



# Media Update

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**For Immediate Release:**

**Today's Date: September 6, 2018**

**Prepared by: Sergeant Brett Rhodenizer**

**MEDIA UPDATE: Buchholz High School, Gun Arrest 09/05/18**

In addition to the Public Records provided earlier today, the following additional information is available now and should offer some additional insight and clarity to initial reports after the recovery of an unloaded 9mm handgun from a former Buchholz High School student on school campus yesterday:

The investigation itself remains open and is assigned to a detective in the Criminal Investigations Division for additional follow up and evidence collection.

Deputies were contacted via school radio at approximately 10:00am and asked to come to the nurse's office for a juvenile that was acting strangely. A school nurse told deputies that the suspect, Thigpin (16 year old female), might be on drugs, and that the nurse had seen several pill bottles in the suspect's backpack.

When deputies arrived they noticed the suspect sweating profusely and acting very nervous. The suspect asked if she could leave to go to the bathroom. Deputies told her that she could, but she should not take her backpack with her, after which the suspect became defiant and said, "no, you don't have a search warrant (referring to a search of her bag), and I don't have to go (to the bathroom) anymore." Based on the suspect's behavior, school personnel decided to search the backpack and, as the search began, the suspect said, "there is a gun in the bag."

The suspect was immediately handcuffed, and deputies secured the gun, finding it unloaded and without a magazine inserted. The suspect advised that the gun was her mother's.

While escorting the suspect to the deputies' office to continue their investigation, the suspect became belligerent and started yelling obscenities and trying to pull away from deputies, and she was taken to a patrol car at that time. She began to forcibly resist going into the patrol car and, once inside, she began kicking the rear window. While placing additional leg restraints on her, the suspect kicked at the deputies several times.

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With the suspect secured, the investigation continued, and deputies learned another juvenile female, currently enrolled at Buchholz, was involved in an incident prior to the events in the clinic. That student told deputies she and the suspect have been arguing over text messages for some time, and that the suspect came on campus looking for her. According to the other student (victim), another student told her the suspect was on campus looking for her. The victim said she looked out of the classroom window, saw the suspect, and walked out into the hall to speak with her.

When the victim walked out, she said the suspect was holding the gun in her right hand and said she was going to shoot her. The victim grabbed the gun, struggled over it briefly with the suspect, then took it from the suspect and put the gun in her (victim's) backpack. They then walked to the bathroom down the hall from the victim's classroom, with the victim carrying both backpacks. While in the bathroom, the suspect got the gun back and put it back in her backpack. The victim stated she got scared and went back to her class, at which point the suspect walked up to the front office and sat down in the chairs there. That was where the alert school nurse saw her and thought she looked pale and sick. When the nurse asked the suspect if she needed care, the suspect's only response was that she needed to call her mom, at which point the nurse called for the school resource deputies.

Additionally, the investigation has revealed to date:

- Portions of the incident were captured on video, and a detective is working to obtain copies of those images as evidence.
- The gun did belong to the suspect's mother, and was kept in locked storage, although a key was missing. The suspect's mother had given the ammunition and magazine to someone else for safekeeping out of concerns for her daughter's behavior. According to her mother, the suspect has been Backer Acted numerous times.
- The pills observed in the suspect's bag included three (3) prescription pill bottles. Two were prescribed to suspect's mother, and one was prescribed to the suspect.
- The suspect received a ride to Buchholz from a male student that she knew. The car was parked off campus, indicating the suspect arrived on foot. There is no indication the male student knew about or was involved in the incident.
- The school was placed in lockdown just after 2:00pm for a secondary search by a gun detection dog of the areas known and believed to be visited by the suspect. No additional weapons were found, and the search lasted roughly 10 minutes.
- Available records indicate the suspect withdrew on 3/11/2018, and not currently registered at an Alachua County Public School.

Requests for additional information or interviews should be directed to the Public Information Officers at (352) 367-4041/4045.

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