

# Wiggins divulges details of shooting, burning deputy

**CHARLOTTE (AP)** — A man charged with killing a deputy in Tennessee, trying to impersonate him and burning his body now faces federal as well as state charges that could be punishable by death, authorities announced Friday.

A state judge arraigned Steven Joshua Wiggins on Friday on 12 charges including premeditated murder in the shooting of Dickson County sheriff's Sgt. Daniel Baker. His alleged accomplice, Erika Castro-Miles, also was arraigned, on the same murder charge.

Baker was responding to a call about a suspicious car last week when he discovered it was stolen and the situation quickly escalated, Dickson County Sheriff Jeff Bledsoe said.

Authorities believe Castro-Miles was in the car when Wiggins shot Baker, and Wiggins dragged the deputy's body into the police cruiser and drove it to a rural area, where he set it on fire. Wiggins then became the object of a massive 48-hour manhunt.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced after the hearing that federal charges against Wiggins include carjacking resulting in Baker's death, shooting a gun while committing a violent crime, having that crime result in death and being a convicted felon with a gun.

If Wiggins is convicted, he faces up to life in prison and is



WIGGINS

eligible for the federal death penalty, which needs Sessions' approval.

According to federal court documents, Wiggins said the suspicious vehicle was parked in the road pointed the wrong way for about four hours, had a flat tire and wasn't drivable when Baker arrived at the scene.

Wiggins was behind the wheel and Castro-Miles was in the front passenger seat. Wiggins gave Baker a fake Social Security number when asked for ID, court documents show.

Wiggins remained at large after being charged the day before for assaulting Castro-Miles and stealing that same car

from her.

Baker determined the car had been stolen and ordered the two out of the car, but Wiggins claimed his door wouldn't open and Baker ordered Wiggins to leave from the passenger side, prosecutors said.

Baker's body camera recorded some of what happened next: While he walked around the rear of the car to the passenger side, Wiggins fired a pistol about five times at Baker, hitting him at least once.

Baker tried to take cover, but collapsed, prosecutors said.

Wiggins then fired five more times, the last three at short range, prosecutors said.

Wiggins went into detail with state investigators about the shooting: After he had fired the first set of shots, he went to

where Baker was lying, thought he was dead, but "didn't want the man (Baker) to suffer," so he shot Baker in the head multiple times: "like a dog, you know, man, its suffering. You make sure," court documents show.

Wiggins also answered a radio dispatch and a call from another deputy on Baker's cell-phone, pretending to be the fallen sergeant, the state indictment says. Then, he dragged the deputy's body into the rear seat of the patrol car and drove it 3 or 4 miles to a field, court filings say.

He told investigators he was thinking about the TV show CSI and worried about forensic evidence and fingerprints, so he found some paperwork and started fires in the front and back seats and fled, court documents show.

# Adoption day set for Aug. 11

BY **LISA HOBBS**  
Reporter for the Southern Standard  
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Heart in Hand, Critters Hollow Ranch & Rescue will be holding a pet adoption day in August and organizers are reaching out to other animal-welfare organizations.

"We'd like to invite all rescues in the area to come out and set up an information booth and bring their adoptable animals," said LeeAnna Ramero, who oversees the rescue with her sister, Latricia Ramero.

Heart in Hand is a small, nonprofit rescue in Warren County dedicated to the rescue of senior horses, dogs, cats and other farm animals.

LeeAnna adds, "We will be having a small petting zoo, adoption day, live music, vendors, Collins River food truck, raffles, kid games, and more. So far, we have six bands lined up and we are looking for two more, as we usually have eight. We have a couple of vendors."

Helping Animals of Warren County has already confirmed it will be in attendance. HAWC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to uniting people and organizations in the community to help animals.

Heart in Hand, Critters Hollow Ranch & Rescue is located at 257 Chapel Hill Drive, McMinnville. The sis-



Lisa Hobbs photo

**A pet adoption day at Heart in Hand, Critters Hollow Ranch & Rescue is set for Aug. 11 from 12 to 8 p.m. The event will have several live bands, vendors, kid games and more. There will also be pets from local rescues seeking forever homes. Pictured is Heart in Hand co-founder LeeAnna Ramero.**

ters are longtime equine enthusiasts and animals lovers. They established the ranch in 2016. It is dependent on sponsorships, donations, grants and fundrais-

ers, such as the pet adoption day, to continue in its endeavor.

The event is scheduled for Aug. 11 from 12 to 8 p.m. If you are a vendor, or with an

animal rescue interested in attending, LeeAnna can be reached at 931-450-4363 or by email at heartnhandcritters@yahoo.com for more information.

# Former employee admits to killing boss with hatchet

**NASHVILLE (AP)** — The suspect in a hatchet slaying earlier this week in Tennessee has been brought back to the state after his arrest in Kentucky.

The Tennessee reports 36-year-old Domenic Micheli was returned to Nashville on Friday. Kentucky State Police arrested Micheli on Tuesday night in connection with the death of his former boss, 46-year-old Joel Paavola.

The Metro Nashville Police Department says Micheli is charged with criminal homicide. Authorities say Micheli "admitted in detail" Wednesday to killing Paavola on Monday morning. Paavola was killed as he led a workout at his gym in the Nashville suburb of Belle Meade.

Paavola had fired Micheli from his gym more than a year before the attack.

## OBITUARIES

### Mary Edith Pelham, 81

Mrs. Mary Edith Pelham, 81, of McMinnville died Thursday, June 7, at Raintree Manor Nursing Center. She was born Oct. 26, 1936, in Warren County, was a retired school teacher, and a member of McMinnville Free Will Baptist Church. Mrs. Pelham was preceded in death by her parents Buford and Retha Hillis Shockley.

Survivors include her husband of 65 years Winford Eugene (Gene) Pelham, sons and daughters-in-law Ed and Karen Pelham and Mark and Tammy Pelham, grandchildren Bradley (Ashley) Pelham, Shawn (Corrina) Pelham, and Heather (Ryan) Parris, great-grandchildren Colton and Collins Pelham, Olive Pelham, Kayla Parris, and Cameron James Parris, sisters Betty Veach and Jonnye Pulley, and brother Billy (Judy) Davis. Several nieces, nephews, family members, and friends also survive.

Funeral service will be 11 a.m. Wednesday, June 13, at McMinnville Funeral Home Chapel. Bro. Tim Pelham will officiate. Interment will follow at Morrison Cemetery. The Pelham family will receive friends Tuesday from 4 to 8 p.m., and again Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m. at the parlors of McMinnville Funeral Home. Online condolences may be made at [www.mcminnvillefuneralhome.com](http://www.mcminnvillefuneralhome.com).

McMinnville Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

*Southern Standard*  
(McMinnville, Tenn.) June 10, 2018



## CIRCUIT COURT

Judge Bill Locke ruled on the following cases Thursday in Traffic Court:

Randal Dale Bond was given 45 days of an 11-month, 29-day sentence for DUI second offense. He must also perform 24 hours public service work and pay a \$600 fine. He was given 10 additional days for failure to appear.

Charlotte D. Ferrell was given 48 hours for driving

without a license.

Justin Hicks was given 30 days of an 11-29 sentence and a \$750 fine for possession of meth.

In separate cases, Jeffery R. Higgins and Austin Dillon Majors were given 48 hours of an 11-29 sentence, a \$350 fine and 24 hours public service work for DUI.

Jendee Lydia Howell was ordered to serve 48 hours of an 11-29 sentence for driving

on a suspended license second offense.

Logan Tyler Martin was given 48 hours of an 11-29 sentence, a \$350 fine and 24 hours public service work for DUI. In addition, he was given 10 days for failure to appear and 30 days for evading arrest.

Stefan Ray Ward was given 30 days of an 11-29 sentence and a \$750 fine for possession of meth.

Jeremiah Niemeyer was given 48 hours for driving on a suspended license.

Shane Butcher was given 30 days of an 11-29 sentence and fined \$750 for possession of a schedule II substance. He was granted a judicial diversion, meaning the charge can be erased.

Zachary Allen Phetteplace was released on time served for vandalism up to \$1,000. He was granted a judicial diversion.

In separate cases, Justin D. Walker and Jared Anthony Vogel were given 48 hours for driving on a revoked license.

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**CORRECTION**

Commissioner Terry Bell is a member of the county Education Committee. In Friday's edition of the Southern Standard regarding the committee and its discussion of the Warren County School System's budget, Bell was noted as not being a member. **The Standard** apologizes for the mistake.

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