

SC deputy shoots and kills wife, charged with involuntary manslaughter, police say

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2015 Cop Domestic Violence Murder



Candace and Matthew Blakely

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COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) An off-duty sheriff's deputy who killed his wife in what he called an accidental shooting at their home is charged with involuntary manslaughter and has been fired, authorities said Monday.

Officers said that when they arrived at the couple's North Augusta house Saturday night, Deputy Matthew Blakely ran outside with blood on his hands, identifying himself as a deputy and telling them he had shot his wife in an accident.

Officers found his wife, Candace Blakely, 24, in a bathtub bleeding from the head. A second man with bloody hands said he tried to give her CPR, but she was already dead, according to the police report.

A broken wedding ring, an M4 rifle — commonly used in the military — and a spent shell also were found in the bathroom, according to the police report. Several other guns also were found throughout the house.

North Augusta police turned the scene over to the State Law Enforcement Division, and an agent charged Matthew Blakey, 23, with involuntary manslaughter. The charge accuses Blakley of showing reckless disregard to the safety of the person killed. It carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison but doesn't require jail time with a conviction.

The Aiken County Sheriff's Office fired Blakely after he was charged. He had spent seven months as a deputy and was taking classes at the state Criminal Justice Academy.

Court records didn't indicate whether Blakely had a lawyer to contact for comment on the case. Phone calls to two numbers listed at the couple's home were not answered, and messages were not returned Monday.

The officers who investigated the shooting were wearing body cameras, and that footage was sent to SLED. The agency had released only Blakley's arrest warrant as of Monday afternoon.