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Suspect in Custody After Nearly Eleven-Hour Standoff with Police

Harrisonburg, VA- October 27, 2025- A suspect is in custody and two women are safe following an hours-long standoff with police on Virginia Avenue.

Just after 3:00 PM on October 26th, Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) Officers responded to a call about a man swinging around a machete and talking to himself in the 1200 block of Virginia Avenue. When officers arrived, they encountered a man armed with an AR-15 style rifle, who ran into an occupied trailer home upon seeing law enforcement. A shelter-in-place order was immediately issued for a quarter mile radius surrounding the incident scene.

HPD Patrol Officers, Major Crimes Detectives, Crisis Negotiation Team (C.N.T.) members, and the HPD Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.) team responded to the scene and immediately began trying to make contact with the suspect and the women inside. Officers were able to confirm the two women were safe inside the trailer and away from the suspect. C.N.T. members were able to make contact with the man, identified as Jason Mercado, and began peacefully negotiating with him to come out of the trailer.

As officers spoke with Mercado, the two women inside the home were safely escorted out and taken to Sentara RMH for evaluation around 10:45 PM. Neither of them reported any injuries. Officers continued to peacefully negotiate with Mercado and give commands to exit the home unarmed, but he refused.

After hours of unsuccessful negotiations, the Harrisonburg Police S.W.A.T. Team executed a search warrant at the residence. Due to Mercado being armed and acting erratically in a populated area, nearby homes were evacuated. Officers then deployed gas into the home to encourage him to leave peacefully.

Just after 1:20 AM on October 27th, HPD Officers, with the help of Virginia State Police, deployed multiple cans of gas into the home. Mr. Mercado then exited the home and was taken

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into custody. He was evaluated by the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad and taken to Rockingham-Harrisonburg Regional jail.

Jason Mercado, 28, of Harrisonburg is being charged with the following:

- Felony Abduction (X2)

The peaceful end to this incident was made possible by a collaborative effort between HPD, the Harrisonburg Fire Department, Harrisonburg Rescue Squad, Virginia State Police, and Harrisonburg Public Works. We would like to thank our public safety partners for their help and resources, leading to a nonviolent end to this situation.

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communication Center (ECC) issued a shelter-in-place order at approximately 3:15 p.m. directed at the affected neighborhood and nearby streets. This decision, made by law enforcement, aims to alert the public about a potential threat within their vicinity. Residents are advised to remain indoors in a safe place during a shelter-in-place order, and they should anticipate a substantial police presence in the area. Community members can register to receive these types of alerts by going online to https://harrisonburgva.gov/eas

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