



City of East Providence
Department of Police
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Note to editors: PHOTO ID: Joshua Pavao

East Providence police arrest man after call for “shots fired” and pursuit

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – East Providence police arrested Joshua D. Pavao, age 43, with a last known address in Kissimmee, Florida.

On Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, at 2:20 PM, the East Providence Police Department received an emergency call reporting shots fired at an Estrell Drive residence in the Riverside section of the city in what appears to be a targeted attack. East Providence Police dispatchers broadcast the suspect vehicle description, a black Nissan Armada with an unknown Florida registration plate. The first officer arrived on scene in less than two minutes, and it was quickly confirmed that at least one shot struck a vehicle at the home, shattering its rear window. The suspect vehicle was last observed fleeing toward Willett Avenue.

At 2:27 PM, Detective Michael Sullivan observed the vehicle on Pawtucket Avenue and it took an abrupt turn on to Crown Avenue. Detective Sullivan lost sight of the vehicle briefly, but once again located it in the vicinity of Silver Spring Avenue and Dodge Street. Detective Sullivan attempted to conduct a motor vehicle stop, but the vehicle refused to stop continuing on the streets in this area. Less than three minutes later, the vehicle was observed on Vincent Avenue, driving toward Pawtucket Avenue. Officers again lost sight of the vehicle but were directed down Cushman Avenue by a City of East Providence Water Department employee who was stopped on the side of the road. Several area residents then directed officers where they last saw

the suspect vehicle. At approximately 2:32 PM officers again located the vehicle and reengaged in the pursuit.

The suspect vehicle fled on Cushman Avenue and began traveling north on Pawtucket Avenue at a high rate of speed. As it traveled north, a long gun magazine was either discarded or fell from the vehicle. The vehicle continued north through the Warren Avenue intersection, toward Waterman Avenue. The suspect vehicle struck another vehicle at the intersection with Waterman Avenue, then continued north on Pawtucket Avenue at a high rate of speed. At 2:35 PM the suspect vehicle proceeded through the red light at the Taunton Avenue intersection striking multiple vehicles, rendering his vehicle inoperable on Pawtucket Avenue between Chase Bank and the Davenport's Restaurant parking lot. The suspect exited his vehicle and fled on foot toward Davenport's with several officers chasing him. Officers were able to take the suspect into custody in the parking area toward the rear of the restaurant.

The suspect vehicle struck three other vehicles at the intersection of Taunton Avenue. Two of those vehicles were significantly damaged with the third sustaining very minor damage. The occupants of the vehicles that sustained significant damage had minor injuries. They were transported to area hospitals by the East Providence Fire Department. As a result of the crash, numerous loaded long gun magazines were ejected from the vehicle and found scattered throughout the crash area. Hundreds of rounds of long gun ammunition were also strewn throughout the area. Located inside the suspect vehicle were thousands of rounds of ammunition in three duffle bags and a significant number of loose rounds throughout the interior of the vehicle. No firearms were located inside the vehicle, on the suspect's person nor in the large crash scene.

Officers began the task of clearing the roadway, securing the scene and painstakingly searching the area for all of the ammunition and other potential evidence that was ejected from the vehicle.

Numerous officers began searching the locations in which the suspect vehicle previously traveled in an effort to locate weapons. A short time later, a civilian contacted police reporting a suspicious backpack in a leaf covered area just off of Boyd Avenue. Officers immediately responded and located a backpack. Near the back were 3 loaded Glock handguns and a pellet style rifle. A bullet proof vest was also located by the back pack.

It should be noted and clarified that after the initial shot was fired on Estrell Drive, it appears no further shots were discharged by the suspect. No shots were fired by the police throughout the duration of this incident.

During the search and pursuit of the suspect vehicle, two of our officers were involved in a motor vehicle crash in the vicinity of Dover Avenue and Gardiner Street, causing a police vehicle to come into contact with a house. The home sustained minor damage and one of the officers was transported to the hospital with minor injuries. He was treated and later released.

Chief Christopher Francesconi stated, "This was an extremely volatile situation involving a dangerous and unpredictable suspect who put so many of our residents and police officers in harms way. My officers and dispatchers handled this very serious situation with great professionalism and restraint. The Chief added, "This investigation remains very active as we try to understand the motive and intentions of the suspect. We have been working with other law enforcement agencies to further the investigation. I would also like to thank the Seekonk Police Department for their assistance during the immediate aftermath of this incident."

“I am extremely proud of the men and women of the East Providence Police and Fire Departments for their swift action during yesterday’s emergency incident,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said. “Thanks to their training and professionalism, the members of the East Providence Police Department were quickly able to apprehend the suspect and locate the guns and ammunition without any threat to our community. I commend them on their actions during Friday’s incident.”

Pavao has been charged with the following:

- 106 counts of Possessing a Large Capacity Feeding Device
- 2 counts License or Permit Required for Carrying a Pistol
- Discharge of a Firearm from a Motor Vehicle
- Firing in a Compact Area
- Eluding an Officer with a Motor Vehicle in a High-Speed Pursuit
- Duty to Stop for an Accident Resulting in Injury
- Duty to Stop for an Accident with Occupied Vehicle
- Vandalism
- Obstructing and Officer in Execution of Duty

