

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Diego Police Identify Woman Arrested in Freeway Pursuit

San Diego – On February 10, 2026, at approximately 7:30 a.m., the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) received a radio call reporting a possible trailer theft in the 7500 block of Balboa Ave. Officers arrived on scene and located the vehicle near the call location. Officers contacted the female driver and placed a stop stick behind one of the rear tires. The driver accelerated away from the officers, and a pursuit ensued.

As the vehicle merged onto the I-15 North, it lost its rear tire. As it continued on the I-15, the driver lost control of the vehicle, stopped, and the vehicle appeared disabled in the middle lanes of the freeway. Patrol vehicles were placed in front of and behind the vehicle as an added precaution. Officers attempted to negotiate with the driver to de-escalate; however, she would not engage in conversation. After an hour of attempted negotiation, officers deployed pepper balls into the vehicle. The driver was able to get the vehicle to move and pushed the rear patrol car back several yards.

The driver then drove over brush to exit Miramar Way, where she almost struck an 82-year-old man. She then traveled south on the I-15. Just prior to the 163 South, she did a U-turn on the freeway to head northbound on the I-15 against the oncoming traffic. Due to the heightened danger of a collision, officers did not pursue the vehicle going the wrong way on the freeway. SDPD's police helicopter maintained visual of the suspect vehicle until it lost the trailer in the middle lanes of the I-15. The vehicle continued on the freeway, where it stalled between Carroll Canyon Rd. and Mira Mesa Blvd. The female suspect ran out of her vehicle with her dog and attempted to carjack several vehicles. Officers took her into custody on the freeway, as traffic was moving at slow speeds.

The suspect was taken to the hospital and has been released. She is 34-year-old Xirogiannis Panayiota of San Diego. She was booked for assault with a deadly weapon, carjacking, felony evading, reckless driving, multiple counts of hit and run, driving the wrong way on a highway and vandalism.

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