Beat: News

Florida man kills daughter, 6 grandchildren before killing self

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USPA News - Eight people were killed Thursday when a man opened fire inside his house in northern Florida, killing his daughter and his six grandchildren before turning the gun on himself, local authorities said on early Friday. The motive was not immediately known.

The incident began at around 4 p.m. local time on Thursday when 51-year-old Don Spirit called 911 from his residence in the town of Bell in rural Gilchrist County. "In the 911 call he made references to harming people and himself," said Sheriff Robert Schultz. "It was certainly enough to alarm us and that we`d need to get there in a hurry." When the first deputy arrived at the scene, he or she made contact with the suspect and a conversation took place before Bell committed suicide, the sheriff explained. The deputy then searched the residence which revealed a total of seven victims -- all whom suffered apparent gunshot wounds. The victims were identified as 28-year-old Sarah Lorraine Spirit and her six children: 2-month-old Alanna Stewart, 4-year-old Brandon Stewart, 5-year-old Destiny Stewart, 9-year-old Kylie Kuhlmann, 8-year-old Johnathon Kuhlmann, and 11-year-old Kaleb Kuhlmann. The Medical Examiner`s Office was working to formally identify the victims. A possible motive for the killings was not immediately known, but Schultz confirmed police had attended the residence for a wide-range of calls in the past. He said Don Spirit had a criminal history but did not elaborate, though news reports said the man had previously pleaded guilty to a weapon charge after he accidentally shot and killed his 8-year-old son while they were hunting. He had also prior convictions for battery, possessing drug paraphernalia and depriving a child of food and shelter.

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