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Media Release



Roberto A. Villaseñor
Chief of Police

Date: September 28, 2011

Contact: Sergeant Maria Hawke

SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE EAST BROADWAY AND SOUTH SCOTT

*****UPDATE – September 29, 2011*****

On the evening of September 28, 2011, detectives from the Tucson Police Department's Special Investigations Division arrested the driver of the box truck, **50-year old David J. Mitchell**, of Sahuarita, for a **misdemeanor charge related to a court order violation**. Detectives obtained a search warrant for the vehicle, which was served at the scene when the Tucson Police Department's bomb robot was utilized to safely open the vehicle. The initial search of the vehicle and its contents was then conducted manually by the Tucson Police Department Bomb Squad with assistance from the Pima County Sheriff's Department Bomb Squad, and an FBI Special Agent Bomb Technician.

Detectives were able to determine that by being in possession of the firearms and ammunition found, which included several hundred rounds of ammunition and several rifles & handguns, he was in violation of a court order from an unrelated incident. Mitchell was booked into the Pima County Adult Detention Center.

An ongoing explosives investigation is being conducted related to items found inside the vehicle. Additional charges may follow once that portion of the investigation has concluded.



David Mitchell

Sgt. Matt Ronstadt – September 29, 2011

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For accommodations; materials in accessible formats; foreign language interpreters; and/or materials in a language other than English, please contact the Tucson Police Department Public Information Office at (520) 791-4852 or (520) 791-2639 for TDD at least five (5) business days in advance. Para arreglos; materiales en formatos accesibles; interpretes de idioma extranjero; y/o materiales en otro idioma que no sea inglés, por favor comunicarse al Departamento de la Policía de Tucson a la sección de Información Pública al (520) 791-4852 o (520) 791-2639 para TDD por lo menos con cinco (5) días hábiles de anticipación.

At approximately 10:56 AM on September 28, 2011, personnel from the Tucson Police Department, Operations Division Downtown were alerted to the presence of a suspicious vehicle that had been left parked in the vicinity of a Federal Courthouse located near the intersection of East Broadway and South Scott. This courthouse is primarily utilized for Bankruptcy Court proceedings. U.S. Marshall's Officers working at the courthouse initially noticed the vehicle where it was parked and opted to utilize one of their canine units to check on it. The vehicle was described as a plain, white "box" or utility truck. There were no signs or insignia on the truck. The canine "alerted" to the vehicle, expressing interest in it. As such, a second canine unit, a Tucson Police Department Bomb Squad Canine, was requested and also "alerted" in a similar manner. At that time, personnel from the Tucson Police Department Bomb Squad as well as various investigative units, including the Tucson Police Department Special Investigations Division, U.S. Marshall's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigations, responded to continue assessing the vehicle to determine if there was any threat or potential for explosion. As a precaution, the area was cordoned off, utilizing East Pennington on the north, East Jackson on the south, South Stone on the west, and South Sixth on the east as boundaries for containment. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic was halted within the cordoned off area. In addition, evacuations of some buildings, including the Federal Courthouse building, took place.

The driver of the vehicle was located after a period of time and was interviewed by investigators. At this time, the content of the interview has not been disclosed. However, he has cooperated with the investigators. He has not been charged with any criminal offenses.

At the conclusion of the interview, Bomb Squad personnel began to address the vehicle directly. They were quickly able to determine that there was no explosive material in the truck. However, there was an amount of ammunition located in the rear of the vehicle. Much of the ammunition was encased in metal "ammunition boxes." However, the ammunition is likely what the canines alerted to during the course of the initial investigation. This is truly a testament to the extreme sensitivity of the canine sense of smell, and the invaluable resource that they are for helping to determine potential threats in our community. At this time, there is no indication that there exist any hazards, especially related to explosives, associated to this vehicle or incident. The investigation continues reference this incident.

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