

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Investigation of Chula Vista Police Department Officer-Involved-Shooting

Chula Vista – On Saturday, February 4, 2023, at approximately 7:45 p.m., the Chula Vista Police Department received multiple radio calls from the 600 block of Moss Street in the city of Chula Vista. The callers stated that two homeless people were possibly setting up camp in an apartment stairwell, banging on doors, yelling, and possibly using drugs or dealing with mental illness.

When officers responded, they located one of the subjects in an apartment stairwell. As they contacted him, he moved a blanket from in front of him and revealed that he was holding another male hostage with a knife to his throat. Officers began giving the suspect commands and requested additional officers and resources. One responding officer was a member of Chula Vista Police's Crisis Negotiation Team and he began negotiating with the suspect. The suspect continued yelling at the officers, threatening to kill the hostage, and refusing to cooperate.

A canine officer, who is also a member of the SWAT team, responded to the call. The suspect continued to press the knife to the victim's throat, was not responding to the negotiations, and threatened to kill the hostage. The canine officer and a team of other officers climbed through a balcony to enter an apartment positioned to the side of the suspect. The canine officer unlocked and cracked the apartment door open. At that point, the officer fired his department-issued rifle at the suspect, striking him in the head. The hostage was able to get away from the suspect and run. Officers began rendering aid to the suspect until medics arrived.

The victim in this case is a 34-year-old white male who is currently homeless in Chula Vista. He was transported to a local hospital for injuries to his neck. His injuries are non-life threatening. His name will not be released at this time. The victim did not know the suspect until today, when the suspect threatened him and forced him to come to the apartment complex.

The suspect in this case currently remains unidentified. He is described as a light-skinned male, approximately six feet tall, 230 lbs, with short brown hair, a beard, and tattoos on his chest and arms. He was transported to a local hospital. He is not expected to survive his injuries.

The officer involved in this incident has been employed by Chula Vista Police Department for approximately five years. He is currently assigned as a canine handler. No officers were injured during this incident.

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 are currently gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and examining the circumstances surrounding the shooting.

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 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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