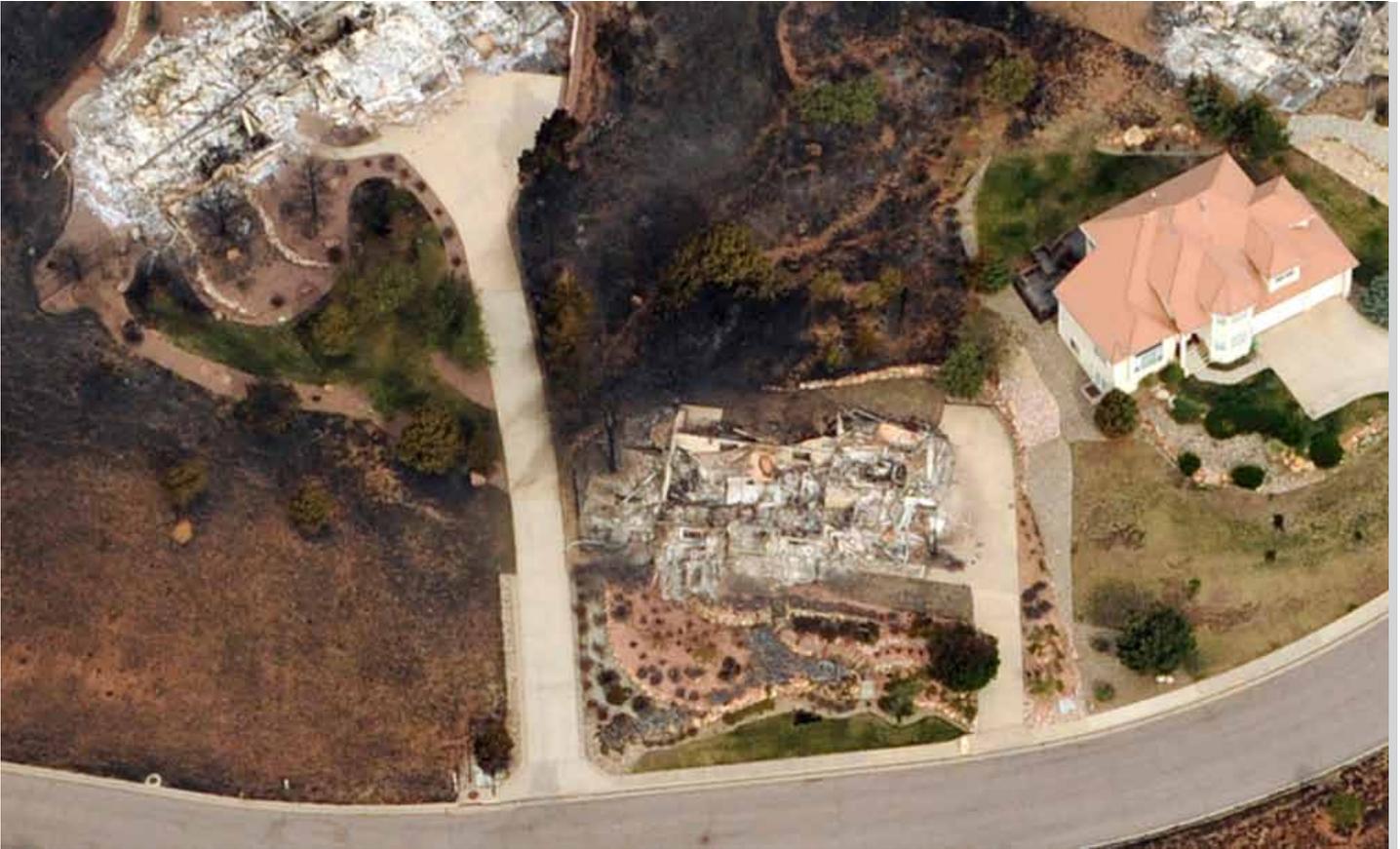


WALDO CANYON FIRE. TWO PERISH IN BLAZE

Remains of two people were found at 2910 Rossmere St., bottom center, in the Mountain Shadows neighborhood of Colorado Springs.
RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post

“They were very quiet. There isn’t much left of their house.”

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Story by
Kirk Mitchell

COLORADO SPRINGS - Just as a firestorm roared into Mountain Shadows, residents fleeing the flames saw one of their neighbors pulling into his garage on Rossmere Street.

Now, after Friday’s confirmation that the remains of two people had been found in the rubble of the home, they fear that that man and his wife perished in the Waldo Canyon firestorm.

The couple — both in their 70s — have not been seen since Tuesday

night's conflagration. And they haven't answered their cellphones.

Roger Yanda of 2870 Rossmere St. said he and his wife started calling their neighbors' cellphones Tuesday evening.

"He's normally pretty good about answering his cellphone," Yanda said. "Since Tuesday, I haven't heard anything from him."

The couple were the only people living at the now-burned-out home at 2910 Rossmere St., which authorities identified Thursday as the location where one body was found.

Colorado Springs Police Chief Peter Carey said Friday afternoon that the remains of a second person had been found in the same home.

Family members of the couple, reached Friday, declined to comment.

Authorities have not confirmed the identities of the two people who died, but Yanda said he believed it was his neighbors who perished in the firestorm unleashed by the Waldo Canyon fire Tuesday afternoon.

During the height of Tuesday's blaze, Yanda's 24-year-old son, Ross Yanda, was leaving his father's house with a load of valuables when he saw the man who lived next door pull into his garage.

"I thought it was a little odd," Ross Yanda said. "We were among the last to leave, and he was pulling in as we were leaving."

Roger Yanda said the woman who lives next door called his home on Sunday to make sure that his family knew that the wildfire could reach them and they should be ready to go.

The home at 2910 Rossmere St. burned to the ground, according to images Roger Yanda saw in *The Denver Post*, he said.

The Yandas have lived next door to the couple since 2000.

The inability to reach them by phone was of great concern. The worry grew worse Thursday night when the Yandas could not find their neighbors at a community meeting held for people who were evacuated. So the Yandas spoke with members of the American Red Cross and asked them to search for their neighbors. The couple had not reported in to The Red Cross.

Several hours later, authorities announced that they had found the remains of one person at the Rossmere Street home and that a second person who lives there is missing.

Then came Friday's news of a second confirmed victim.

“They are a great couple. They were very quiet,” Roger Yanda said. “There isn’t much left of their house.”

He said the woman used a cane to get around. The Yandas often saw her gardening. She had birdfeeders in the backyard of the couple’s home, which was worth somewhere around \$400,000.

“She had a condition that made it hard for her to get around,” Roger Yanda said. “They were very comfortable.”

The man who lives in the home, who retired from a management position at an airline, had elaborate computer equipment and often communicated with former colleagues.

He would tell Roger Yanda that he loved the area because it felt like they lived in the country even though they were in the city. Coyotes, bears, wild turkeys and cougars often were seen in their neighborhood.

“I think he was planning on staying there the rest of their lives,” Roger Yanda said. “I wish I knew what their status was.”

Yanda, a software engineer at United Health Group, said his home appears to be the only one left standing in the neighborhood, according to photographs.

“Our house looks like it hasn’t been touched,” he said.