



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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*****NEWS RELEASE*****
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Injury Hit and Run while Driving Under the Influence Arrest after Pursuit

November 30, 2011 approximately 0100 hours, Visalia Police Department officers were dispatched to reports of a physical disturbance needing officer assistance at Caldwell Ave and Mooney Blvd. An officer arrived on scene within seconds and locates a vehicle leaving the area at a high rate of speed. The officer attempted a traffic stop on the vehicle after the vehicle failed to stop for a red light. As the officer was attempting the traffic stop additional reports from the location of the incident advised two pedestrians had been purposely struck by a vehicle leaving the parking lot. Officers received additional information from witnesses advising the vehicle that fled the area and was being followed by an officer was the suspect vehicle in the hit and run.

When officers attempted a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle, the driver and sole occupant Herman Ruiz, 25, of Visalia, failed to stop for officers resulting in a pursuit. Officers pursued the suspect through fields and orchards on the southwest side of Visalia with the conclusion of the pursuit west of the Visalia airport on Drive 85 and Aviation Way.

The two victims at the scene suffered injuries as a result of the suspect striking them with the vehicle. Victim Carlos Sagala, 23, of Visalia suffered bone fractures to his face and foot in addition to head trauma. Sagala was transported to a local hospital where he was listed in serious but stable condition. Victim Christopher Garcia, 29, suffered minor injuries to his hand.

The suspect, Herman Ruiz, was arrested and booked on suspicion of felony hit and run, felony driving under the influence of alcohol, evading a peace officer, and resisting arrest.

