

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

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Update on Arrest and Officer-Involved Shooting in Hot Prowl in Tierrasanta

San Diego – On April 9, 2022, at approximately 12:30 a.m., the San Diego Police Communications Center received a report that someone tried to force entry into a residence in Tierrasanta in the 4000 block of Rueda. The unidentified suspect was believed to have fled in a white minivan.

Approximately 30 minutes later, while officers were still checking the area for the suspect, Communications received a report that a bald, Black male, in his 20s or 30s, tried to force entry into another residence in Tierrasanta in the 5300 block of La Cuenta Drive. Officers responded and again began checking the area for the suspect.

At approximately 2:18 a.m., Communications received a call that a Black male had broken into a residence in the 10900 block of Viacha Drive. The homeowner, a 53-year-old white female, had barricaded herself in a room with her elderly father.

While precise details are still being investigated, preliminary information gathered is that the suspect broke into the room where the homeowner was barricaded, produced a firearm, and threatened the homeowner.

As officers arrived, they could see a white minivan in the driveway. It had previously been reported stolen in a carjacking. The van matched the description from the first radio call.

Hearing screams from inside the residence, officers forced entry and confronted the suspect. Ignoring officers' commands to surrender, the suspect took the victim hostage at gunpoint and forced her into another bedroom. During the totality of this interaction, the suspect exposed himself and sexually battered the homeowner multiple times.

Officers managed to evacuate the homeowner's father onto a balcony. An officer climbed onto the balcony to protect him.

While officers were attempting to negotiate a safe resolution of the hostage situation, the suspect fired at least one round inside of the room. No one appears to have been hit by that round.

Shortly after that, an officer, who had climbed onto on a nearby rooftop, used a rifle to fire multiple rounds at the suspect through a window. The suspect was not struck by the rounds.

However, in response to the rifle rounds, the suspect dropped to the floor, threw the gun away, and was taken into custody. The homeowner and her father were safely rescued.

The officer who fired the rounds is Patrick Richards. He has been employed by the San Diego Police Department for approximately eight years. His current assignment is Eastern Division patrol.

Investigators from the San Diego Police Homicide Unit were called to the scene. The investigators are in the process of collecting evidence and interviewing witnesses. Detectives are still working to establish that the suspect was the same in all three reported incidents in Tierrasanta.

The suspect who was arrested is identified as Demetrius Trussell, a 40-year-old Black male. He was booked into jail on multiple charges including hot prowl burglary, kidnapping, false imprisonment with a hostage, negligent discharge of a firearm, possession of a stolen vehicle, indecent exposure, assault with the intent to commit a sex crime, sexual battery, multiple counts of assault with a deadly weapon, and a parole hold.

The investigation and review process for an officer-involved shooting is extremely thorough. When the Homicide Unit completes their investigation, it will be reviewed by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office to determine if the officer bears any criminal liability for his actions. The Internal Affairs Unit will conduct an investigation to determine if there were any policy violations, and the Shooting Review Board will evaluate the tactics used by the officers. The Commission on Police Practices will conduct a review of the incident and provide any appropriate recommendations. The Federal Bureau of Investigation 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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