



# *Township of Monroe*

County of Middlesex

Griffin M. Banos  
Chief of Police

Department of Police:  
Municipal Complex  
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Monroe Township, NJ 08831

For Immediate Release:

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## **Monroe Township Police Officers Rescue Man from Burning Bedroom During Mental Health Crisis**

On May 17, 2025, Sergeant Justin Caruso and Officers Wesley Panckeri and Marc Kramer of the Monroe Township Police Department responded to a residence for a welfare check on one of the occupants. Upon arrival, the officers encountered an uncooperative man experiencing a mental health crisis. The individual made multiple threats to harm the officers if they attempted to enter the bedroom.

Despite the tense situation, the officers remained calm and attempted to engage the subject in dialogue. When communication ceased, officers maintained a cautious posture while equipped with less-lethal options, including shields and Taser energy devices, in case further intervention became necessary.

A short time later, smoke was observed coming from the bedroom. Recognizing the imminent danger to the individual inside, the officers made the decision to force entry, despite the threats of violence. Inside the room, the subject was found armed with a knife. The officers were able to safely subdue him using a shield and remove him from the burning room.

After removing the subject, the officers attempted to extinguish the fire using a fire extinguisher, but required assistance from the Monroe Township Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services to fully manage the scene.

The subject was transported to the hospital for medical treatment and psychological evaluation. All three officers were also transported to a local hospital for evaluation and were released later that day.

"This incident highlights the bravery, compassion, and professionalism of our officers," said Chief Griffin Banos. "Despite the dangers they faced, they remained calm, made sound decisions under pressure, and ultimately saved a life. I am incredibly proud of their actions. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Monroe Township Fire Department and Monroe Emergency Medical Services for their swift response and vital assistance at the scene."