



Frederick County Sheriff's Office
110 Airport Drive East
Frederick, MD 21701
301-600-1046

News Release

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CONTACT: Major Tim Clarke
301-600-3643 Office
301-748-4161 Cell
tclarke@frederickcountymd.gov

CATOCTIN HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING THREAT UNCOVERED

On Thursday, March 23, 2017, Catoctin High School officials were notified by a concerned parent of the potential threat of violence towards the school. Administrators immediately contacted the Frederick County Sheriff's Office and an investigation was initiated.

The student, an 18 year old female and Thurmont resident identified as Nichole Cevario, was immediately removed from the classroom and turned over to investigators. Preliminary investigation revealed clearly that Ms. Cevario posed a threat not only to the school, but to herself. She was transported from the school to Frederick Memorial Hospital for an emergency evaluation and currently remains hospitalized.

IT WAS ABUNDNTLY CLEAR TO INVESTIGATORS VERY EARLY ON IN THE INVESTIGATION THAT THE IDENTIFICATION AND QUICK CONTAINMENT OF MS. CEVARIO ELIMINATED ANY THREAT TO THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY. THE INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT AT NO TIME WAS THERE EVER A WEAPON OR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE BROUGHT ON TO SCHOOL PROPERTY. ADDITIONALLY THE INVESTIGATION IS CLEAR THAT WHILE EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS WERE LOCATED DURING THE INVESTIGATION THEY HAD NOT BEEN COMBINED IN ANY FORM THAT ACTUALLY CREATED AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE.

Detectives from the Sheriff's Office have been aggressively investigating this incident for the past several days to determine its extent and if there were any other individuals involved with Ms. Cevario. **The investigation to this point has revealed that this was a plot solely conceived by Ms. Cevario and there are no other individuals that assisted her in the planning and/or the execution of this plot. Additionally, at this point in the investigation, we are confident that Ms. Cevario was the only one that knew of the impending incident that was averted as a result of this investigation.**

The investigation to this point has been focused on the search of Ms. Cevario's residence and the recovery of evidence, scrutiny of her journal, interviews with her known associates, family members, and friends. Ms. Cevario's journal clearly spelled out a detailed shooting event that she planned to execute on a specific date in April at Catoctin High School. Evidence recovered from her home revealed that she was actively acquiring materials needed to execute the plot. Those items included a shotgun with ammunition, bomb making materials to include pipes with end caps, shrapnel, fireworks, magnesium tape, and fuse material.

Ms. Cevario's journal revealed that she had been planning this event for some time and had been compiling intelligence on behavior activities of the school, noting emergency procedures associated with drills conducted by school staff and obtaining intelligence on the School Resource Deputy assigned to the school. The journal was very detailed including a timeline that revealed how she was going to execute the plot and her expectations at each stage of the event.

Investigators are confident of the intent, but are still trying to evaluate if Ms. Cevario would have had the will to execute the event, but what was clear from Ms. Cevario is she planned on dying on the date she identified in her journal. The investigation has also revealed she had the means and equipment to have caused a significant life safety event at Catoctin High School if she had followed through with the threat. It was also clear that Ms. Cevario was struggling with mental health issues which prompted the emergency evaluation at Frederick Memorial Hospital.

Investigators have obtained an arrest warrant for Ms. Cevario that will be served upon her release from Frederick Memorial Hospital charging her with:

1. Possession of explosive material with intent to create a destructive device.
2. Possession of incendiary material with the intent to create a destructive device.

The Sheriff's Office is extremely appreciative of the parent's actions in bringing this potentially deadly incident to the proper authority's attention, promptly, so that a positive conclusion could be achieved. They absolutely did the right thing and have been extremely cooperative throughout the entire investigation. We also acknowledge that this is a very difficult time for the family and ask that everyone respect their privacy in this matter. We also want to acknowledge that emergency procedures, developed in cooperation with Frederick County Public Schools, which have been in place for some time, worked in this case. We have a significant amount of valuable information from this incident that will be extremely beneficial to school and law enforcement officials. We intend to evaluate this information and update our emergency procedures, system-wide, in order to further improve on our response to critical incidents.

The Sheriff's Office is also extremely grateful for the cooperation and assistance we received in this case from Frederick County Public Schools, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office bomb squad, the Department of Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's Office, and the Frederick County State's Attorney's Office.

Any one that has information related to this investigation is asked to contact SGT Greg Warner at **301-600-2583**.

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