Delaware State Police Investigate Fatal Crash Involving Tractor Trailer-Newark

Newark, DE- Delaware State Police are investigating a fatal motor vehicle crash involving a tractor trailer that occurred early Sunday morning.

On January 30, 2022, at approximately 4:04 a.m., a 2017 Ford Focus operated by **John D. White, 58, of Effingham, New Hampshire,** was traveling southbound on Interstate 95 (I-95) in the right thru lane at speeds below the posted speed limit. At the same time, a 2020 Freightliner Tractor/Trailer operated by a 37-year-old Newark man was traveling in the right thru lane approaching the Ford from the rear. Due to the slower moving vehicle ahead in the right-thru lane, the driver of the Freightliner changed lanes and entered the center-right lane to move past the slower passenger vehicle. After changing lanes, the Freightliner began approaching the rear of the Ford from the center-right lane. Moments later, White merged into the center-right lane into the path of the Freightliner. The truck driver was unable to avoid the rear-end collision, resulting in the front right bumper striking the rear center of the Focus. The vehicles continued traveling into the right thru lane than the right exit lane to SR-896. The Freightliner followed the damaged Ford as it coasted onto the exit ramp from I-95 to northbound SR-896, where it came to a controlled stop in the right shoulder.

A 56-year-old Richmond, Virginia woman was seated in the front seat of the Ford Focus. She and White were not properly restrained. As a result of the collision, the female sustained life-threatening injuries. She was transported to a nearby

hospital, where she died a short time later. Identification is pending notification to next of kin.

The 37-year-old Newark man was properly restrained and was uninjured in the collision.

After the initial investigation, John D. White was charged with the following crimes:

- Operation of a Vehicle Causing Death of Another Person
- Driving without a Valid Driver License
- Improper Lane Change
- Failure to Signal Lane Change

White was arraigned in the Justice of the Peace Court #11 and committed to Howard R. Young Correctional Institution on a $1,500.00 secured bond.

The ramp from southbound I-95 to northbound SR-896 was closed for approximately 4-hours during the on-scene investigation.

The Delaware State Police Collision Reconstruction Unit continues to investigate this collision. Anyone with information is asked to contact Sgt. Dermot Alexander at 302.365.8484. Information may also be provided by calling Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333 or via the internet at http://www.delaware.crimestoppers.com.

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of a crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll-free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1-800-842-8461). You may also email the Victim Services Unit at DSP_VictimServicesMail@delaware.gov

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 013022 2244

-End-

Homeless Sex Offender Notification

Dover– The following subject is **not wanted**. This is a Homeless Sex Offender Public Notification. If you have information that the listed subject is occupying a residence, please call 302-672-5306. Information may also be provided by calling Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333, via the internet at www.delawarecrimestoppers.com.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 013022 1040

-End-

Delaware State Police S.O.A.R. Searching for Wanted Sex Offenders- Dover

Dover – Delaware State Police Sex Offender Apprehension and Registration Unit (S.O.A.R) is currently looking for the following wanted sex offenders after they either failed to register or re-register their current address. If anyone knows the location of these subjects, they are asked to call 302-672-5306. Information may also be provided by contacting Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333, or www.delawarecrimestoppers.com.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 013022 1032

-End-

Troopers Investigate Fatal Single Vehicle Crash- Lincoln

Lincoln, DE- Delaware State Police are investigating a fatal single vehicle crash that occurred Friday in Sussex County.

On January 28, 2022, at approximately 9:14 a.m., a 1995 Chevrolet Blazer was traveling northbound on Greentop Road, just south of Bunting Avenue. For unknown reasons, the Blazer caught fire while still in motion. The driver exited the east edge of the roadway into a grassy area, where it came to a controlled stop before becoming completely engulfed. The driver attempted to exit the vehicle but was unsuccessful and was located deceased in the driver seat. The body was turned over to the Division of Forensic Science for identification.

The Delaware State Fire Marshal responded to the scene and

determined the fire started in the dashboard/firewall area of the vehicle.

The roadway was closed for approximately three hours as the investigation was completed.

This collision remains under investigation by the Delaware State Police Troop 7 Collision Reconstruction Unit. Anyone with information regarding this crash is asked to contact Cpl/3 Kenneth Argo by calling 302-644-5020.

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of a crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll-free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1-800-842-8461). You may also email the Victim Services Unit at DSP_VictimServicesMail@delaware.gov

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 012922 1141

-End-

Troopers Offer Safety Tips to Help Prevent Vehicle Thefts

Sussex County, DE- During the last week, the Delaware State Police have seen an increase in vehicle thefts in Sussex County, with many occurring in the western part of the county. In an effort to help reduce the chance of becoming a victim, the following safety tips are offered as a reminder:

- **Park in well-lit areas.**
- **Lock and secure homes and garage doors.** Doors left unlocked allow vehicle theft suspects an opportunity to search for keys and steal vehicles undetected.
- **Close and lock all windows and doors when you park.** Most vehicle thefts can be prevented by locking your car doors.
- **Secure your valuables.**
- **DO NOT leave your keys in your vehicle**. Keys and FOBs should **NEVER** be left in a vehicle, whether at home, work, or running errands. ***Take your keys with you!***
- **DO NOT leave your vehicle running unattended.** Warming your car up on a cold winter morning or going inside a convenience store while your car is left running and unattended, make you vulnerable. A car thief is looking for these easy targets!

It only takes seconds for your vehicle to be stolen. However, you can prevent yourself from becoming the next victim by taking the necessary precautionary measures.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 012722 1355

-End-

Gold Alert Issued for Smyrna Woman- Newark

Newark, DE- Delaware State Police Troop 2 is issuing a Gold Alert for **Verona Smith, 39, of Smyrna.** Verona was last seen on January 20, 2022, at approximately 10:03 p.m., walking on Churchman's Road. Attempts to locate or contact Verona have been unsuccessful and there is a concern for her safety and wellbeing.

Verona is described as a black female, 5′ 06″ tall, 165 pounds, and short black hair. She was last seen wearing a green shirt, blue jacket, gray/red/green Christmas pants, and black shoes.

Anyone with information regarding Verona's whereabout is asked to contact Delaware State Police Troop 2 by calling

302-365-8567 or 9-1-1.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 012622 2037

-End-

Attempt To Identify Public Assistance Needed Identifying Robbery Suspect- Bear





Delaware State Police are asking for the public's assistance in identifying the pictured suspect who committed an armed robbery.

At approximately 1:00 p.m., Friday, December 31, 2021, troopers responded to the La Morena, located at 757 Pulaski Highway, Bear, for a knife point robbery. The investigation determined a male suspect entered the grocery store and confronted an employee behind the sales counter. The suspect displayed a large kitchen knife and removed an undisclosed amount of money from the cash register. The suspect then entered a small drawer below the register and removed cashier checks. The suspect fled on foot eastbound towards Pulaski Highway. The employee gave chase which caused the suspect to drop his phone. The employee picked it up, but gave it back after the suspect engaged the victim again brandishing the knife. The suspect then ran to a black sedan parked in the rear of the business and fled the scene. The employee was not injured as a result of the incident.

The suspect is described as a Hispanic male, early to mid 20's, approximately 5'7" tall, with an average build, and possibly operating a black four door sedan.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to

contact Detective Kirchenbauer of Troop 2 Robbery Unit by calling 302-365-8428. Information may also be provided by calling Delaware crime stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333 or via the internet at http://www.delaware.crimestoppers.com

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll-free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1800 842-8461). You may also email the unit Director at debra.reed@state.de.us.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Senior Corporal Jason Hatchell

Released: 012622 1650

-End-

Update-Victims Identified Delaware State Police Conducting Double Homicide Investigation- Georgetown

Georgetown – The Delaware State Police is releasing the names of the victims involved in the double homicide as 31-year old **Armando Vicente Chilel Lopez** of Georgetown and 28-year-old **Honorio Velasquez** of Bridgeville.

Homicide detectives are currently seeking information on a grey pick up truck with an extended cab that fled the area after the shooting. This vehicle may have been involved in the incident. No information is available on the occupants of the vehicle or on the suspects in the shooting.

This case remains an active and ongoing investigation. Anyone with information regarding the incident or the pick up truck is asked to contact Detective Grassi by calling 302-365-8441. Information may also be provided by calling Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333 or via the internet at www.delawarecrimestoppers.com.

Original Release-Delaware State Police Conducting Double Homicide Investigation- Georgetown

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1-800-842-8461). You may also email the Victim Services Unit at DSP_VictimServicesMail@delaware.gov.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Gary Fournier

Released: 012422 1330

-End-

Dover Man Arrested After Pursuit in Stolen Truck and Crashing into Another Vehicle

Kent County, DE- Delaware State Police arrested **Demetrius Wright, 29, of Dover**, Sunday morning after fleeing from troopers in a stolen truck and crashing into another vehicle.

On January 23, 2022, at approximately 7:25 a.m., troopers responded to southbound Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway (SR 1) for a reported stolen vehicle located traveling on the roadway. The red Dodge RAM 1500 was reported stolen out of the City of Dover and was traveling southbound in the area of I.G. Burton, north of Milford. A traffic stop was initiated on the truck, but the operator failed to pull over and continued traveling on US 113. The operator accelerated as the Dodge

continued to travel south through multiple intersections. Troopers attempted to deploy stop sticks in the area of Rt. 16, Ellendale, but the truck swerved to avoid them and entered the right shoulder, striking the rear of a 2020 Dodge work van operated by a 43-year-old Bridgeton, NJ man. After the collision, the driver of the Dodge RAM, identified as **Demetrius Wright**, exited through the right rear passenger door and was taken into custody. He was transported to a nearby hospital by EMS, where he was medically cleared. The investigation determined Wright was driving the stolen truck under the influence of drugs.

The operator of the Dodge work van had pulled to the shoulder before the collision to allow police to pass. EMS transported him to a nearby hospital with minor injuries.

A 48-year-old Bridgeton, NJ man was seated in the front right passenger seat. He was transported by EMS to a nearby hospital with minor injuries.

Demetrius Wright was transported to Delaware State Police Troop 3 and charged with the following crimes:

- Disregarding a Police Officer Signal (Felony)
- Driving While Suspended
- Reckless Driving
- Aggressive Driving
- Driving Under the Influence of Drugs
- (Two Counts) Speeding in Excess of Posted Limit
- Failure to Stop at Red Light
- Speeding in Excess of 50mph on 2 Lane Road
- (Two Counts) Speeding in Excess of 55mph on Divided Roadway
- Failed to Remain Within a Single Lane

Wright was arraigned in the Justice of the Peace Court and committed to Sussex Correctional Institution on a $2,470.00 secured bond.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Master Corporal Heather Pepper

Released: 012422 1306

-End-

Delaware State Police Conducting Double Homicide Investigation- Georgetown

Georgetown- Delaware State Police are conducting a double homicide investigation that occurred Saturday night in Georgetown.

On January 22, 2022, at approximately 7:28 p.m., the Georgetown Police Department and Delaware State Police responded to the El Nopalito Restaurant, located at 22095 DuPont Blvd, Georgetown, Delaware for a report of two people shot at the business. Through the investigation it was learned that a group of Hispanic males had been asked to leave the

restaurant earlier in the night due to their disorderly behavior and having a dispute with other patrons. Two of the males that were previously asked to leave returned to the business, both wearing masks. One of the suspects approached a 31-year-old male victim and removed a necklace from his neck. The victim lunged at the suspect that stole the necklace which caused the second suspect to remove a handgun from his waistband and shoot the victim. During the course of the suspects fleeing the restaurant, the second suspect fired a second round into the dining area which struck a 28-year-old male victim.

The 28-year-old male sustained a gunshot wound and was pronounced deceased at the scene. Identification of the victim is pending notification to the next of kin.

The 31-year-old victim was transported to an area hospital with a gunshot wound, where he succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased. Identification of the victim is pending notification to the next of kin.

The suspects were described as two Hispanic males.

This case remains an active and ongoing investigation being conducted by the Delaware State Police Homicide Unit. Anyone with information regarding the incident is asked to contact Detective Grassi by calling 302-365-8441. Information may also be provided by calling Delaware Crime Stoppers at 1-800-TIP-3333 or via the internet at www.delawarecrimestoppers.com.

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of crime or have lost a loved one to a sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1-800-842-8461). You may also email the Victim Services Unit at DSP_VictimServicesMail@delaware.gov.

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