



# SEMINOLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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**BRIGHTON RESERVATION**  
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**IMMOKALEE RESERVATION**  
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**HOLLYWOOD RESERVATION**  
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**TAMPA RESERVATION**  
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Tampa, Florida 33610  
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**John G. Auer**  
Chief of Police

February 22, 2019

Honorable Albert A. Arenal  
Chief of Police  
Coconut Creek Police Department  
4800 West Copans Road  
Coconut Creek, Florida 33063

Dear Chief Arenal,

I hope this letter finds you well. It isn't every day that I get to write a letter about heroism or even great teamwork between two police organizations even though there are acts of heroism and good examples of teamwork performed routinely by our police officers. But in this case I have the honor to reflect and call attention to the extraordinary heroism, bravery and teamwork performed by the Coconut Creek Police Department and Seminole Police Department along with Seminole Casino Security on Valentines' day a week and a half ago.

At approximately 10:30 pm on February 14, 2019 a call for service was received on the roof of the parking garage at the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek indicating that a male was acting strangely and that he climbed on the wall and indicated he was going to kill himself by falling the almost 100 feet to the ground below. Security Supervisor Bret Powers made the call and Seminole Officer Armando Halley was the first Police Officer on the scene. He immediately requested assistance from the Coconut Creek Police Department drawing a professional response from in-service staff under the direction of Sergeant Adam Marts, and a crisis negotiator, Sergeant James Dingus.

Additional Coconut Creek Police managers and officers responded, to include; Lieutenant Shawn Shelton, Sergeant Joseph Jahrsdoerfer, Officer Gavin Henry, Officer O'Meil Molyneaux, Officer Nicholas Scherr, Officer Thomas Eisenring, and Officer Victor Blackwood. Seminole Police Sergeant Angela Margotta responded as did I upon hearing of the situation. For about two hours the subject remained precariously straddling the top of the concrete wall, at times placing the majority of his body over the side toward the drop below. He was also armed with a box cutter and flailed it from time to time to keep the distance between he and the police staff on scene.

Sergeant James Dingus, the crisis negotiator kept a constant dialogue with the suicidal subject prolonging the safe time and allowing the additional officers and support staff to arrive. The end

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**CHIEF'S OFFICE**

of the parking garage roof floor was segregated by security personnel allowing the police staff the space and privacy to apply their craft. It became increasingly apparent that the subject was not reducing his threat to jump despite the best efforts of the negotiator and the concern for his well-being that was clearly demonstrated by all on scene.

When it became clear that the subject was not going to come off the ledge voluntarily, Sgt. Dingus made a grab for the subject's leg. Immediately the prepositioned staff jumped into action and as the subject went over the side, they were able to grab first one wrist, and then his other forearm as more officers joined the life-saving attempt. Even after the officers had a grip on his wrists, the subject bit their arms and flailed his body in an attempt to get free and drop to his death.


A video of the event captured from several angles shows the officers and then a security officer enter the effort to not only hold the suicidal subject up, but to pull him back to safety from a full "over the side" position. The subject continued to fight the rescue efforts and several officers can be observed leaving their feet to assist getting the subject to safety at the risk of going over themselves. A very strong consolidated effort of brute force was employed three times to get the subject to a safety where he was given medical attention and taken for a Baker Act with the hope he will have another chance at life.

There were injuries sustained however, but only by the law enforcement staff. As you will see on the video capturing the event many were physically sated and injured from the concrete, bites, and strain involved in the event, with at least two of your officers having to be transported for treatment (and some others who probably should have, but their attention to duty would not allow themselves to be taken). I can personally attest that at no time were any of the officers involved concerned about their own safety during this event, which makes this a truly heroic save. The Seminole Tribe and the people of Coconut Creek are truly fortunate to have such professionals at their service.

As you can tell, I am truly in awe of the work done by both of our staffs on this matter and I know that the service provided to the Casino and ultimately to the Seminole Tribe is service that is appreciated. Please pass along my personal thanks and gratitude and that of the men and women of the Seminole Police Department to your Police Staff members. I am going to request that the officers and security personnel be recognized by the Tribal Council at a regular Council Meeting at the headquarters in Hollywood, and I would like to invite them and for you to accompany them for that recognition. It would be my honor to introduce them to the Council and the Tribal members and employees in attendance. I will keep you informed on the date.

In closing, please share this letter with your involved staff as testament to the appreciation of their heroic efforts and to document their excellent service. I am as proud of our respective staff members as I know you are of them. I have enclosed a thumb drive of the videos for your review.

Sincerely,



JOHN G. AUER  
CHIEF OF POLICE

Enclosure  
JGA/da