



# St. Petersburg Police Department News Release



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## **For Immediate Release**

Dec 22, 2011

## **Update Regarding Jennifer Dunford**

Last night at about 8:20 p.m., detectives received a call from Jennifer Dunford's mother who informed them that Jennifer was with her at her residence at 5701 Haines Road North and that she was unharmed.

Detectives responded to the home and spoke with Dunford who provide the following information;

Dunford said that she was walking near her apartment the previous evening (December 20th) when she saw an man following her that she believed was a former boyfriend with whom she has had domestic violence issues in the past. She acknowledged that she could not be sure the man following her was in fact her former boyfriend however he had similar physical features.

Dunford began to panic and made her way back to her apartment where she looked outside and could see the same man that had been following her was now standing in the alley outside her building.

\*It should be noted at this point that several neighbors also claimed to see a suspicious subject who they believed to be Dunford's former boyfriend outside the building as well. Detectives did make contact with the former boyfriend that who lives near-by. He denied following Dunford and said he had not seen her for several days. He did allow detectives to search his residence.

Dunford went on to say that she was scared and called 911 on her cell phone while in her apartment. Upon being connected to an operator, she dropped the phone and it broke on the floor.

Now further panic stricken, Dunford fled from the apartment and ran east toward the area of Crescent Lake where she claimed to have found an unsecured vacant house and took refuge inside. She spent the night there unaware of the efforts being made by the police to locate her in the surrounding neighborhood.

Dunford said that she spent most of the following day (December 21st) in the vacant house and did not leave until just before dark. She made her way east to 4th Street where eventually got on a PSTA bus, planning to go to her mother's house on Haines Road. Dunford said that prior to fleeing the apartment she did grab some money she used to pay her fare and also her identification card.

During her travels on the bus, Dunford claimed she was approached by a woman who told her that her picture had been on the news and that she had been reported missing. Dunford said she transferred buses at the Gateway shopping center on 77th Avenue North and then got off that bus near 62 Avenue north where she walked to her mother's residence. Her mother in turn called the police.

At this time detectives to not anticipate filing any criminal charges in this case. While there are aspects of Dunford's account of her actions which appear to be unusual and unsubstantiated, there is no evidence at this juncture that she specifically



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intended to make any false report of a crime.

Information released by Mike Puetz, 727-893-7550, michael.puetz@stpete.org

Previous Media Release of Dec 21, 2011 at 22:18:22 \*\*\*\*\*

Update re. Detectives Attempting to Locate Woman Missing Under Suspicious Circumstances

Jennifer Dunford has been located alive and well.

Detectives were contacted at about 8:20 p.m. this evening by a relative who advised that Dunford was with her.

Detectives interviewed Dunford at the relative's home and determined that she had left the residence at 1919 Dr. MLK Street North yesterday evening by herself and of her own accord.

At this time there is no evidence of any crime taking place in this matter and we will provide additional information on her statement to detectives tomorrow morning.

Original release of 12/21/11\*\*\*\*\*

Detectives Attempting to Locate Woman Missing Under Suspicious Circumstances

Missing Person: Jennifer Elizabeth Dunford W/F, 12/25/82 5' 4" tall, 130 lbs, brown hair, hazel eyes of 1919 Dr. MLK Street North, St. Petersburg (photo attached).

At 7:30 p.m., 12/20/11, Dunford's cell phone called 911 and a female voice could be heard stating she needed help and then was disconnected. Dunford's live in boyfriend, Douglas Fowler, arrived at the residence located at 1919 Dr. MLK Street North prior to the police and found her cell phone lying broken on the floor. There were several items inside the residence that were out of place and may suggest a possible struggle.

Thus far detectives have interviewed her current boyfriend Fowler and an ex-boyfriend who lives a short distance away, however nothing so far has been discovered that would help pinpoint her current whereabouts. Detectives have also checked numerous hospitals, spoke with neighbors and interviewed various acquaintances again without results. Dunford does not have access to a vehicle

A K-9 unit and a blood hound from Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office did a grid search of the surrounding area after which a thermal imaging helicopter did a search, all with negative results.

Detectives are currently holding Dunford's residence as a potential crime scene pending further investigation.

Detectives are now seeking the public's assistance in locating Dunford. Anyone with information is asked to contact Detective Brian Taylor at 727-893-4955 or the police non-emergency number at 727-893-7780.

Information released by Mike Puetz, 727-893-7550, michael.puetz@stpete.org  
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