



Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

Raquel Zick
Public Information Officer
(805)681-4192

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News Release

Deputies Spend the Morning Tracking Down Vehicle Theft Suspects

Santa Barbara, Calif. – This morning, at 6:11 a.m., the California Highway Patrol (CHP) requested deputies check the area of Turnpike and Calle Real for a reported sighting of a stolen vehicle. Deputy Reynoso arrived in the area moments later and spotted the vehicle parked on a side street. The vehicle immediately left the scene, northbound on Turnpike. Deputy Reynoso and Senior Deputy Henslin followed the vehicle northbound on Turnpike, but before they caught up to the vehicle, the driver lost control and crashed into the curb turning westbound onto Cathedral Oaks. The crash destroyed the rear axle of the truck, the driver ran towards Tucker's Grove, one passenger stayed inside the vehicle and a third attempted to walk away from the scene. Deputies took the two suspects into custody at the scene. They are 25-year-old Samuel Torrez of Lompoc and 27-year-old Anastasia Villegas of Santa Barbara.

Additional deputies set up a perimeter in the surrounding area including Tucker's Grove and K9 units responded to assist with a search. At 6:36 a.m., residents in a half mile radius of Tucker's Grove were sent a message asking them to shelter in place while deputies searched the area for the outstanding suspect. The final suspect, 27-year-old Fabian Romero of Santa Maria was located by Deputy Scott and his partner K9 Duke on the west end of Tucker's Grove and was taken into custody without further incident.

CHP units will be handling the stolen vehicle recovery report as well as the traffic collision investigation. The 3 suspects were transported to the Santa Barbara Main Jail and booked with the following charges and bail:

- Samuel Torrez was booked for conspiracy (felony) and giving false information to a peace officer (misdemeanor) with a bail of \$30,000. Torrez was release from the Main Jail just before this incident. He had been arrested by Santa Maria Police for vehicle theft and possession of a controlled substance and release in accordance with Emergency Rule 4.
- Anastasia Villegas was booked on an outstanding no bail felony warrant for violation of parole as well as obstructing a peace officer (misdemeanor).

- Fabian Romero was booked for vehicle theft (felony), obstructing a peace officer (misdemeanor), conspiracy (felony), evading (misdemeanor) and a no bail probation violation hold.

In a separate but similar incident, deputies in Los Olivos also captured a suspect who stole a vehicle and crashed it. At 3:44 a.m., deputies were in the 2800-block of Via Alta searching for a subject who was looking into cars with a flashlight. When they arrived in the area, a vehicle passed them going the opposite direction at a high rate of speed. The vehicle crossed Alamo Pintado and crashed into a tree near the dead end of Alta. The driver of the vehicle fled on foot. Deputies and a K9 unit searched the area but were unable to locate the suspect. CHP contacted the owner of the vehicle who confirmed that it had just been stolen from their driveway. CHP handled the stolen vehicle report as well as the traffic collision investigation.

Deputies were called to return to the 2800-block of Alta at 8:39 a.m. for a report of a subject trying to open the doors of a locked vehicle. The reporting party followed the suspect to Foxen Canyon and Highway 154. Sergeant Woodill contacted the subject, 19-year-old Angel Ortiz of Santa Maria who matched the description of the suspect from the earlier vehicle theft in that area. Ortiz was turned over to CHP who later booked him at the Santa Barbara Main Jail for vehicle theft (felony), grand theft (felony), hit and run without injury (misdemeanor), burglary (felony), and possession of stolen property (felony) with a bail of \$85,000.



Angel Ortiz



Fabian Romero



Samuel Torres

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Anastasia Villegas