



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

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News Release

Suspect Arrested for Firearm and Domestic Violence Violations

Buellton, Calif. – At approximately 12:42 in the morning on New Year's Day, deputies responded to the 500-block of Central Avenue in Buellton on a report of an armed suspect who had barricaded himself in a residence after firing a handgun into the air, assaulting his spouse and then threatening his family. When deputies arrived, they had the family members leave the residence and evacuated adjacent residences. Deputies then called the suspect on his cell phone and gave verbal commands asking him to exit the residence peacefully. After several attempts, the suspect, 24-year-old Gaston Tapia, came to the door and eventually surrendered.

Inside the residence, deputies located a number of assault weapon parts and a high capacity magazine that was fully loaded with rounds of 9mm ammunition. Deputies also located a 9mm handgun without a serial number or any identifiable markings, which is believed to be the weapon that Tapia fired into the air. A Sheriff's K9 that is trained in tracking for explosives responded and conducted a search outside the residence to locate the spent rounds from the handgun, however the search was not successful.

Tapia was booked at the Santa Barbara County Jail for the following charges; threatening crime with intent to terrorize (felony), preventing or dissuading a witness (felony), domestic violence (misdemeanor), possession of a large capacity magazine (misdemeanor) and discharging a firearm in a negligent manner (misdemeanor). His bail is set at \$100,000.



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