

# Media Release

## Yavapai County Sheriff's Office Scott Mascher – Sheriff

255 E. Gurley Street, Prescott, AZ 86301  
Dwight D'Evelyn - Media Coordinator  
928-777-7441



December 20, 2016

### *Deputy's Persistence leads to arrest of suspect wanted for Murder in California*

\*\*\*

On December 14, 2016, around 12:30 PM, deputies were dispatched to a business in the 6500 block of Highway 179, Village of Oak Creek, regarding suspicious activity. Specifically, the store manager reported a man and woman in the parking lot soliciting to obtain drugs and alcohol. The manager also saw the woman abandon a nearly new bicycle which he believed may be stolen. Upon arrival, the deputies could not locate the pair, but after a brief search along Highway 179, the woman was found. When the deputies approached, she tried to walk away but was detained. She gave the name 'Vanessa,' spelled her last name as Terravella,' and was apparently not carrying identification. She claimed no knowledge of bothering people for alcohol and was eventually released.



Taravella and her 'boom box' tattoo

While still on scene, a YCSO deputy ran her name in a national crime data base and received a 'sound alike' notice for a homicide warrant identifying 23-year-old Tabitha Taravella. The warrant had been issued 3 days earlier by a police agency in Yreka, California. The physical description of the murder suspect was close to that of 'Vanessa,' who had just been released. The warrant information also mentioned that a tattoo should be visible on the suspect's neck. The deputy recalled that 'Vanessa' had a bandana tied tightly around her entire neck.

While keeping the woman in sight, he called a contact number for the law enforcement agency in Yreka and was told that the neck tattoo was designed as a boom box. Deputies contacted 'Vanessa' again and after hesitating, she complied by removing the bandana from around her neck exposing a boom box tattoo. She eventually admitted her true name was Tabitha Taravella as named in the warrant. Her male friend was now being detained after approaching deputies and trying to interfere with the arrest of the suspect. He was later released. Deputies learned he was also from the Northern California area and may have been travelling with Taravella.

Taravella was arrested and booked at the Camp Verde Detention Center on a Murder warrant and is being held without bond pending extradition. She has denied any involvement.

A link to a media report on the homicide is here: <http://ktvl.com/news/local/female-suspect-wanted-in-murder-investigation-in-yreka>. The media office does not any further details on this investigation.

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260

or the YCSO website: [www.ycsoaz.gov](http://www.ycsoaz.gov)