



HARRISON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

TROY J. PETERSON
SHERIFF

P.O. BOX 1480 ♦ GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI 39502 ♦ 228-896-0606

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

For Immediate Release

On Friday, July 25, 2017, at approximately 1132 hours, a Harrison County Deputy put out radio communications through Harrison County Dispatch, "Officer Down", that he had been shot by an unknown assailant in a wooded area near the intersection of Highway 67 and Highway 605.

As to be expected, the Law Enforcement community along the Coast; County, State, Local and Federal Agencies to include Fire and Medical personal responded to assist in any way they could. Within minutes of the incident, a massive manhunt ensued across Harrison County for the Suspect and Suspect vehicle. The support of Law Enforcement personal was overwhelming and very much appreciated.

With any officer involved shooting, a third party Agency is called in to handle the investigation. This brings transparency to the Investigation and eliminates any conflicts of interests from the parent agency when it comes to prosecution. The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation was called in to work the Investigation. The Biloxi Police Department Crime Scene Unit was also called in for assistance to investigate the crime scene.

According to initial reports from our Deputy, he stated that while parked in the wooded, a 90's model Ford F-150 pulled up to the front of his vehicle and parked. (Front bumper to front bumper) A W/M described as 6'-1" to 6'-3", 250-300 pounds, wearing jeans, brown work boots, brown hair and a brown mustache exited the vehicle wearing gray gardening gloves. The Deputy stated that he exited his vehicle and met the subject in between the two vehicles, briefly greeting the assailant and without hesitation; the assailant grabbed the Deputy and brought him to the ground. Throughout this struggle, the Deputy was shot in the upper right chest by the assailant.



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As this investigation continues, one of our major concerns was the lack of information coming in from the public. News media outlets from across the coast covered this story and were quick to release any and all information regarding this incident. One thing the citizens of Harrison County are known for is being observant and giving any information they have to Law Enforcement. Citizens of Harrison County are known to police themselves when it comes to crimes committed close to them. Although we have received numerous tips regarding the suspect and suspect vehicle, all have led to a dead end.

During any traumatic event involving a Police Officer, it is very common for a formal interview to be conducted after the victim has allowed his mind to calm down and rest which is identified as a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing. On Monday, July 31, 2017, the Deputy was brought in for a formal debriefing by MBI and the Harrison County District Attorney's Office. After the Interview, the description of the suspect and suspect vehicle has not changed. This remains the only information we have at this time.

The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation is the primary agency handling this Investigation. Upon the completion of this case by MBI, a press conference will be held by the Harrison County Sheriff's Department and MBI.

Approved For Release: _____

Troy J. Peterson, Sheriff, Harrison County, Mississippi