

## 2014 Valor Awards — Fleeing Suspect

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On December 28, around 1:30 a.m., Officer Trevor Griffin and Officer Hayden Johnson were stopped at a red light at the intersection of North Van Dorn Street and Sanger Avenue, each in their own cruiser. They observed a car run through the red light and into the intersection. Vehicles coming from the opposite direction had to slam on their brakes to avoid hitting the car. Officer Griffin turned on his police lights and began following the car in an attempt to pull it over. Officer Johnson followed Officer Griffin. The car began going noticeably faster. Traveling at a high rate of speed, the car made a left turn onto Taney Avenue, narrowly avoiding a collision with oncoming traffic. The driver of the vehicle then attempted to make a left turn from North Pelham Street onto Holmes Run Parkway. However, due to its high rate of speed, the car was unable to make the turn and collided with a parked vehicle before coming to a stop.

As Officer Griffin approached the car in his police cruiser, he observed the driver exit the car. The suspect fled towards the canal on Holmes Run Parkway. Officer Griffin quickly exited his cruiser and ran after the suspect, yelling “Police, Stop. Police” several times. Officer Johnson pulled up beside Officer Griffin’s cruiser, observed him running after the fleeing suspect and quickly joined the chase.

The suspect continued to run. He tore through a thick bush on the embankment. Officer Griffin again told the suspect to stop and show his hands. As Officer Johnson caught up to Officer Griffin just in time to observe the suspect enter the freezing water in the canal. He showed no signs of slowing down. Immediately, Officer Griffin radioed for other units to intercept the suspect on the other side of the canal.

Officer Ruben Cardenas heard Officer Griffin on the radio and responded to the area. He parked his cruiser and began to approach the canal from the opposite side. It was cold and dark. He shined his flashlight down the canal in search of the suspect. There, he observed a male matching the suspect’s description standing in the canal water with his clothes soaking wet. Officer Cardenas drew his weapon and told the suspect to get to the ground. The suspect complied. By this time, Officers Johnson and Griffin had arrived at Officer Cardenas’ location. They entered the freezing canal water and placed the suspect in handcuffs. The officers attempted to remove the suspect from the canal. However, due to the freezing water temperatures, the suspect collapsed and became disoriented. Officers Johnson and Griffin quickly dragged the suspect out of the water and began to provide first aid. Officer Griffin covered the suspect with an emergency hypothermia foil blanket to get his body temperature up and medics were called for assistance. The suspect received medical treatment at a local hospital and was later released to police.

The officers are credited for apprehending and ultimately saving the suspect’s life when the he put himself in a life-threatening situation. The suspect was charged with Felony Eluding Police, Reckless Driving, Driving on a Suspended License and Accident Hit and Run.

Officers Trevor Griffin and Hayden Johnson are awarded Life Saving Awards.



Trevor Griffin



Hayden Johnson