For Immediate Release
Aug 28, 2012

Officer Wrestles Gun Away During Struggle with Armed Suspect

Arrested Suspect: Preston Bernard Johns, B/M, DOB 08/17/90 of 1100 64th Avenue South

At about 10:45 p.m. last night, a 2011 Nissan VRS driven by the above listed suspect struck a St. Petersburg Police cruiser at the intersection of 39 Avenue South and 6th Street. According to reports the Nissan was traveling at a high rate of speed with its lights out north bound on 6th Street as the cruiser turned left east bound in front of it onto 39th Avenue South.

After the collision, Johns fled from his car heading in a westerly direction. Officer Lisa Gaskins, 30, who was operating the cruiser, called for assistance and was later transported to Edward White Hospital with minor injuries.

A K-9 Unit responded to the area and began to track Johns who was eventually observed by officers fleeing west into Lake Maggiore Park in the 3800 block of Dr. MLK Street South.

Acting Sergeant Kevin Sullivan, 37, pursued Johns on foot, eventually tackling him to the ground. Johns resisted and during the ensuing struggle pulled a 9mm automatic pistol from his waist band. Acting Sergeant Sullivan was able to disarm Johns and take him to custody.

Johns has been charged with several felony charges to include Aggravated Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer, Resisting Arrest with Violence, Felon in Possession of a Firearm and Leaving the Scene of an Accident with Injuries.

At the time of this incident Johns was on felony probation for Armed Robbery and had several prior arrests for Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer

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