

Standoff in North Plainfield ends after SWAT Team, police arrest armed man

BY BRANDON LAUSCH • STAFF WRITER • SEPTEMBER 9, 2008



NORTH PLAINFIELD —A four-hour standoff in an apartment complex ended Tuesday, Sept. 9 with a man in custody after dozens of camouflaged SWAT Team members and police used tear gas to force their suspect into surrender, authorities said.

Borough resident James Edward Minor, 29, was arrested in the Northwood Apartments on North Drive after Somerset County negotiators attempted to contact him for hours, including tries with a phone and bullhorn, police said.

Because Minor repeatedly refused, authorities said they used tear gas to pressure him into the hands of law enforcement.

No injuries were reported and no shots were fired in the cluster of 134 one- and two-bedroom apartments.



Somerset County Prosecutor Wayne J. Forrest said the incident started at about 11 a.m. Tuesday when borough police asked county authorities to assist them in serving a temporary restraining order against Minor and in executing a search warrant of his residence, Apartment H1.



Forrest said borough police asked for backup because they believed Minor had barricaded himself inside the apartment with firearms.

About two hours later, Forrest said county SWAT Team members and Crisis Negotiators surrounded the

apartment and secured a perimeter as they attempted to contact Minor. At one point, authorities said Minor tried to leave his apartment but immediately returned to hiding once he saw the heavy police presence.

The female companion of Minor's who sought the restraining order remained safely elsewhere as the incident unfolded, the prosecutor said.

Following Minor's arrest, police said they seized a bulletproof vest and two semi-automatic handguns, a .45-caliber Colt and a .45-caliber Glock, from the apartment. Borough police are continuing to investigate.

"No one's hurt, everyone went home — even the person's safe — so that's all we could

hope for," borough police Chief William Parenti said in the minutes after Minor was led in handcuffs to a police cruiser and responding personnel were gathered and complimented for their work.

"Our SWAT Team working with our negotiators, have always, thank God, brought things to a peaceful resolution where we've never had to fire shots and no one's ever been seriously injured," Forrest said later. "And this is just another mission where they've been deployed where the result has been the same."

Nearby residents, who watched at least 50 officials congregate near their homes after the arrest, said the area is typically a quiet and carefree community.

Michael Hayden, standing with his 11-year-old son Matthew, said he moved to the apartment complex from New York City about three years ago.

He said he wasn't shaken by the incident.

"This is the safest spot around here," Hayden said. "This stuff never happens here. You don't even hear a noise after six o'clock."

Dorothy Sherman, an 89-year-old resident who stood on her first-floor balcony with daughter Melissa to catch



some of the action, said the area is usually so peaceful, "if a dog barks, people complain."

"It's nice here," added Melissa Sherman.

"Nobody even knows you're here."

When Melissa Sherman was asked how she'd sleep after such a drawn-out episode happened just a few buildings away, she was quick to respond.

"I never sleep good, so it doesn't make a difference," she said.



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