



SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT
155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

MEDIA RELEASE



DATE/TIME: August 24, 2014 4:30 PM

LOCATION: 700 Block Pacific Avenue

TOPIC: Hit and Run with Serious Injuries

CASE NUMBER: 14S-07012

INFORMATION:

On August 24, 2014, Santa Cruz Police officers responded to a report of a hit and run collision, involving a vehicle and a pedestrian in the 700 block of Pacific Avenue. Officers arrived and found a 70 year old Watsonville resident had been stuck by a passing vehicle. The vehicle fled the scene and did not stop to render assistance to the victim. Officers tended to the victim until the arrival of Emergency Medical crews.

Witnesses reported that the vehicle may have been seen prior to the collision leaving Walgreens just a block away at 201 Front St. Based on this lead, officers obtained video of the suspect parking the vehicle, entering and leaving Walgreens and driving away. We checked other video sources and obtained video of the suspect driver purchasing alcohol from Bonesio Liquors just prior to the collision.

Armed with a description of the truck and driver, officers continued to search the surrounding area. The truck was identified as a white 2012 Nissan Frontier truck. At 5:50 PM the suspect's vehicle was found parked in a motel lot in the 300 block of Pacific Ave. The suspect driver was found inside a room where she was taken into custody. The driver is identified as:

Joanna Steele - 29 years old, Oakland, CA resident (booking photo attached)

The owner of the truck was also found in the room. He claimed to have been asleep in the room and had no knowledge of the collision. The driver identified the owner of the truck as her fiancée.

The suspect's truck had damage to the right side consistent with the collision. The truck was towed and impounded for evidence collection.

The driver was booked into Santa Cruz County Jail for felony Hit and Run. Her driving record shows a 2010 conviction for Reckless Driving.

The victim was airlifted to a Bay Area trauma center where he remains in extremely critical condition. We are continuing to check on his condition.

The cause of the collision is still under investigation. Traffic investigators are awaiting toxicology results from both the driver and pedestrian. Anyone with information is encouraged to contact SCPD Traffic at (831) 420-5860

For additional information, contact: Deputy Chief Steve Clark

Phone: (831) 420-5815

Anonymous tips can also be sent to the police department through our Tip Line (831) 420-5995, or from our Website; www.santacruzpolice.com . Tipsters can also submit an anonymous tip via our smartphone app or from an SMS text. Visit our Website for instructions.





