

NMSP officer shot in an unprovoked attack on I-40

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 25 September 2020 05:17



CIBOLA COUNTY — When an officer approached a GMC pickup driven by a Scottsdale, Ariz. man on the morning of Sept. 12, she became the target of 28-year-old Robert Benjamin Nelson.

The New Mexico State Police officer was on patrol on I-40 at milepost 130 near Laguna when she stopped the truck occupied by a single male who appeared to fire multiple rounds at her head.

After being struck, the officer was able to recover and return fire at the suspect. Nelson was able to flee the scene and continue eastbound on I-40. Despite having multiple injuries, the officer returned to her vehicle, and pursued Nelson.

When Nelson stopped near milepost 135 on I-40 and exited his vehicle, Laguna officers arrived to help the officer, and take him into custody.

The state police officer sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was taken to an area hospital, where she was treated and released. Nelson was booked into the Cibola County Detention Center and charged with the following crimes: attempt to commit murder, aggravated battery upon a peace officer, shooting from a motor vehicle, and resisting, evading or obstructing an officer.

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The state police officer involved is also commissioned as a Federal Task Force Officer, so the FBI is involved in the investigation and Nelson could face federal charges.

The details that led up to the traffic stop and subsequent shooting are under investigation by the New Mexico State Police Investigations Bureau. The name of the officer involved will not be released until interviews are complete.