



# Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office

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## News Release

For Immediate Release:

### **SISKIYOU COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEWS UPDATE**

**May 9, 2017**

### **Sheriff's Office Arrests Suspect for Murder of Happy Camp Man**

On May 9, 2017 at about 7:41 p.m., Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) detectives and members of the SCSO's Special Response Team arrested Mr. Dakota Michael Bearquiver, 24, of Happy Camp for the murder of Mr. Benjamin Arthur Camarena, 42, also of Happy Camp. The arrest was made in the 2500 block of Indian Creek Road in Happy Camp. On May 4, 2017, SCSO Dive Team and Search and Rescue members located Mr. Camarena's body in Klamath River about two miles east of Wingate, an area a few miles west of Happy Camp after an exhaustive 20-day search for the missing man. The case has been investigated as a possible homicide from the day Mr. Camarena was reported missing on April 14, 2017, when a report was received of a body floating down Indian Creek and shortly thereafter the body was seen in the swift current floating in the Klamath River; however, the body submerged and was not immediately found even though considerable search efforts were initiated and sustained.

The SCSO's Major Crimes Unit developed a number of investigative leads in recent days and weeks, which resulted in Mr. Bearquiver's arrest for Mr. Camarena's death. The SCSO's Special Response Team, Crisis Response Team, and additional SCSO field units responded due to the extraordinary officer safety threats that potentially existed during the arrest operation. A CHP unit also assisted SCSO with the operation. After the arrest, Mr. Bearquiver was transported to the Siskiyou County Jail in Yreka, where he was booked for murder, assault with a deadly weapon, and he was also booked for intimidating a witness/dissuading a witness of a crime. He is being held without bail, pending an arraignment in the Siskiyou County Superior Court.

An exhaustive search of the Klamath River in the Happy Camp area had been conducted by SCSO SAR, SCSO Posse, SCSO Dive Team, SCSO Water Safety Unit, California Highway Patrol (CHP) Northern Division Air Operations fixed-wing and rotary wing aircraft, and, extensive assistance and support was received by Karuk, Hoopa, and Yurok tribal emergency response and various volunteer resources. The U.S. Coast Guard, California Army National Guard, and California Office of Emergency Services also assisted with the search and recovery efforts since April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Shortly after the initial search for the suspected dead body was started, relatives of Mr. Camarena reported him missing. He was last seen in vicinity of Indian Creek in the Happy Camp area at about the time the body in the river was reported to law enforcement authorities on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

SCSO detective units have made a number of trips to Happy Camp to gather information and to interview more people who had knowledge of Mr. Camarena's activities in the hours and moments before his disappearance.

According to Sheriff Jon Lopey, "We are grateful that we received support from Mr. Camarena's family and Happy Camp citizens, which helped us make tremendous progress on this case, which, when coupled with the investigative efforts of our Major Crimes Unit, resulted in Mr. Bearquiver's arrest. There were others, including an infant in a structure on the property, the team deployed skillfully, and Mr. Bearquiver was taken into custody without anyone getting hurt, which is always a major plus. There were firearms in the structure as well, which presented a potential safety threat. I would again like to extend our sincere condolences, thoughts, and prayers to the family and friends of Mr. Camarena in the aftermath of his tragic death. They have suffered untold grief and uncertainty during this ordeal and it is a positive development that this arrest was made because it provides some answers to the family about Benjamin's disappearance. The many departmental members involved in this on-going, complex, difficult, and challenging investigation have worked very hard to solve this case on behalf of the victim, his family, friends, and the entire Happy Camp community. We still have a lot of work to do on this case and anyone with any information about Mr. Camarena's case is urged to contact the SCSO's 24-hour Dispatch Center at (530) 841-2900."



Murder Victim - Mr. Benjamin Arthur Camarena



Suspect – Dakota Michael Bearquiver

