

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Identification of La Mesa Police Department Officer and Suspect in Officer-Involved Shooting**

**La Mesa** – On Sunday, August 6, 2023, two La Mesa Police Officers contacted a suspect who had an active felony warrant for burglary in the parking lot of a condominium complex at 8000 University Avenue. Officers had confirmed the status of the subject’s felony warrant and obtained a photograph of the suspect prior to contacting him. At approximately 4:13 p.m., the officers saw the suspect standing outside of the passenger side of a vehicle parked in the lot. When officers contacted the suspect, he took out a handgun and pointed it directly at an officer who was standing in front of the vehicle. It appears the suspect tried to fire at the officer multiple times but the firearm malfunctioned. In response, one officer discharged his firearm multiple times at the suspect as he ran through the parking lot. As the suspect continued to run towards University Avenue, it appeared the suspect was trying to manipulate or clear the firearm of the malfunction. The officer discharged his firearm, striking the suspect in the upper body multiple times. This incapacitated the suspect and caused him to drop the firearm.

Officers rendered first aid and called for paramedics but the suspect was pronounced deceased at the scene a short time later. The preliminary investigation into this incident indicates a passing vehicle was struck by a round but the motorist in that vehicle was not struck. There was also at least one round that struck a building within the lot. No officers or other persons were injured during this incident.

The suspect in this incident has been identified as Jason Hampton of La Mesa. He is described as a 41-year-old white male.

The officer involved in the shooting has been identified as Brian Heller. He has been employed by the La Mesa Police Department for approximately six years. He is currently assigned as a Master Patrol Officer in La Mesa and has been placed on paid leave per the La Mesa Police Department’s standard protocol following an officer-involved shooting incident. The second officer present did not fire his weapon 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 continuing to

gather evidence, interview witnesses, and examine the circumstances surrounding the shooting. A loaded 9mm handgun was recovered at the scene.

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 officer involved bears any criminal liability for their actions. The La Mesa Police Department will conduct an administrative investigation into the officer's discharge of his firearm. The Independent Police Auditor from La Mesa's Community Police Oversight Board will conduct a review of the incident and provide any appropriate recommendations. 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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