



***For Immediate Release***

***September 16, 2026***

***Case #MN26-4649***

## **SUSPECT ARRESTED FOLLOWING PURSUIT AND FATAL COLLISION**

**Menifee, CA** – On September 15, 2026, at approximately 4:54 p.m., the Menifee Police Department responded to the 27000 block of Hemingway Court regarding a burglary in progress.

As an officer arrived, the suspect vehicle was seen leaving the location. The officer attempted to conduct a traffic stop, but the driver failed to yield, resulting in a brief vehicle pursuit.

During the pursuit, the suspect vehicle traveled westbound on Holland Avenue at a high rate of speed. Upon reaching the intersection of Holland Avenue and Evans Road, the driver failed to stop for a red traffic light and struck a juvenile riding an electric bike northbound on Evans Road.

Officers rendered emergency medical aid to the juvenile until CAL Fire personnel arrived and continued lifesaving efforts. Despite these efforts, the juvenile succumbed to his injuries. The juvenile was identified as a 13-year-old Menifee resident.

Following the collision, the suspect continued fleeing until the vehicle became disabled and came to a stop. The driver, and sole occupant, was identified as Melody Valdez, a 21-year-old Temecula resident. Valdez was taken into custody and booked at the Cois M. Byrd Detention Center on multiple felony charges, including homicide.

The California Highway Patrol Multidisciplinary Accident Investigation Team (MAIT) responded at our request and assumed responsibility for the fatal traffic collision investigation. The Menifee Police Department, in coordination with the Riverside County District Attorney's Office, is conducting the associated criminal investigation.

This remains an active and ongoing investigation. Anyone who witnessed the incident or has surveillance footage, dash-camera video, or other recordings that may have captured any portion of the incident is encouraged to contact Detective Garcia of the Menifee Police Department at [Ogarcia@menifeepolice.org](mailto:Ogarcia@menifeepolice.org) or (951) 723-1641.

Our deepest condolences go out to the family and loved ones affected by this heartbreaking incident.

### **Media Contact**

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**###**

**David Gutierrez**

Chief of Police

