



# DOUGLASVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## Statement from Chief Gary Sparks

### Arrests made in July, 2015 incident in Douglasville, GA

On Saturday July 25th, 2015 Douglasville Police Officers were dispatched to 9037 Campbellton St regarding a disturbance. When they arrived, officers were met with a hostile and volatile situation involving at least 30 people. Officers initially confirmed that there were no injuries and then began to separate all of those involved. The scene was chaotic and the officers were concerned that if the parties were not immediately separated there was a high potential of physical altercations because many of those involved were highly emotional and agitated. While attempting to control the situation Officers were able to identify all but two individuals in the group of suspects who were involved in the incident. One suspect was arrested for a violation of probation warrant. Those involved in the incident gave Officers conflicting accounts of what took place, and several people would not give statements at the scene.

For the next month Detectives conducted a thorough and professional investigation. A total of 17 follow-up interviews were conducted and 5 additional independent witnesses (who did not stop at the scene and identify themselves to officers) were identified and later located to be interviewed. A total of 7 investigators worked on this case. The investigation spanned two counties and included obtaining videos from multiple locations, numerous follow up interviews, and the use of social media to both identify witnesses and obtain background information about the suspects. Investigators contacted members of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Hiram Police Department, 911 centers in both Douglas and Paulding Counties, and parole officers to uncover information regarding this case.

Because of the thorough and methodical investigation, investigators were able to put together a complete and accurate picture of the events that took place at the

scene. This allowed the Douglas County District Attorney's office to successfully indict and prosecute numerous individuals. Two individuals, Jose Torres and Kayla Norton went to trial and were convicted by a jury in Judge Beau McClain's court.

The Douglasville Police Department chose to conduct a lengthy investigation after officers at the scene were unable to immediately identify probable cause to make arrests due to the volatile and chaotic situation, conflicting accounts of what took place, and lack of on-scene independent witnesses. Because of the seriousness of this case to our community we wanted to get this case right the first time. Officers and supervisors at the scene determined that it was prudent to get both sides of the story and gather more evidence, rather than making hasty decisions that ultimately could have jeopardized the case.

Let it be known that our investigation and uncovering of the facts is what allowed the District Attorney's Office to indict the suspects, and subsequently for them to be convicted in Superior Court. Our decision to conduct a rigorous investigation is what brought justice to the victims in this case and made our community safer.

Chief Gary Sparks  
Douglasville Police Department