



# **News Release**

**Alachua County Sheriff's Office**

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**For Immediate Release:**

**Today's Date: July 27, 2015**

**Prepared by: PIO Art Forgey**

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**Media Advisory: Interstate 75 Update**

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office continues to cooperate with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) into the circumstances surrounding the armed confrontation that occurred near Interstate 75, Saturday (July 25). The incident began when a Florida Highway Patrol Trooper stopped to render aid to a stranded motorist. A suspect, later identified as Earl Jackson, fired several rounds from a handgun while fleeing into the woods.

In the interest of public safety, both northbound and southbound traffic was stopped on Interstate 75 in the area of the 378 mile marker. During this time deputies were holding perimeter positions and getting ready to go into the woods. Those deputies holding perimeter positions heard random gunfire throughout the time until Mr. Jackson was located. Gunfire was also heard as the helicopter circled the area. Due to the close proximity of the gunfire to the Interstate, in the interest of safety to the motoring public, the Interstate remained closed in both directions.

When the suspect was finally located and confronted, he made several statements in regards to being associated with the terrorist organization ISIS. Gunfire was exchanged between the suspect and Alachua County Deputies. The suspect was actually held in a prone position by one of the Rooks on scene so that law enforcement could approach & check for possible explosive devices. During this check it was found that Mr. Jackson was dead. An autopsy will be conducted at which time a cause of death will be determined.

Once the scene was secured and Mr. Jackson was found not to be in possession of any explosive devices, attention turned to his vehicle. The vehicle was still parked in the emergency lane on the Interstate. Due to the ISIS comments, explosive detection K-9's were brought in to insure the car was safe. During this time the dogs hit on a locked box in the

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trunk of the vehicle. Alachua County Sheriff's Office Bomb Team members responded and found that the package contained a firearm.

No ISIS connection has been confirmed and the FBI is investigating these statements further.

Once all steps were taken to insure safe public passage, the Interstate was reopened. The Alachua County Sheriff's Office will continue to cooperate with the FDLE investigation into the incident.

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