

Body found in bunker believed to be that of survivalist murder suspect Peter Keller

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Updated at 4:42 p.m. ET: NORTH BEND, Wash. -- Law officers hunting for a self-trained survivalist suspected of killing his wife and daughter on Saturday found a body inside elaborate, underground bunker in the woods of Washington state where he was thought to have been hiding.

Authorities used explosives Saturday morning to blow the roof off the heavily fortified bunker and gain access. They said the body found inside was believed to be that of Peter Keller, who has been on the run since Sunday.

"Once inside deputies discovered a body which they said appeared to be Keller, and it appeared as though he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound," the King County Sheriff's Office said in a press release.

A gun and some blood were found near the body, [The Seattle Times reported](#).

No shots were fired by law enforcement during the 22-hour standoff, Sheriff Steve Strachan said.

Members of the sheriff's Bomb Disposal Unit were sent in to clear the bunker to ensure there were no planted explosives or booby traps.

Keller had spent eight years building the bunker into the side of Rattlesnake Ridge in the Cascade mountains, police said. It was thoroughly camouflaged and had multiple levels. Photos of the inside of the bunker, released by the King County Sheriff's Office, showed a shelf full of ammunition boxes stacked inside Ziploc bags.



AP This image released by King County Sheriff's Office shows the outside of bunker.

On Friday, authorities pumped tear gas into the structure after locating it in the Cascade foothills east of Seattle. The dozens of officers didn't immediately enter the bunker because they believed its occupant was armed, and that it might be booby-trapped.

Officers kept watch over the bunker overnight.

With clear weather and a fresh SWAT team in place Saturday morning, it was time to act more aggressively, King County sheriff's Sgt. Katie Larson said.

Hostage negotiators were dropped Saturday morning by helicopter into the rugged site. They were among more



King5.com Peter Keller

than 100 officers and volunteers from the King County Sheriff's Office, the Seattle Police Department and other area agencies were on hand.

No police were injured in the siege. Two officers were treated for dehydration and hypothermia from chilly overnight temperatures and released, Larson said.

The raid ended a tense week for law enforcement officials who tried to track down Keller, a gun enthusiast described by his family as having a "survivalist mentality." That Keller was likely armed and on the loose in an extremely popular hiking and mountain-biking area east of Seattle kept many people on edge.

"There's been a huge sigh of relief," Larson said. "Our people are out safe, and the trails are now safe for the community to use."



King5.com Authorities believe a survivalist suspected of killing his wife and daughter fled to this underground bunker in the woods east of Seattle.

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SWAT teams spent a grueling seven hours on the mountainside Friday morning, virtually crawling over dangerously steep terrain slick with mud from recent rains, before they found the bunker. A number of officers were treated intravenously for dehydration, and one broke his ankle, said sheriff's Sgt. Cindi West said.

After long shifts, the officers appeared exhausted, their faces smeared with camouflage paint, as they rode down the mountain in sport-utility vehicles or armored carriers to be replaced by fresher teams.

SWAT officers who kept watch on the bunker through Friday night said they saw lights going on and off, and they believed its occupant had everything necessary to remain inside for a long time — including a generator, food, gas mask, bullet-resistant vest and many guns.

Photographs found in Keller's home after the killings gave authorities an idea of where it was; in one picture that they enhanced, detectives could make out buildings in nearby North Bend. Combined with reports from alert hikers who remembered seeing his faded red pickup truck at the Rattlesnake Ridge trailhead, the sheriff's office sent experienced trackers to the area, where they found off-trail boot prints confirming their belief that he was somewhere on the ridge.

They could smell smoke from its woodstove before they found it.

Authorities pumped tear gas into the structure Friday, but it failed to flush the occupant — either because it didn't penetrate deep enough into the structure, or because the person had a gas mask.

Officers described the bunker as "amazingly fortified" and said the photos recovered from Keller's house don't do it justice, West said.

The bunker was found at about the 1,350-foot level, several hundred yards due east of a trailhead at Rattlesnake Ridge. It had several entryways and ladders.



King5.com Lynnettee and Kaylene Keller were found dead in their home

Court documents described Keller as a loner who has a survivalist mentality and has been stockpiling supplies in the woods.

An arrest warrant issued Wednesday accuses him of two counts of first-degree murder and one count of first-degree arson; the home was set on fire after Keller's wife and daughter were shot.

The fire at Keller's home was stopped before the house burned down, and authorities said they found seven gasoline cans placed in different areas of the home.

The King County medical examiner has determined Kaylene Keller, 18, and her mother, Lynnettee Keller, 41, both died from gunshots to the head. Their bodies were found in their bedrooms.

Kaylene's boyfriend told detectives that Peter Keller had shown him his gun collection and several large-caliber rifles and handguns, court documents said. The boyfriend, who was not identified, said Kaylene had told him her father took long hikes on the weekends and was stockpiling supplies at a fort in the woods.

Peter Keller withdrew \$6,200 from a bank last week and told one of his co-workers at a computer refurbishing store in Preston that he might not return, according to court documents.