



**POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON**

MEDIA RELEASE

INCIDENT TYPE:	DATE/TIME REPORTED:	
Aggravated assault, drug trafficking, eluding police	05/31/2024 1857 Hours	
INCIDENT NUMBER:	LOCATION:	
24BU011465	Perkins Pier	
SUSPECT:	AGE:	SUSPECT ADDRESS:
Tayami Barnes	31	Bronx, NY
Ron A Thomas	21	Brooklyn, NY
A juvenile male	18	Richmond, VA

NARRATIVE:

At approximately 1858 hours on Friday, May 31, 2024, dispatchers with the Burlington Police Department received calls from a victim who had been threatened at gunpoint. Officers responded to the area of Perkins Pier and encountered employees of a rental-car company who had electronically tracked and attempted to retrieve one of their cars, a white Ford Expedition. The occupants had refused to relinquish the car and threatened the employees with a firearm. When the employees disengaged and called police, the occupants of the vehicle abandoned the white Ford and moved themselves and various backpacks, etc., into a second vehicle, a black Ford Expedition, and then fled. This vehicle, too, was a rental car and the company began to track the vehicle electronically. They shared the location data as it evolved with responding patrol officers, who began to attempt to locate the vehicle. It traveled to various locations around Burlington and into South Burlington and Winooski. Dispatchers created a "Be On Lookout," or BOL, for neighboring agencies.

Members of the BPD's Drug Unit recognized the descriptions and license plates of both vehicles from numerous drug tips and an ongoing narcotics investigation. The BPD seized the white Expedition in anticipation of applying for a search warrant.

At approximately 1925 hours officers located the black Expedition in the vicinity of Pearl Street Beverage. When they prepared to approach the vehicle it fled west on Pearl Street before turning towards Vermont 127, the Beltline. BPD officers initially pursued, but the subject vehicle's high rate of speed and reckless operation caused BPD supervisors to terminate the pursuit just north of the Beltline's North Avenue exit. The subject vehicle continued into Colchester where it nearly struck a Colchester police vehicle. The fleeing Expedition was ultimately involved in a one-

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vehicle crash with two fatalities. BPD officers responded to assist and detained three surviving suspects.

The crash is being investigated by the Vermont State Police, and questions about that investigation and the two decedents should be directed to the VSP.

The three surviving suspects were taken to the University of Vermont Medical Center for treatment for non-life-threatening injuries. All three were ultimately arrested and charged with possession of the large amount of drugs that were ejected from the black Expedition at the crash scene. (BPD detectives are also applying for a search warrant for the black Expedition.)

Two of the three men were identified as Tayami Barnes, 31, of the Bronx, and Ron Thomas, 21, of Brooklyn. Mr. Thomas was associated with a gunpoint robbery in South Burlington last summer and was previously arrested by Burlington for eluding police in January of this year. The two men were held by the court until arraignment this morning. The third man, aged 18, from Richmond, Virginia, was referred to Family Court because, in Vermont, 18 year olds cannot be charged in criminal court for drug crimes.

This is an ongoing investigation and additional charges, including aggravated assault for the gunpoint threats, are expected.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Burlington Police Department at (802) 658-2704.