

OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING

WEST AJO WAY AND INTERSTATE 19

On June 30, 2026, at approximately 11:30 p.m., patrol officers from Operations Division East responded to a reported carjacking near East Broadway Boulevard and North Camino Seco. The male victim was held at gunpoint by a male suspect who then stole the victim's vehicle. The victim was not injured. Officers were able to obtain a description of the suspect, the stolen vehicle, and its license plate. Officers immediately broadcasted this information to Tucson Police Department (TPD) personnel patrolling the city.

At approximately 11:45 p.m., officers conducted a license plate reader (LPR) search and determined the stolen vehicle had recently been in the area of South 6th Avenue and West 44th Street on Tucson's south side. Officers in marked patrol units responded to the area and located the stolen vehicle. When officers attempted a traffic stop, the suspect refused to yield and fled at a high rate of speed. Patrol supervisors authorized a vehicle pursuit. The pursuit continued westbound on Ajo Way toward the Interstate 19 overpass. During the pursuit, the suspect struck a raised median near the Interstate 19 on-ramp, which disabled the vehicle. The suspect exited the vehicle and fled on foot with a firearm as multiple marked TPD patrol units converged on the area.

Despite repeated commands to stop running, drop the weapon, and show his hands, the suspect continued to run in the roadway across multiple lanes of traffic at which time an officer discharged his department-issued firearm. A TPD officer then struck the suspect with his patrol vehicle in an effort to stop him from fleeing, bringing him to the ground. The same officer that initially discharged his firearm fired additional rounds at the suspect. Officers took the suspect into custody and immediately began rendering medical aid. The suspect's handgun was recovered at the scene and secured as evidence. Personnel from the Tucson Fire Department responded and transported the suspect to a local hospital with serious injuries.

The suspect has been identified as 17-year-old Ryan Danal Ayala Duran. The officer who struck the suspect with his patrol vehicle has been identified as Officer Matthew Merz, a 27-year veteran of the Tucson Police Department. The officer who discharged his department-issued firearm has been identified as Officer Eli Miller, a 5-year veteran of the Tucson Police Department. No officers or other members of the public were injured during the incident. Mr. Ayala Duran remains hospitalized and continues to receive medical treatment. He will remain under medical care until he is medically cleared for booking into the Pima County Adult Detention Complex.

The Pima Regional Critical Incident Team (PRCIT) was activated to handle the criminal investigation of this critical incident. The PRCIT is comprised of investigators from the Pima County Sheriff's Department, Tucson Police Department, Oro Valley Police Department, Marana Police Department, Pascua Yaqui Police Department, Sahuarita Police Department, University of Arizona Police Department, Pima Community College Police Department, South Tucson Police Department, and the Tucson Airport Authority Police Department. The PRCIT was created to have



PIMA REGIONAL CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM



an independent law enforcement agency take the lead in criminal investigations of critical incidents involving member agencies.



As part of the PRCIT, the Pima County Sheriff's Department has been assigned primary responsibility for the criminal investigation of this critical incident. The Tucson Police Department will conduct a separate, but parallel administrative investigation, to examine the actions of their personnel. As is standard practice in all PRCIT investigations, all findings will be presented to the Pima County Attorney's Office once the investigation is complete.

