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Sheriff Lou Vallario
Garfield County, Colorado

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: 2/1/2024

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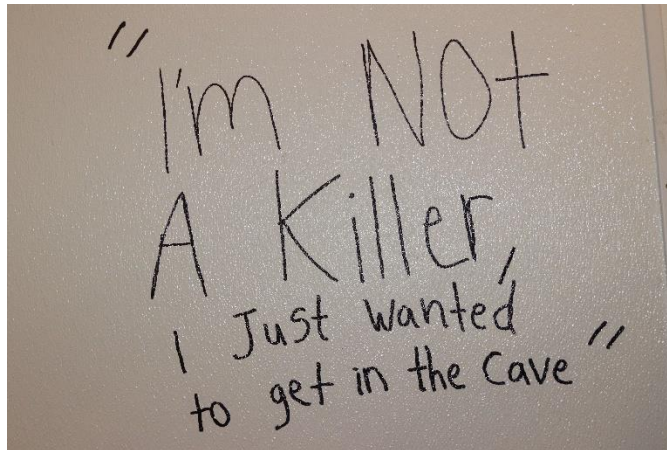
Title: Glenwood Adventure Park Updated Press Release

IMPORTANT: Please direct any media requests to the contact above. Do not contact the Garfield County Emergency Communications Center or Patrol staff for media requests.

GARFIELD COUNTY, CO. –



Diego Barajas Medina as pictured in his High School Yearbook



On October 28, 2023, the Garfield County Sheriff's Office received a call of a deceased male at the Glenwood Springs Adventure Park. The body was that of Diego Barajas-Medina, he was discovered prior to the opening of the Park. Diego was a 20-year old man who had graduated from the Roaring Fork High School in Carbondale in 2021.

He was described by friends, family and school officials as being a bit of a loner. Diego lived quietly with his mother and brother in Carbondale. He had no prior engagements or run-ins with law enforcement and there was no reason to believe that he was a threat to others.

The investigation further revealed Diego had no contact with mental health services. There was nothing to indicate that he worked in concert with any other individual or group or that he was a part of an extremist group nor did he operate at the behest of any drug cartel or terrorist group. In the end, Diego took his own life in the women's restroom at the Amusement Park for reasons known only to him. Before taking his life, he wrote on one of the restroom walls, "I'm not a killer, I just wanted to get in the cave."

Diego's residence in Carbondale was initially searched, even while the investigation was proceeding at the Amusement Park in Glenwood Springs, to determine if there was any threat to the public or residents at that location. The home was cleared and the residents returned to their homes.

A search of Diego's phone and computer revealed he visited several sites discussing other mass shootings. However, the investigation was unable to uncover any motive for Diego amassing such a lethal arsenal nor did it explain what happened to change his mind and why he did not follow through with whatever he was planning. Toxicology reports showed no traces of alcohol or other illegal drugs in his system. He illegally entered the park after hours when no employees or patrons were present.

Diego was dressed in black tactical clothing bearing patches and emblems that gave the appearance of being associated with law enforcement. He was wearing body-armor and what appeared to be a ballistic helmet. He had a semi-automatic rifle as well as a semi-automatic handgun with multiple loaded magazines for each weapon and several hundred rounds of ammunition.

Diego also had multiple IEDs or "Improvised Explosive Devices" on or near him. Similar devices were found in a vehicle on the premises. Diego had apparently used that vehicle to drive up to the Caverns. Some of the IEDs were decoys but each had to be considered live and active until it could be properly neutralized.

Because of the IEDs, the Grand Junction Bomb Squad was called to the scene. With their expertise, they were able to inspect all such devices and deactivate or determine them to be harmless. Members of the GJ Bomb Squad and the Garfield County All Hazards Response Team (AHRT), made a sweep of the entire adventure park to assure that no other devices were present. These operations necessitated that the park remain closed for two days, October 28 and 29, 2023, in the interest of public safety and the general safety of everyone involved.

The initial two days of the investigation were carried out in a slow, methodical manner in order to search the property at the adventure park, as well as the suspect's residence. These steps were necessary for the safety of the public at large as well as to determine the possible extent of Diego's criminal activity. It was determined that the suspect's actions were limited to the property of the Glenwood Caverns and that there was no threat to the public outside of the amusement park area. The safety of the public, bomb disposal personnel, law enforcement and other first responders was always the priority during the investigation in addition to making sure the caverns were safe to reopen.

The investigation did not reveal any ties between Diego and the Glenwood Caverns Amusement Park. The Sheriff's Office acknowledges that given amount of weaponry, ammunition, and explosive devices found, Diego could have implemented an attack of devastating proportions on our community resulting in multiple

injuries and possibly death to members of the public as well as first responders. As a community, we are fortunate and thankful that this did not happen.

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office Investigations determined that Barajas-Medina acquired all of his weapons, ammunition, and tactical equipment legally by ordering the items from various internet sites. This included the two semi-automatic guns that were determined to be "ghost" guns. *Note: ghost guns are unregulated, unserialized and untraceable firearms that anyone can buy and build without a background check.*

The Garfield County Sheriff's Office wishes to thank the employees and maintenance staff of the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park for their patience and ongoing assistance with this investigation. We would also like to extend out thanks to the Grand Junction Bomb Squad, Garfield County All Hazard Response Team, the Carbondale Police Department, the Garfield County Coroner, United States Postal Inspectors, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their assistance with this investigation.

No additional information will be released.

The mission of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office is to provide solutions for the people through professional, ethical and compassionate conduct.

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