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CHULA VISTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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POLICE MEDIA ADVISORY

Date: August 24th, 2024
To: San Diego Media
From: Chula Vista Police Department
Contact: Sergeant Anthony Molina
Phone: (619) 691-5111
Email: pio@chulavistapd.org
Subject: **ARSON/ATTEMPT HOMICIDE – MAN ARRESTED HOURS LATER – OCCURRED AT 899 BROADWAY (7-ELEVEN) ON 8/24/2024**

Message: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two women are hospitalized with serious injuries after a man entered the 7-Eleven where they worked and started a fire. The man was arrested hours later outside of San Diego County.

Just after 8 a.m., Saturday morning (August 24, 2024), Chula Vista officers responded to a call of a fire at 7-Eleven, 899 Broadway, in Chula Vista. While en route, officers learned an employee was possibly on fire in the building. When officers arrived, there was smoke billowing out the front doors of the store. A woman with significant burns had already walked out but officers could still hear a voice from inside.

The officers entered the smoke-filled store to check for other victims and found one other woman inside. She had serious burn injuries and was unable to move on her own, but the officers were able to pull her out of the building. The remaining fire was extinguished by arriving fire department personnel and no other people were found inside.

Both women were employees of the 7-Eleven where the fire occurred. They were transported to a local hospital with significant burns. One of the women is in critical condition with injuries considered, at this time, to be life-threatening. The other woman's injuries have been updated to serious but non-life-threatening.

Due to the suspicious nature of the fire, Chula Vista Police detectives as well as Chula Vista Fire Department arson investigators were called to the scene to investigate. Although damage to the store and building are still being assessed, initial findings indicated the fire was intentional and that a man entered the store just prior the fire starting. The man was believed to have used a flammable liquid, likely gasoline, to start the fire before fleeing in a vehicle.

The man was described as a Hispanic male wearing a green sweater with possible burn marks. He fled the area eastbound on L Street in a dark BMW sedan. Investigators determined the vehicle's license

plate and had it entered into a criminal database as a felony vehicle. Just after 2 p.m., officers in Redlands, California, about a hundred miles north of Chula Vista, received an Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) notification that the BMW was in their city. They used the information to locate the vehicle, parked at a gas station in Redlands.

Officers contacted the single occupant in the vehicle, who was identified as 47-year-old Jose Carlos Villanueva of Chula Vista. Villanueva was arrested without incident and taken into custody to be transported back to Chula Vista for processing. While his connection to the store and/or employees is still being investigated, it's believed he is known to at least one of the victims and this was not a random act.

Although there were no customers in the store, there were likely potential witnesses in the area since the store is located at the intersection of Broadway and L Street, a main thoroughfare in Chula Vista. Anyone with information is asked to contact San Diego County Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477 or submit tips anonymously online or through the P3tips mobile application.

****Weekend and after-hour inquiries should be directed to the Watch Commander at (619)476-5374, however no other information is available for release at the time of this media advisory distribution.***

Prepared By: Sgt. Anthony Molina
Copies Sent To: San Diego Media

Approved By: Capt. Miriam Foxx
Date/Time: 08-24-2024 / 1715