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PRESS RELEASE

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On July 2, 2021, the Chilton County Sheriff's Office responded to a wooded area off of County Rd 5014, on a report of a burned vehicle containing human remains. Deputies responded to the location and located a badly burned SUV with the burned remains of three individuals. Investigators processed the scene and the remains which were taken to the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences for examination. Through that evidence, other evidence Investigators collected in Tennessee, as well as samples provided from family members in Mexico, the three individuals have been identified as Gabriel Alonzo Rios Jr 24, Gilberto Munoz Cabrera 37, and Javier Quintero Gonzalez 36. All three victims were from the Metro Nashville/Hendersonville Tennessee area. The autopsies completed by the Alabama Department of Forensic Science determined that at least two of the victims suffered from gunshot wounds prior to being burned and the case was investigated as a Homicide.

Since July 22, 2021 Investigators from the Sheriff's Office Special Operations Division have traveled to multiple jurisdictions in Alabama and Tennessee, conducting interviews and gathering evidence in this case. On January 27, 2022, the Sheriff's Office executed Search Warrants on County Rd 5014 and County Rd 1080 in Chilton County. At that time, Investigators recovered items of evidence that are believed to be linked to this investigation. Based on this evidence, as well as other evidence and statements collected during the course of this investigation, Investigators arrested Noel Garcia Esquivel, 28 of Montevallo and Abraham Pena Perez 27 of Alabaster. Both Esquivel and Perez were charged with (3) three counts of Murder. Both offenders are in the United States illegally. Information gathered during the investigation indicates that the individuals were involved in drug trafficking. Both have had their first appearance in front of District Judge Chris Speaks and bond was set at \$1.5 Million on each count. \$4.5 million total for each offender.

This investigation is still ongoing. Investigators are gathering additional evidence and expect to make additional arrests for firearms related offenses. If anyone has any information about these Homicides, please contact the Sheriff's Office at (205) 755-4698 or leave a crime tip at www.chiltoncountyso.org.

This investigation, like most major cases, was a team effort. The Sheriff's Office received assistance from the Alabaster Police Department, the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, Fast-Lab in Thorsby, Alabama, the Metro Nashville Police Department, the Hendersonville Tennessee Police Department, the Cheatham County Tennessee Sheriff's Office, the Dickson County Tennessee Sheriff's Office, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Thank you to everyone who has helped throughout this investigation.

John Shearon
Sheriff