

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Identifications from Auto Theft Task Force Officer-Involved Shooting

San Diego – On Monday, November 28, 2022, at approximately 8:45 p.m., members of the San Diego County Regional Auto Theft Task Force (RATT) located a stolen 1998 blue and gray Ford Econoline Van in the 4600 block of Collwood Boulevard. The task force is comprised of officers from various local and state agencies that work together to reduce vehicle theft through arresting and prosecuting automobile thieves.

When task force members approached the van, they realized that someone was inside the vehicle. That person was later identified as a 32-year-old white female. The task force members identified themselves as police and asked the woman to exit the vehicle. They were using red and blue lights on their vehicles and wearing tactical vests identifying their agencies.

As the woman exited the vehicle, she produced what appeared to be a handgun and pointed it at officers. Two members of the task force, a San Diego Sheriff Sergeant and a Chula Vista Police Officer, fired their service weapons at the woman, striking her multiple times. At that point, she dropped the handgun and was taken into custody. Officers immediately began rendering lifesaving aid until paramedics arrived.

The woman was transported to a local hospital where she remains in stable but critical condition. She is expected to survive her injuries. The woman is now identified as Candace Spears. Spears had an active federal probation warrant. She remains at the hospital in the custody of federal authorities. Local prosecutors are evaluating appropriate charges against Spears.

Per the Countywide Memorandum of Understanding, the San Diego Police Homicide Unit was called to the scene to conduct the officer-involved-shooting investigation.

Detectives recovered the handgun from the scene. Upon its collection, it was determined that it was a replica firearm. As the task force is a plain clothes assignment, there are no body worn camera recordings of the shooting.

The names of the task force officers involved in this incident are now being released. Sergeant James Balderson has been employed by the San Diego Sheriff's Department for approximately 14 years. Officer Cody O'Riley has been employed by the Chula Vista Police Department for almost four

years. Both are currently assigned by their respective agencies to the task force. No officers were injured during this incident.

The investigation and review process for officer-involved shootings are extremely thorough. When the Homicide Unit completes its investigation, it will be reviewed by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office to determine if the officers bear any criminal liability for their actions. The San Diego Sheriff's Department and the Chula Vista Police Department will conduct an administrative investigation into the officers' discharge of their firearm. The Federal Bureau of Investigations and the United States Attorney's Office will also be monitoring the investigation.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the Homicide Unit at (619) 531-2293 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.

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