



Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

826 Fourth Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Date: 07-22-2013

From: Lt. Steve Knight
(707) 268-3630

Subject: Pursuit

Case: 201303716

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 07-21-2013, approximately 11:40 p.m., two Humboldt County Sheriff's Deputies were parked near Gipson Drive, Trinidad when they heard and saw a vehicle traveling northbound on Stagecoach Road at a high rate of speed. The vehicle, a 2000 Green Jeep Cherokee, made a turn onto Gipson Drive in front of the two deputies in marked patrol cars almost losing control while sliding across the roadway. One of the deputies conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle for reckless driving. The Jeep pulled off the roadway and yielded to the deputy. When the deputy approached the Jeep, the driver revved its engine, spun its tires and drove off at a high rate of speed. The deputy initiated a pursuit and was joined by the other deputy. The deputies pursued the Jeep which traveled westbound on Gipson Road, then southbound on Stagecoach Road. They pursued the Jeep on several roads in the Trinidad area. During the pursuit the Jeep ran through stop signs and traveled at high rates of speed until it entered onto US Highway 101 southbound. On US 101 the Jeep reached speeds of 90 mph, until it suddenly slowed to 5 mph, at which time it crossed the highway and then began traveling north on US 101. Deputies continued pursuing the Jeep which turned into the Hidden Creek Campground where it slowed to a stop. The driver attempted to run from the vehicle; however, the deputies were able to catch him and take him into custody. During the driver's arrest, he resisted the deputies' efforts to handcuff him. The passenger, a 27 year old female, complied with the deputies and was temporarily detained.

A search of the Jeep revealed two illegal double edged knives which were seized. The driver, Joseph Robert Velenti, 33 years old, from Eureka was arrested for felony evasion of a peace officer, driving on a suspended license, possession of illegal weapons, possession of a syringe, violation of probation. Velenti was also wanted on six outstanding arrest warrants. Two felony, one for assaulting a police officer, one for terrorist threats, and four misdemeanor warrants, two for driving under the influence, one for disturbing the peace and one for assault and battery.

Valenti was transported to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility where his bail was set at \$190,000.00.

The female passenger was determined to not have committed any crimes and was released at the scene.

Anyone with information for the Sheriff's Office regarding this case or related criminal activity is encouraged to call the Sheriff's Office at 707-445-7251 or the Sheriff's Office Crime Tip line at 707-268-2539.

Mike Downey
Sheriff

