For Release: 01/05/2017

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At 8:48 this morning a Maricopa County Sheriff Deputy responded to a disturbance call at the Shell Station on the east side of the highway on I-8 in Gila Bend, 3006 S. Butterfield Trail. When the MCSO Deputy arrived on scene, he encountered a woman who was disrobed and acting erratically. The woman told the deputy she had been sexually assaulted. At that point, the incident evolved from a deputy responding to a disturbance call to a deputy compassionately assisting a possible crime victim.

Standing outside his vehicle, the deputy attempted to assist the woman by covering her with a blanket. She then entered his pick-up truck on the driver’s side and started to leave the scene. The deputy tried to stop her, running alongside the vehicle as it was pulling away. He was unable to do so and sustained minor injuries in the process. He was treated and released from Abrazo Buckeye Emergency Center.

The woman left the Shell Station and took the MCSO vehicle onto Interstate 8 eastbound toward Casa Grande. A private vehicle arrived at the Shell Station and the driver invited the deputy to enter and use the private vehicle in a pursuit. The deputy drove the private vehicle with its owners as passengers for a few miles, and then returned to the Shell station to brief public safety responders.

The stolen MCSO pick-up truck, driven by the disrobed woman, then proceeded eastbound on I-8 toward Casa Grande. It reached speeds of over 100 miles an hour. The Department Of Public Safety (DPS) and Pinal County...
Deputies joined in the pursuit and used stop sticks to puncture the two front tires of the MCSO pick-up. The woman continued driving on deflated tires and rims.

As she entered I-10 eastbound at the interchange north of Eloy, units from DPS, Pinal County Sheriff, and City of Eloy were in pursuit. An MCSO air unit arrived on scene as the pick-up entered I-10. At this point, the pursuit covered over 70 miles from Gila Bend to Eloy.

Near exit 208 on I-10, the suspect in the stolen MCSO pick-up bumped a civilian SUV whose passengers were on their way to Texas. The SUV had minor damage but neither the driver nor passengers were injured and continued to their destination. However, the contact with the SUV caused the pick-up to drive into the median, hit brush, and stop.

A Pinal Sheriff’s Deputy attempted to take the woman into custody. Observing from a distance, the Pinal Deputy was concerned that the woman was going to try and cross I-10 on foot to avoid capture. He deployed non-lethal force and she was taken into custody. The woman was treated at the scene and then taken to Banner Casa Grande Medical Center. She is being evaluated for non-life-threatening injuries.

Since the woman claimed she was the victim of a sexual assault, MCSO Special Victims Unit detectives are assisting her as a crime victim. Since the woman stole an MCSO vehicle, a separate team of detectives is investigating her as an alleged perpetrator.

Please note also that other vehicles on I-8 had tires punctured by the stop sticks but were not damaged otherwise. MCSO is assisting the owners of those vehicles.
ANTICPATING YOUR QUESTIONS

- Portions of the incident were recorded by security cameras at the Shell station in Gila Bend and by the MCSO deputy’s body camera. That video is being held as evidence as MCSO detectives work to sort out details. The video will not be released today.
- The woman is classified as both a victim of sexual assault and as a suspect in stealing the MCSO vehicle. Any photos of her, including any mug shots, will be withheld pending a determination of her status. We suggest that you file open records requests for cameras and photos.
- We are not releasing the name of the civilians who assisted the MCSO deputy by offering their vehicle. That information is still being processed by investigators, and we do not have it.
- The Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) is the lead investigator for the accident scene on I-10 near Eloy. I-10 was closed for an unspecified time while the scene was processed. Questions about I-10 closure should be directed to DPS and ADOT.

MCSO expresses thanks to the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office, City of Eloy Police Department, Arizona Department of Public Transportation (ADOT), and the Phoenix area news media for their valuable assistance in bringing this incident to an end without loss of life and major injuries.