helicopters were in a relatively close airspace – hovering over one media checkpoint.

The sheriff asked the press to please spare the families of the fallen officers and to give them time to mourn their loved ones before asking them for interviews.