

"Falling Refrigerator" Turns Out to Be Exploding Ordnance

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New River, Arizona Forty-nine-year-old Scott Lane suffered a severe leg injury after a military-grade explosive went off near Daisy Mountain in the New River area north of Phoenix.

According to officials from the Maricopa County Sheriff's office, the man has lost most of one leg due to the explosion which reportedly occurred as the victim was helping two people move from a 120-acre property on which they were not authorized to live.

When the property "resident" called the sheriff, he reported that the injury was the result of a "falling refrigerator." Once at the hospital, the accident was determined to be the result of an explosion.

The ATF is investigating the incident along with the Maricopa County Sheriff's office who released a statement that the property was once owned by Chuck Byers who operated a series of ordnance factories but lost his license after a federal bribery case in 1990. In 1997, federal agents raided the same property and discovered a large quantity of explosives. Byers later pleaded guilty in federal court to illegally possessing grenade fuses and manufacturing ammunition. He was sentenced to probation.

In 1999, a state task force declared the 120-acre ranch safe after removing thousands of pounds of chemical explosives, including materials to make grenades and booby traps. It is unclear if the explosive involved in Lane's injury was a remnant of the Byers' era, but reports indicate it was an IED and may be unrelated.