

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Lieutenant Steve Shebloski at (619) 531-2275 or sshebloski@pd.sandiego.gov

Suspect Arrested For Murder and Victim Identified in Suspicious Death of 87-year-old Male in Scripps Ranch

San Diego – On August 2, 2022, at approximately 2:39 p.m., the San Diego Police Communications Center received a call from a family member reporting a drowning of a male at a home in the 11700 block of Birch Glen Court. Officers from Northeastern Division and personnel from the San Diego Fire Rescue Department responded and arrived within minutes. Upon arriving, the officers found a male down in the bottom of a nearly empty swimming pool. Officers and personnel from San Diego Fire Rescue Department attempted lifesaving measures however, the male was pronounced deceased at the scene at 2:52 p.m. hours.

During the preliminary investigation into the male's death, officers noted circumstances that were considered suspicious. In an abundance of caution, San Diego Police Homicide Detectives were called to the scene and assumed responsibility for investigating the male's death. The deceased male has been identified as William Deignan. Deignan is described as an 87-year-old White male and was a resident at the home where he was located.

Detectives have collected numerous items of evidence, interviewed witnesses and reviewed surveillance video to determine the circumstances surrounding the death of the Deignan. During the course of that investigation, Detectives developed probable cause to believe that Deignan was killed at his home. In addition, Detectives learned of an active restraining order protecting Deignan and his residence from an individual named Jeffrey Smith.

On August 8, 2022, officers from Northeastern Division responded to Deignan's residence on a security check call. Upon arrival, officers located Smith in Deignan's residence. Officers conducted a records check and confirmed the conditions of the restraining order. Smith was subsequently arrested for violating the restraining order and booked into San Diego County Jail. Smith is described as a 60-year-old white male and a resident of San Diego.

On August 11, 2022, based on information and evidence gathered during the investigation into Deignan’s death, Homicide Detectives charged Jeffrey Smith with one count of murder.

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

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