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Car chase maneuver ends with driver killed

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Article Text:

A state **trooper's** pursuit maneuver that caused a stolen sport utility vehicle to crash Thursday on I-75 in Bartow County, killing the driver, is one adopted by the Georgia State Patrol to stop car chases quickly.

The State Patrol says the tapping maneuver, which is supposed to spin a pursued car, causing it to stop, ended a **chase** that had already reached 85 mph and could have endangered other drivers.

The tapping maneuver caused the Explorer to crash in the median, ejecting the driver and killing him.

Jim Shuler, a spokesman for the Georgia State Patrol, said the driver, a Hispanic man, was carrying no identification.

The GBI is trying to identify him by fingerprints, he said.

Two other Hispanic men were riding in the Explorer. They told investigators they had hitched a ride with the driver and didn't know him, Shuler said.

Shuler identified the two as Hector Francisco Martinez, 24, and Jose Ortiz, 40, whose addresses are unknown. They were treated and released from a hospital.

A spokesman at the Bartow County Jail said the two were being held this morning.

The **chase** began when a gas station in Calhoun reported a 1994 Ford Explorer with Indiana plates drove off without paying for gas, Shuler said. The driver of the Explorer passed by the state patrol's Calhoun station to get onto I-75 South and was spotted by a dispatcher who happened to be looking out a window.

The dispatcher called for **Trooper** Les Wilburn to pursue, and discovered when he checked that the Explorer had been stolen on Wednesday.

Wilburn began chasing the Explorer near the Cartersville exit at 7:53 and called for an ambulance at 7:54, Shuler said.

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