



# AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

## CHARGES FILED IN SHOOTING, PURSUIT AND CRASH WHICH RESULTED IN A FATALITY NEAR THE FOX VALLEY MALL

[AURORA, Ill. – February 20, 2020]: The Aurora Police Department is continuing to investigate the circumstances of an incident involving a vehicle wanted in a shooting Wednesday afternoon which led officers on a pursuit and eventually crashed into multiple vehicles near the Fox Valley Mall.

Erik Esparza, 24, of Aurora, was believed to have been the driver of the offending vehicle, was transported by Aurora Fire Department paramedics to Good Samaritan hospital where he succumbed to his injuries Wednesday evening. The DuPage County Coroner's Office performed an autopsy on Thursday.

Additionally, a passenger inside the offending vehicle, Adrien Betsinger, 23, of the 500 block of Woodlawn Avenue in Aurora, was charged in connection to Wednesday's shooting that occurred in the 600 block of South Broadway. The Kane County State's Attorney's Office authorized the following charges against Betsinger:

- One Class X Felony count of Attempted Murder
- One Class X Felony count of Aggravated Battery with Firearm
- Six Class 1 Felony counts of Aggravated Discharge
- One Class 2 Felony count of a Felon Possessing a Firearm while on Parole

On Wednesday, February 19th at 1:30 p.m., officers were responding to call of shots fired in the 600 block of South Broadway. While they were responding to the scene, a description of the suspected vehicle involved in the shooting was relayed over the radio and the vehicle, a grey Chevrolet Monte Carlo, was spotted by an officer.

The vehicle also matched the description of a vehicle wanted in connection to an aggravated discharge of a firearm incident on Tuesday night in the 400 block of South State Street.

With the knowledge that the offenders in the suspected vehicle were potentially involved in two shooting incidents in less than 24 hours, Aurora Police Department patrol supervisors believed that the offenders in the vehicle posed a great risk to the community at large and allowed officers to continue to pursue.

A patrol supervisor was monitoring the radio during the pursuit and continuously reviewing the incoming information to determine whether the pursuit should be continued or terminated.

During the pursuit, the driver of the offending vehicle was observed driving at a high rate of speed into on-coming traffic along East New York Street. As the offending vehicle was approaching busy Route 59, officers terminated the pursuit, turned off their emergency lights and sirens and slowed their patrol vehicles. Shortly thereafter, the suspects' vehicle was involved in a crash near the Fox Valley Mall.

Two illegal guns were also located inside the vehicle by investigators.

The charges against Betsinger are not proof of guilt. Betsinger is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the state's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

---

---

*(Previous News Release Below)*

**VEHICLE INVOLVED IN SHOOTING LEADS OFFICERS ON A PURSUIT THAT ENDS IN  
CRASH NEAR FOX VALLEY MALL**

[AURORA, Ill. – February 20, 2020]: The Aurora Police Department is investigating after a vehicle wanted in a shooting Wednesday afternoon led officers on a pursuit and eventually crashed into multiple other vehicles near the Fox Valley Mall.

At 1:30 p.m., officers were responding to a call of shots fired in the 600 block of South Broadway Street. While they were responding to the scene, a description of the suspected vehicle involved in the shooting was relayed over the radio and the vehicle, a gray Monte Carlo, was spotted by an officer.

The officer attempted to perform a traffic stop and activated their emergency lights and siren, but the driver didn't stop. The officer began to pursue the vehicle and other nearby officers assisted. During the course of the pursuit on Aurora's east side, the suspects' vehicle began driving erratically and crossed over into oncoming traffic on East New York Street before it crashed into multiple other vehicles near the Fox Valley Mall.

Three people were inside the suspects' vehicle and were transported by Aurora Fire Department paramedics to Aurora area hospitals. Two were listed in critical condition and the third was listed in stable condition. A fourth person, from one of the vehicles involved in the crash, was transported to an area hospital with very minor injuries.

During the course of the incident, a 35-year-old male suffering from a gunshot wound arrived at an Aurora area hospital. Investigators have determined that he was shot near the scene of the original call of shots fired in the 600 block of South Broadway Street. The Aurora Police Department believes the shooting was gang-related.

Aurora Police detectives responded to the scene and began interviewing potential witnesses, canvassing the area and investigating the specific circumstances of the incident. Evidence

Technicians from Aurora Police's Evidence Unit also responded to the scene to identify and collect forensic evidence from the shooting and the crash. Additionally, Aurora Police's Traffic Unit responded to the scene to begin conducting an investigation into the crash.

Investigators from the Kane County Major Crimes Task Force were also called to investigate this incident as the State of Illinois Police and Community Relations Improvement Act requires special investigation provisions for serious injuries or deaths including those involving "an individual's vehicle in the process of apprehension or attempt to apprehend."

East New York Street was shut down for a number of hours between Route 59 and Commons Drive while the incident was investigated. Volunteers from Aurora's Emergency Management Agency provided assistance with road closures throughout the incident.

The investigation is still on-going. Anyone with information or tips on the incident is asked to call the Aurora Police Department Investigations Division at 630-256-5500.

- ### -

*(APD Reports #: AUPR20002420 / AUPR20002421 / AUPR20002426)*