



HAWTHORNE POLICE DEPARTMENT

12501 South Hawthorne Boulevard, Hawthorne, California, 90250

PRESS RELEASE

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Suitable For Public Dissemination

Domestic Violence / Child Endangerment Arrest

On Monday, August 22, 2011, at about 3:00 AM, Hawthorne Police Department patrol officers were dispatched on a domestic violence call, at an apartment building in the 14400 of Chadron Avenue, in the City of Hawthorne. Upon arrival, officers contacted the adult parties involved, a husband and wife. Also present in the apartment were the six of the couple's children, ages 16, 14, 12, 11, 8, and 4.

Officers learned that an argument over finances between the man and woman escalated into a physical struggle. During the struggle, the man allegedly choked the woman. Upon seeing their father batter their mother, some of the children verbally objected. The man then instructed one of his children to bring a canister of "pepper spray" from another room, to the bedroom where the dispute was ongoing.

The child, following the man's instructions, retrieved the "pepper spray," handing it to the man. The man then turned the "pepper spray" on his own children. The man sprayed the "pepper spray" in the air, causing eye irritation for the six children in the room, and the woman.

Arrested on suspicion of domestic violence and child abuse:

- **Lakepa Fifita, a 45 year old resident of Hawthorne**

The couple's children were all left in the custody of their mother. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services was notified of the incident, and is conducting an independent investigation into the child abuse allegations. The case remains under investigation by Hawthorne Police Department detectives.

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