



NEWS RELEASE

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OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING SOUTH CAMPBELL AVENUE AND EAST IRENE VISTA

The Tucson Police Department is investigating an officer-involved shooting that occurred yesterday on Tucson's South Side.

On July 18, 2021, at approximately 3:46 p.m., Tucson Fire Department (TFD) Engine and Ladder 10 along with several other TFD personnel were dispatched to a reported house fire in the 2100 block of E. Irene Vista.

At 3:49 p.m., American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance with two Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) were parked in the parking lot of Silverlake Park, near the Quincie Douglas Community Center located at 1575 E. 36th Street. The two EMT's were staged, in the parking lot, waiting to respond to an unrelated TFD medical call when they were approached by an adult male later identified as the suspect. The suspect pointed in the direction of the fire, when the EMTs looked in direction of the fire, the suspect discharged his firearm multiple times striking both EMTs. The passenger was able to call for help and provided a description of the suspect as he fled in a gray SUV.

At 3:52 p.m., multiple TFD Engine companies arrived at the structure fire on Irene Vista to begin fire suppression of the residence. At 3:53 p.m., Engine 10 advised over the radio "shots fired" and shots were coming in their direction and they located an adult male in front of the residence on Irene Vista with gunshot trauma. A "Code 99" was placed over the radio; this is an emergency request code that notifies communications and TPD that TFD needs police assistance. The suspect continued to fire multiple rounds at TFD personnel striking a TFD Captain in the arm. TFD personnel were able to evacuate the area or seek shelter in community member's homes as the suspect continued to fire shots and eventually fled the scene in an SUV.

At approximately 3:58 p.m., Officer Danny Leon, an 8-year-veteran of the Tucson Police Department was driving southbound on S. Campbell Avenue to assist with the incident. As the suspect was fleeing, traveling westbound on E. Irene Vista approaching South Campbell Avenue he "rammed" Officer Leon's driver side rear quarter panel of his patrol vehicle. Both vehicles came to a stop and the suspect immediately exited his vehicle and began discharging his firearm at Officer Leon. At 3:59 p.m. Officer Leon returned fire, striking the suspect. Additional officers arrived on scene and began rendering aid to the suspect who was ultimately transported to Banner University Medical Center with life-threatening injuries. He has been identified as 35-year-old **Leslie Scarlett**.

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Both AMR EMTs were transported to Banner University Medical Center, the driver EMT with life-threatening injuries and the passenger EMT with serious injuries. The TFD Captain was also transported to Banner University Medical Center with minor injuries and was released shortly after the incident.

TPD and TFD personnel were able to make their way to the down male in front of the house on Irene Vista, he was pronounced deceased on the scene. He has been identified as 44-year-old **Cory Saunders**. Next of kin has been notified of his passing.

Tucson Fire was able to extinguish the fire. A search of the residence was conducted by both TPD and TFD personnel where they located one deceased person inside. Due to the fire, the person has not been identified.

Detectives with the Tucson Police Homicide Unit were contacted and responded to continue the investigation. Through witness statements it was learned Mr. Saunders saw a fire at his neighbor's house and made his way to assist in getting the possible occupants out and flag down responding TFD personnel when he was approached by Scarlett. A confrontation ensued and Scarlett discharged his firearm striking Mr. Saunders. Another neighbor was with Mr. Saunders who was also confronted by Scarlett. Scarlett discharged his firearm at that victim grazing him, causing minor injury. Additionally, officers learned that there were three children associated to the residence where the fire took place and could not be located. Investigators with the Child Physical Abuse Unit continued the investigation into the children and located them safe at a family member's residence.

Detectives with the Tucson Police Violent Crimes Unit along with sergeants and detectives with the department's Office of Professional Standards are investigating the incident. The Violent Crimes Unit is conducting the criminal portion of the investigation, while the Office of Professional Standards conducts a separate, but parallel administrative investigation to examine the actions of department personnel. This is standard protocol in all officer-involved shootings.

Scarlett is still receiving medical treatment at Banner University Medical Center. Any charges will ultimately be determined based on his medical status. This is an ongoing investigation; additional details will be provided when they become available.

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