

## Feds Join Investigation Of Firebombed Orange County GOP Headquarters

By Administrator

Monday, 17 October 2016 14:25 -

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HILLSBOROUGH — Hillsborough Police Department investigators met with local, state and federal investigators this morning as the investigation continues into arson and graffiti committed at the Orange County Republican Party headquarters. “We are taking this incident very seriously and have significant resources at the local, state and federal level committed to this investigation,” Hillsborough Police Chief Duane Hampton said. “We continue to ask for anyone with any information to come forward.”

The time frame for the crime has been narrowed to between midnight and 8:54 a.m. Oct. 16, when a 911 call was made by a nearby business owner. The Police Department has received a recording of the 911 call, and it is being released to the public with some redaction and obfuscation to protect the individual reporting.

The approximately 4-minute call notes a smell of smoke, no visible flames but signs of the use of an incendiary device at the Republican Party headquarters, located at 347 Ja-Max Drive in the Shops at Daniel Boone.

“Someone has firebombed through the window of the Republican Party next to me and sprayed all over the side of my building, ‘Nazi Republicans leave town or else,’ ” the caller reported.

The caller further reported, “They threw some sort of firebomb through the window because it smoked up under the porch and all around the window frame. ... I can smell smoke, so obviously it went out on its own or didn’t work well, but it is some sort of incendiary device.”

The caller theorized that the incident must have occurred in the early hours due to no one being in the area and the presence of outdoor cats the caller cares for at that time of the 911 call.

Hillsborough investigators are working as a team with the federal and state bureaus of investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Orange County Sheriff’s Office to follow leads and investigative steps. The Secret Service also is supporting the investigation. Investigative steps include canvassing and conducting interviews in the area;

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following up on tips; seeking additional evidence, such as any video footage in the area; and processing collected evidence.

“I’m appreciative of our law enforcement expertise and cooperation across agencies to uncover who is behind this reprehensible act,” Hillsborough Mayor Tom Stevens said. “Especially given the national attention we are receiving, I’m extremely appreciative for everybody who is using this as an opportunity to pull our community together, rather than promote division.”

The Republican Party building sustained heavy smoke damage and some fire damage. A bottle containing flammable material was thrown through a front window of the building and appears to have ignited inside the building, burning some furniture and damaging the building’s interior before going out on its own. Graffiti was spray-painted on the side of an adjacent building at 353

Ja-Max

Drive. Five officers responded to the scene. A copy of a portion of the police report is available; however, the reported damage estimate is a preliminary minimum estimate made by the patrol officer on scene before the full extent of the damage was known. Damage estimates will be updated. A more detailed narrative cannot be released at this time.

Anyone with information about the crime is asked to contact Hillsborough Investigator Jon Purvis

by email or by phone at 919-732-9381,

ext

. 37. Information also may be left anonymously through the town’s website or by calling the Hillsborough Police Department’s tip line at 919-732-3975. The phone line is routed directly to voicemail and does not record callers’ phone numbers.