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NEWS RELEASE

HPD Response to Alleged Excessive Force Complaint

HINESVILLE, Ga. (July 18, 2020) – The Hinesville Police Department (HPD) is currently investigating a complaint of excessive force resulting from a traffic stop on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at approximately 9:10 p.m. The complaint was received from a family member who was not on scene at the time of the incident but expressed concerns over the treatment of the suspect.

A driver was traveling westbound on W. Hendry Street when an officer observed the vehicle tag was improperly displayed. The officer initiated a traffic stop and the vehicle came to rest in the parking lot of Anytime Fitness. Immediately upon coming to a stop, the left rear passenger exited the car and ran from the scene. As the officer approached the car, the right rear passenger also fled on foot. The first suspect was located and arrested without incident within a few minutes of the stop and was identified as Darius Drew-White.

The second suspect continued to flee from assisting officers and was observed running into the Waffle House via the back door. Officers located the suspect and attempted to place him under arrest. He resisted attempts to place him into handcuffs and during the ensuing scuffle, he struck his head on the wall of the bathroom. The suspect was handcuffed after appearing to be unconscious. The officer onsite summoned medical personnel to the scene and the suspect, identified as Taizhun Ezekiel Nephew, was transported to Liberty Regional Medical Center (LRMC) for treatment. He was later cleared by LRMC and transported to the Liberty County Jail.

On July 17, 2020, Mr. Nephew was taken for a first appearance hearing where he was denied bond due to his extensive criminal history. He is currently charged with obstruction of a law enforcement officer, possession of a firearm by a first offender and criminal attempt to possess marijuana. His charges will be presented to a grand jury.

On the afternoon of July 17, 2020, a family member voiced concerns over the arrest and level of force used to subdue Mr. Nephew. An internal investigation has commenced to determine the facts of the case and to determine if the level of force that was used was appropriate for the situation. Mr. Nephew has been interviewed several times since the incident, including a face-to-face meeting on the morning of Saturday, July 18, 2020 and he is alert and has only minor complaints of soreness.



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For questions or more information, please contact Whitney Morris-Reed at wmorrisreed@cityofhinesville.org.

ABOUT THE CITY OF HINESVILLE:

The [City of Hinesville](http://www.cityofhinesville.org) was established in 1837 and is recognized as one of the fastest growing cities in the State of Georgia in both size and population. As the largest city in Liberty County, it serves as the county seat and is home to more than 35,000 people. For more information, visit [cityofhinesville.org](http://www.cityofhinesville.org).

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