



MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff



News Release

For Immediate Release

October 27, 2016

Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587 or (701) 595-3596

Charges Filed for Terrorizing of Journalists

Mandan, N.D. – The Morton County State's Attorney's office has filed charges against two individuals involved in the attack on three journalists. James White and Karen Lewis are charged with felonious restraint in the October 18th, 2016 incident.

Three individuals were interviewing protesters in the camp area during the morning of October 18th. The protesters became very agitated with the journalists after they asked some pointed questions. A protester then identified himself as security and physically attempted to take the reporter's microphone. The three journalists were then able to get into their vehicle and locked themselves inside. Protesters surrounded the vehicle preventing them from leaving the camp. Two protesters also used their vehicles to prevent the journalists from leaving. At one point, the protesters even shook the vehicle and were hitting the vehicle's windows. Protesters demanded the journalists' video footage.

The journalists called 9-1-1. Law enforcement responded to the camp entrance to assist the trapped journalists. An officer witnessed vehicles blocking in the journalists vehicle. After Lt. Glen Ternes gave directives to allow the journalists to leave, the protesters eventually complied, and the journalists were freed.

White and Lewis knowingly restrained the three journalists under terrorizing circumstances when White stood in front of their vehicle, yelling at them and refusing to allow them to leave the 7 Councils Fire camp. Felonious Restraint is a class C felony. There are warrants filed for the arrest of White and Lewis.

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Law enforcement again request the public's assistance in identifying three other individuals who are people of interest in the case. A picture of the five individuals authorities have captured in video as having involvement in this incident is attached.

White has also been charged with reckless endangerment, fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer and reckless driving in relation to an October 14th, 2016 incident. An officer witnessed White exit the roadway into the right ditch. The pick-up drove at a high rate of speed and recklessly in the ditch with occupants in the pick-up bed unrestrained. The vehicle then passed the patrol vehicle and drove back onto the roadway. The officer witnessed the vehicle come to a stop and all occupants exited the road and stood on the roadway. The deputy had to drive on the left side of the roadway to avoid striking White who was attempting to block the deputy's vehicle. White and others got back into the vehicle and followed the deputy. A second protest vehicle also joined in the pursuit.

Highway Patrol troopers attempted to stop the vehicle driven by White. He refused to stop and troopers ended the high-speed pursuit for safety reasons.

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