

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 16, 2023

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Suspicious Death in Palm City; Related Arrest Made

San Diego – On Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at approximately 12:05 p.m., the San Diego Police Communications Center received a call regarding a kidnapping with a gun at Palm Avenue and Saturn Boulevard. Officers from Southern Division responded and contacted a 43-year-old white female. She stated that, for approximately the last 24 hours, she had been held captive by a male suspect at a nearby residence. She had known the male for approximately one week prior to the incident. The woman stated that the male had threatened her with a gun, sexually assaulted her, and there was a dead body located inside the residence. She escaped from the residence and flagged down a passing motorist to call the police.

Officers responded to the residence located in the 2200 block of Citrus Avenue. They contacted the resident, a 43-year-old Hispanic male named Rafael Banda. When officers checked inside the residence, they located what appeared to be a deceased adult female. The female remains unidentified, and her exact race and age are unknown. At this stage of the investigation, it is unclear what caused her death.

The Homicide Unit responded to investigate the suspicious death, with assistance from the Sex Crimes Unit. The County Medical Examiner's Office responded to take custody of the body. They will determine the manner and cause of the death.

Banda was arrested and booked into County Jail for sexual assault under duress and kidnapping.

This is an active and ongoing investigation. There is no other suspect information to release at this time. 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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