



POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON



MEDIA RELEASE

This evening at approximately 3:28 pm officers from the Colchester Police Department were engaged in an investigation in cooperation with the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Task Force. As part of that investigation, officers had stopped a 2019 Jeep bearing Pennsylvania registration in the parking lot of the McDonald's restaurant on Heineburg Drive. A narcotics canine called to the scene identified possible contraband in the vehicle. At approximately 4:03 pm, when officers asked the occupants to exit the vehicle, the operator refused to do so and fled the scene southbound toward Burlington, almost striking an officer. Colchester police and DEA agents pursued.

The vehicle proceeded southbound on Plattsburg Avenue and then southbound on North Avenue at high rates of speed. Officers lost sight of the vehicle as it turned onto North Avenue. Shortly after turning onto North Avenue, they could see the vehicle make a sharp left turn. On approach they found the vehicle had left the roadway and struck two residential structures. The operator lost control near the intersection of North Avenue and Staniford Road, and crashed into two houses on the east side of the street, shearing off the front porch of the second house before coming to a stop. The driver exited the vehicle and fled eastbound on foot. His female passenger remained on scene and was eventually transported to the University of Vermont Medical Center for minor injuries.

Burlington Police Officers arrived at the site of the crash and one officer evacuated children from the second home. Additional officers established traffic control and began getting witness statements. Firefighters with the Burlington Fire Department arrived to assess the crash and the damaged buildings. Permitting and Inspections personnel and staff from Vermont Gas Systems also responded to evaluate the structures.

Additional police officers also began to search for the suspect. Owing to the suspect's direction of flight, BPD School Resource Officers initiated lockdowns at Lyman C. Hunt Middle School and C.P. Smith Elementary School. Staff at Hunt Middle School informed dispatch that the suspect attempted to enter the school but then left. Two canines were called in to perform tracks. Callers reported the suspect running through backyards on Gazo Avenue and then Lori Lane, but officers were not able to intercept him and make an apprehension.

Information is preliminary and subject to change.

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Questions about the vehicle pursuit may be directed to Chief Douglas Allen of the Colchester Police Department. As in all instances of pursuit, the circumstances will be reviewed and evaluated according to policy and directive. The Vermont State Police Crash Investigation Team is assisting Colchester Police and Burlington Police with this continuing investigation

The suspect is Jason Cortez Kelsaw, 28, of Detroit, Michigan. As of this writing he remains at large and wanted for eluding a police officer while operating a vehicle in a negligent or grossly negligent manner, a felony. Any person with information about this incident or knowledge of Mr. Kelsaw's whereabouts is encouraged to call Detective Tremblay of the DEA Task Force at (802) 540-2323.



Jason Kelsaw, 28

It is the policy of the Burlington Police Department to attach photos only for persons being sought or persons missing, not for arrestees.

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