



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Prepared by: Brittany Kershaw
Phone and Email: (386) 586-2637; bkershaw@flaglersheriff.com
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FCSO Deputies Show Tremendous Restraint during Intense Response to Woman Attempting 'Suicide by Cop'

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) responded to a call just after 10:30 p.m. on June 17th for a domestic disturbance at 20 Beth Lane in Palm Coast.



Pictured Above: Melanie Botts, age 36.

FCSO deputies arrived on scene and discovered that the suspect, Melanie Botts (36 years-old), had threatened her boyfriend, Michael Celano (61 years-old), with a 12-inch kitchen knife. Celano's 11-year-old son was present during the altercation. Celano told deputies that Botts was no longer at the residence and he did not know if she still had the knife.

During a check of the perimeter, FCSO deputies located Botts in the backyard holding the knife up to her neck. Botts began an intense exchange with deputies screaming profanities at them and demanding that they shoot her, encouraging the K-9 to bite her, and refusing to drop the knife. After

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numerous attempts were made to get Botts to drop the knife, an FCSO Sergeant deployed his agency issued Taser, causing Botts to drop the knife and allowing deputies to detain her.

“This is a tremendous example of the amazing men and women we have working here at the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office,” Sheriff Rick Staly said. “This was an intense call with a woman who was trying everything and anything to get our deputies to shoot her. Our deputies showed incredible restraint and professionalism and because of that she is alive today. I hope she gets the help she needs. This story could have had a very different ending.”

Melanie Botts was arrested and charged with Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Domestic Violence, Resisting Arrest without Violence, and Violation of Probation. Even after being placed under arrest, Botts continued to berate the deputies on scene. While in the patrol vehicle, Botts intentionally slammed her head on the vehicle partition causing a laceration to her forehead.

Due to suicidal statements and actions made by Botts, she was also placed under a Baker Act. Botts was taken to Advent Health Palm Coast for medical attention where she was soon after cleared and transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility where she is being held without bond.

The incident was captured on FCSO Body Worn cameras and can be seen here. The video is 11 minutes and 31 seconds long: https://drive.google.com/open?id=14uUrdUDy8Nhjqf_iZp-RX2ZvHvOWLc0D

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1769 East Moody Blvd., Bunnell, FL 32110

386-437-4116 – Fax 386-586-4820

Mailing: P.O. Box 879, Bunnell, FL 32110

www.flaglersheriff.com