



Ready to Protect,
Proud to Serve

NEWS RELEASE

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Chief of Police

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Date: 9/7/2021
TDD: 791-2639

HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION 3700 BLOCK OF EAST 23RD STREET

The Tucson Police Department is actively investigating a fatal shooting that occurred early this morning in Midtown Tucson.

At approximately 1:50 a.m., the Public Safety Communications Department received a 9-1-1 call from a residence in the 3700 block of E. 23rd Street. Officers from Midtown Division were dispatched to the home and responded. Prior to their arrival, officers were notified that a domestic dispute had occurred in the home. During the dispute, a male suspect had shot two female victims and fled the scene.

Once officers arrived, they located 39-year-old **Flor Del Mar Hernandez Tapia** with obvious signs of gunshot trauma. She was pronounced deceased at the scene. Next of kin has been notified. The second victim, a 19-year-old female, was transported by Tucson Fire to Banner University Medical Center, where she received treatment for non-life-threatening injuries.

Homicide Unit Detectives were briefed and responded to continue the investigation. Through interviews and evidence recovered at the scene, detectives identified the suspect as Ms. Tapia's boyfriend, 36-year-old **Brandon Michael Watts**. Investigators immediately coordinated efforts to locate Watts. As the investigation progressed, detectives and officers from Operations Division Midtown/Community Response Team learned that Brandon Watts had fled to the area of E. Irvington Rd. and S. Hotel Drive. Almost simultaneously, the Pima County Sheriff's Department had received a report of a domestic violence disturbance at a hotel room in the 4800 block of S. Butterfield Drive. PCSD Deputies and TPD investigators arrived to the hotel and learned that Watts had barricaded himself in a room with hostages, which prompted the 9-1-1 call of what was believed to be a domestic disturbance. Members of the Tucson Police Hostage Negotiations Unit initiated attempts to communicate with Watts until personnel from the Pima County Regional SWAT Team arrived to continue those efforts.

Over the course of several hours, negotiators from Pima Regional SWAT were able to negotiate the safe release of the hostages – a mother and her four children. The children were not harmed; however, the mother was treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

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Communication with Watts continued, but he refused to surrender to law enforcement. Just after 5:40 p.m., Pima Regional SWAT members made entry into the hotel room; where they discovered Brandon Watts deceased from what appears to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

As the investigation continues, detectives are conducting follow-up interviews and are not looking for additional suspects. The Tucson Police Department would like to thank members of the Pima County Sheriff's Department and the Pima Regional SWAT Team for their assistance, notably for negotiating the safe release of the four children and their mother. Below is a booking photo of Brandon Watts from 2020.



Brandon Michael Watts

Homicides Year to Date:

2020 - 37

2021 - 62

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