



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 22, 2016

Published in the February 22, 2016 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 32, No. 04

LaVoy Finicum Shot, Killed

On January 26, at around 4:30 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time), LaVoy Finicum, an Arizona rancher and spokesman for the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon, was shot dead at a roadblock by troopers of the Oregon State Police. He was driving a pickup truck with four passengers, including two women, all of whom were arrested and taken into custody. One of Finicum's passengers, Ryan Bundy, a son of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, was wounded, reportedly in the shoulder, during the arrest. Ammon Bundy, another son of Cliven Bundy and a leader of the occupation, was arrested, along with an additional passenger and the driver of a second vehicle. They were traveling with Finicum from the wildlife refuge to the town of John Day, Oregon, where the occupiers intended to meet with the Grant County sheriff and local ranchers.



Was LaVoy Finicum “murdered” while his hands were extended in the air, as two eyewitnesses have claimed? Or was he “charging” the police, as another witness claims?

Although various news accounts have referred to the shooting as a “gunfight,” according to the eyewitness testimony of Victoria Sharp, an 18-year-old woman who was in the back seat of Finicum's truck when the shooting occurred, no occupants of the vehicles fired any weapons; the only shooting that occurred was on the part of the police and FBI. Sharp's audio account of the shooting has been posted on a number of websites and social media. After being arrested with the other survivors of the shooting and taken to Burns, Oregon, for questioning, she was released. The other female passenger, Shawna Cox, 59, was released three days later, on January 29. Her testimony is similar to Sharp's.

The two vehicles were stopped by police on U.S. 395 outside of Burns. They were ordered to put their hands out of the windows, Sharp says, and she claims that Finicum put his hands out of the car window and asked the police to allow the women to leave the car.

“They shot at him, but they missed him,” said Sharp, adding that Finicum then said, “They mean business; they're going to shoot us.” He then drove away in the truck, while taking fire from the police, but crashed into a snow bank at a police/FBI roadblock about a mile up the road. According to Sharp, the police “were riddling the car with bullets.”

“When we crashed and stopped for a second, he got out of the car, he had his hands in the air, he's like ‘just shoot me then’ ... and they did, they shot him dead,” said Sharp.



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 22, 2016

Published in the February 22, 2016 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 32, No. 04

“He was just walking, with his hands in the air,” said Sharp. “I saw it, I swear to God, he was just walking with his hands in the air. And they shot him dead and after he was down on the ground, shot him three more times.” Then, she says, they “bombarded the vehicle with bullets” and tear gas, as she and the other passengers lay on the floorboards praying and screaming for them to stop.

Dueling Witnesses

A different “eyewitness” account of the shooting conflicts sharply with that of Miss Sharp. We put eyewitness in quotes because even though he has been referred to as an eyewitness in media and social media accounts, he was about a mile away when the shooting occurred, having already been stopped by the police roadblock. In a video he posted on Facebook, Mark McConnell disputes Victoria Sharp’s testimony, claiming Finicum was “charging” police when he was shot down. This is based, he says, on accounts he got from Ryan Payne and Shawna Cox, after their arrests. However, McConnell’s testimony is merely third-party hearsay, and as some critics point out, it comes from a suspect source. Individuals who have closely followed the occupation note that:

- McConnell was the only participant (other than Sharp) to be summarily released, and, unlike Sharp, he had been an active, armed participant in the occupation, and was the driver of the vehicle carrying Ammon Bundy;
- McConnell was very hasty, after his release, to put up a video on his Facebook page backing up the story being given to the media by the federal authorities who had just carried out the “murder” of a suspect who is alleged to have had his hands in the air.

Both of these facts, say the McConnell critics, point to one of two probable explanations: Either he is a police informant/agent provocateur who was assigned to infiltrate the occupation, or he was sufficiently leaned on by prosecutors and the FBI with threats of life imprisonment if he didn’t “cooperate” — with one of his first tasks being to come out with a statement that would support the official FBI narrative and neutralize the eyewitness testimony of Victoria Sharp.

FBI Video Leaves More Questions

On January 28, the FBI released a video of the Finicum shooting, claiming it showed that Finicum was shot while reaching toward his pants pocket, where he allegedly had a loaded 9mm handgun. The grainy and often out-of-focus video, taken from an FBI plane, is 28 minutes and 26 seconds long. It purports to document the attempted roadblock arrest of Finicum on Tuesday, January 26, along a wooded stretch of U.S. Highway 395 in eastern Oregon.

Does the video support the police/FBI version of the event? Well, as often is the case, that is in the eye of the beholder. The images are fuzzy and blurry much of the time and the camera jumps about. Moreover, much of the time the images are quite small, taken from a long distance up. Was Finicum “charging” the police, as Mark McConnell (who was not a witness) alleges, or was he walking toward the police with his hands up, as Victoria Sharp claims?

The initial images, as he exits the driver’s seat of the truck, could support either version. Shortly thereafter, Finicum’s right hand does appear to drop toward the direction of his left pocket, but some observers point out that he may have merely been trying to maintain his balance in the deep, slippery snow. Or his movement may have actually been the involuntary physical reaction to having already been



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 22, 2016

Published in the February 22, 2016 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 32, No. 04

shot. Since the video does not have an audio recording, we do not know if he may have already been shot when he made that movement.

That brings us to the many additional unanswered questions, such as:

- In an operation of this size, with all of the local, state, and federal resources and manpower deployed, were there no other video or audio recordings?
- Were there no dash-cams on the vehicles or body-cams/body-mics on the troopers and FBI agents?
- Where is Finicum's truck, and has there been any independent verification as to the number of bullet holes in it?

It is highly unlikely that there are not additional video and audio recordings. According to Victoria Sharp's account, there were over 100 shots fired, none of which were fired by the occupants of Finicum's vehicle. Additional audio/video recordings and the pickup truck should be able to resolve the important discrepancy as to the large difference in accounts of how many shots were fired, as well as resolving whether Finicum was "charging" police, or merely walking with his hands up.

An obituary posted by Finicum's family states that "Robert LaVoy Finicum ... was murdered the day before his 55th birthday on January 26, 2016." A statement issued by the family on January 29 said, "As the FBI's own narrative stated, LaVoy was not wielding a firearm or any other weapon when he was killed. His hands were obviously in the air. Knowing LaVoy, it is our view that he was moving away from the vehicle in an attempt to draw any hostility or violence away from the others.... It is our understanding and position that deadly force should only be used as a last resort. In LaVoy's case it appears that they were determined to go straight to the last resort."

Photo: AP Images



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 22, 2016

Published in the February 22, 2016 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 32, No. 04

Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.