



Press Release: Fatality Crash & Felony Murder Arrest 09-02-2023

Date: September 3rd, 2023

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UPDATE:

The two deceased motorcyclists have been identified as Taran Morris, age 20 of Miami, Oklahoma, and Mark A. McGowen, age 60 of Miami, Oklahoma. Next-of-kin notifications for both have been made. For clarification purposes, Taran Morris and Colten Goddard were the motorcyclists who fled from officers and continued to drive recklessly. Morris' motorcycle collided with McGowen's motorcycle as McGowen was turning south out of Casey's General Store at 403 N. Main Street. James Harrison from the Jasper County Coroner's Office responded to the scene. Autopsies are currently being scheduled for the two deceased individuals in this crash. This investigation is still ongoing and further details may be released as information becomes available.

ORIGINAL:

On 09-02-2023 at 8:44 p.m., an officer with the Joplin Police Department attempted to conduct a traffic stop on two motorcycles for careless driving, including observing the motorcycles driving at approximately 80 mph in a 30-mph speed zone while northbound on Main Street from 15th Street. The officer was able to pull behind them at a red light at 10th and Main Street and attempted to conduct a traffic stop. As the officer activated his emergency lights and siren, the two motorcycles fled from the officer at a high rate of speed. The officer deactivated his emergency equipment at 9th and Main and disregarded his attempt to stop the motorcycles. However, the officer could still see the two motorcycles continue to drive at a high rate of speed at approximately 80-100 mph in a 20-mph speed zone, running multiple red traffic lights, and having no regard for the safety of themselves or other motorists.

A few minutes later the Joplin Police Department Emergency Communications Center received a 911 report of a crash near 403 N. Main Street involving multiple motorcycles. Officers

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POLICE DEPARTMENT



Police Department

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responded and located a debris field that stretched for a full city block. It was determined that the two fleeing motorcycles were involved in the crash along with a third motorcycle. Officers, along with personnel from METS Ambulance and the Joplin Fire Department, provided aid and assistance, however, two motorcyclists died from injuries sustained in the crash. The third motorcyclist was not injured and was taken into custody. Due to the serious nature of the crash, members of the Joplin Police Department Major Crash Team responded to the scene to conduct the crash investigation. Preliminary results indicate the two fleeing motorcycles were northbound on Main Street at a high rate of speed and one of them collided with another motorcyclist who was leaving Casey's General Store and attempting to turn south on Main Street. Names and information of the two motorcyclists who died in the collision are being withheld at this time pending formal next-of-kin notifications.

Joplin Police arrested the third motorcyclist, who has been identified as Colten F. Goddard, age 18 of Welch, Oklahoma. Two counts of Murder in the 2nd degree are being sought against Goddard due to his actions that resulted in the death of the two other motorcyclists. A probable cause affidavit for those charges has been submitted to the Jasper County Prosecutors Office. A mugshot of Goddard is attached to this release.

This is an ongoing investigation and further updates may be released as information becomes available.