

A Greenville County SC woman was charged with filing a false police report alleging that she had been abducted at gunpoint from Hendersonville NC and left bound at the feet in her vehicle just across the SC state line on south bound US 25. At approximately 1:53 p.m. the Henderson County Sheriffs Office Communications Center received at least three 911 calls reporting a female who appeared to be tied at the legs hanging out of a parked vehicle on the south bound side of US 25. The Sheriffs office transferred the call to the South Carolina highway patrol for reasons of jurisdiction and proximity to the scene. South Carolina State Highway Patrol and Deputies from the Greenville County Sheriffs' Office responded and found Cari Elizabeth Hernandez, 23 years of age, in the backseat of her vehicle with rope restraints around her legs. Henderson County deputies also responded to the scene, arriving shortly behind the SC Highway Patrol and the Greenville County Sheriffs' Office.

Ms. Hernandez reported to the officers that she had been kidnapped at gunpoint by two Hispanic males from a location in Henderson County. At this time, Investigators from the Henderson County Sheriffs Violent crimes Unit responded to assist in the interview of the victim and to process the crime scene. Investigators went with the alleged victim to the Greenville county Hospital where she was examined and appeared to be free from injuries or trauma. Ms Hernandez is a resident of Greenville SC.

Investigators stated that they were dubious as to the veracity of the victims' claims as they spoke with her and processed the vehicle. According to Sheriff Davis "The problem is that as professionals, we have to put our personal suspicions aside and continue to process and examine all leads until we are certain of the facts. We can never make the mistake of arriving at a conclusion based on mere suspicions, and risk losing valuable time and information necessary to solve the crime. On the other hand we do not want to alarm the public to a crime, or malign a people group with unsubstantiated allegations when in fact no such crime had been committed."

Henderson County Investigators continued to check out leads provided by Ms. Hernandez and to compare her story with the evidence gleaned from her vehicle and elsewhere. News media outlets were justifiably curious having heard the initial calls dispatched to law enforcement agencies responding to the scene. It was an uncomfortable balancing act as those responsible with disseminating critical information had to weigh the public benefit with the public right to know. The Sheriffs Office is not in the position to hold back critical information of public interest, but we also need to be responsible to ensure that when we do release information, it is certain and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

After being interviewed again and being confronted with the deficiencies in her story, Ms. Hernandez admitted that there was no merit to the story and she had "made the story up." The Sheriffs Office can speak to the motives of Ms. Hernandez, but it was clear that there was no merit to her initial report.

This phenomenon of filing false reports is not uncommon to law enforcement. "It is and will continue to be the policy of this Sheriffs' Office, to prosecute any and all individuals that knowingly make false police reports to this agency. When one considers the man power expended by the various agencies involved from the time of the initial report until the arrest of Ms Hernandez it is a shameful waste. When you also consider that those resources were pulled away from legitimate ongoing cases, it is even more disconcerting." Sheriff Rick Davis.

Ms. Hernandez was arrested without incident and released on a promise to appear on charge of "Making a false report to police."