



Fresno County Sheriff - Coroner's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff - Coroner

August 8, 2018

News Release

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Suspect in Pursuit Captured After Rolling Car into River and Getting Bit by Dog

Fresno County Sheriff's deputies have arrested 44 year old Efrain Martinez of Parlier. He has been booked into the Fresno County Jail on felony counts of burglary, evading police, resisting arrest and harming a K-9 officer. His bail is set at \$75,000.

On August 7th, a hot prowler burglary took place at a home on the 5200 block of S. Wildwood Ave. in Del Rey. The victims saw the suspect and identified him to deputies as Efrain Martinez, a man they've known from the past. As deputies were on scene investigating, the victims alerted them to Martinez as he was driving back through the area.

Deputies attempted to make a traffic stop on Martinez, but he refused to pull over. Deputies began to pursue Martinez, but then backed off once our EAGLE One helicopter was overhead and able to follow his car. During the pursuit, dispatchers received reports from motorists saying it appeared Martinez was holding a gun and pointing it toward deputies trailing on the roadway. Martinez eventually made his way to Highway 99 and drove into downtown Fresno. Several deputies used their patrol vehicles to try and block in Martinez on Fresno Street, near P Street, where traffic was stopped for a passing train. Deputies got out of their vehicles and fired a less-lethal bean bag round from a shotgun to break Martinez' window. Other deputies shot PepperBall inside Martinez' vehicle in an attempt to get him to surrender. However, Martinez was unfazed. He used his car to ram several civilian vehicles and was able to

make his way free onto a side street. Martinez reached Highway 99 again and headed north. He exited onto Avenue 9 in Madera County, headed east and then drove through an orchard off of Road 39. Martinez continued onto the bluff of the San Joaquin River. He drove along the edge of the bluff where the dirt is soft, causing his car to roll down the embankment into the river. Martinez got out of the car and swam across the river toward Scout Island, where approximately 100 elementary school age kids were attending a day camp. Working under the assumption Martinez was armed with a gun, deputies inside EAGLE One used its P.A. system to alert the camp to go into a lockdown. The nearby Fig Garden Golf Club also went into lockdown. The California Highway Patrol helicopter, H40, arrived to assist deputies in the search for Martinez. He was later spotted wading through the water and trying to take a canoe to paddle downstream. The pilot of EAGLE One then hovered over Martinez, creating a strong force of wind which prevented him from getting into the canoe. Martinez got to shore and ran between trees and bushes. Fresno County Sheriff K-9 Bady was deployed. Bady found Martinez hiding and bit him, allowing deputies to take him into custody.

Martinez was transported to the hospital for treatment of his dog bites and later booked into jail. It took a total of approximately an hour and 15 minutes to take Martinez into custody.

Anyone with additional information about Efrain Martinez is asked to contact the Sheriff's Office at (559) 600-3111. You may also call Crime Stoppers at (559) 498-7867 or online at www.valleycrimestoppers.org You will remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward.