

Victims ID'd in interstate crash

Written by gallupsun
Tuesday, 23 June 2020 14:29

The Gallup Police Department was dispatched to the Redwood Lodge Motel, 907 Hwy. 66, in reference to two male subjects in a white Dodge truck brandishing a firearm back on June 5.

When GPD officers arrived on scene, they located the white Dodge truck with two men inside. The white Dodge truck drove around the Gallup officers and almost struck their Patrol unit. The white Dodge truck merged onto Highway 118. The truck fled and a pursuit was initiated.

As Gallup Police officers pursued the Dodge truck, the driver of the Dodge turned their headlights on and off and traveled in opposing lane traffic. The Dodge got onto Interstate 40 eastbound at mile marker 16. During the pursuit, the passenger began throwing objects from the bed of the truck at officers. Near mile marker 22, the driver of the Dodge crossed the median of Interstate 40 and began to travel the wrong way, heading eastbound in the westbound lanes. A Gallup Police supervisor terminated the pursuit.

New Mexico State Police Sergeant Steven Owens responded to assist in the pursuit after he learned the pursuit was headed towards him. Owens overheard on his police radio that the two occupants inside the Dodge were armed with weapons. Owens positioned and parked his department issued patrol vehicle in the median of Interstate 40 near mile marker 26.

As Owens observed the Dodge approach, he observed the Dodge traveling the wrong way, eastbound in the westbound lanes of Interstate 40. In an attempt to disable the Dodge truck, and to prevent a head-on collision with another vehicle, Owens fired at least one shot from his department issued shotgun towards the Dodge.

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The Dodge pickup continued to travel eastbound in the westbound lanes of Interstate 40 and struck a Commercial Motor Vehicle head-on. The driver of the Dodge pickup, later identified as Gerard John, 25, of Brimhall, N.M., and passenger, Ray Lee Jim, 21, of Wingate, were both ejected from the pickup.

John and Jim both sustained fatal injuries and both were pronounced deceased on scene by the Office of the Medical Investigator. The driver and passenger of the CMV were both uninjured in the crash. Their names will not be released by State Police as they are not facing any charges.

Upon further investigation, State Police Investigations Bureau agents learned John had two active Felony arrest warrants for his arrest from the 11th Judicial District Attorney's Office for Attempt to Commit a Felony to wit: First Degree Murder, Armed Robbery, Robbery, Aggravated Battery (Deadly Weapon), Aggravated Battery (Great Bodily Harm), Unlawful Taking of a Motor Vehicle (2 counts), Conspiracy to Commit Unlawful Taking of a Motor Vehicle and Receiving or Transferring Stolen Vehicles.

No officers were injured during the incident. Owens was placed on standard administrative leave. Owens has been employed with the New Mexico State Police for approximately 15 years and is currently stationed in Gallup.

Upon completion of the investigation, the case will be forwarded to an assigned district attorney's office for review.

