



POLICE DEPARTMENT

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******PRESS RELEASE****WALLA WALLA POLICE DEPT******
Rival gang fight at local convenience store leads to serious injury

June 1, 2014

Four suspects are in custody this afternoon following a gang fight at the Walla Walla Farmers Co-op Cenex convenience store at 706 W. Rose. WWPD Officers responded to the call at 7:54 this morning. It started when a known gang member was waiting to pump gas while his friends were inside the store. He was confronted by 4 rival gang members and a fight ensued. As the incident continued his friends came out to assist.

During the melee, Johnny Gonzalez, 20, sustained a severe injury to his eye. He has since been flown to a Seattle area hospital for specialized treatment.

Upon arrival of officers, 2 vehicles were identified as being involved and stopped by Officers and Deputies from the Sheriff's office. Occupants of both vehicles—members or associates of local rival gangs, were detained and brought to the police station for interviews.

Detectives believe that guns and knives were displayed or used during the fight and are currently seeking warrants to search the impounded vehicles for these items and other evidence.

Three suspects have been arrested and are currently being held on probable cause for Complicity to Commit Assault 2nd and Misdemeanor Riot. They are Juan Venagas Esquivel, 20; Jesus Angel Hernandez, 27; and Juan Munoz, 27. Munoz had been out of jail on pre-trial release for previous charges of robbery and assault, and may face additional penalties for violating this release agreement. A 4th suspect—Javier Valdez, 27, was arrested for Felon in Possession of a Firearm. He has 2 previous convictions for this same offense.

More arrests and/or additional charges are likely as the investigation continues.

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