Written by Lauren Ohnesorge
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A shooting near Banner Elk closed N.C. Highway 105 this morning from 2 a.m. until around 5:30 a.m., Avery County Sheriff Kevin Frye said. Law enforcement officers from Avery County Sheriff's Office, Banner Elk Police Department, Sugar Mountain Police Department, and Seven Devils Police Department were involved in a chase that resulted in two individuals receiving gun shot wounds.

The chase began on 105 when deputies suspected a black pickup truck of having an impaired driver. The chase led into Watauga County then back to Avery where waiting Banner Elk and Sugar Mountain Police Departments attempted to intercept the fleeing vehicle. A roadblock had been set up near Pappy's Barbeque. The vehicle attempted to collide with the blocking vehicles. According to reports, the occupants attempted to use the vehicle as a weapon, driving directly at Officer Fred Shrader of the Banner Elk Police Department. Shrader fired on the vehicle, to protect himself and other officers, according to a statement. At least 7 shots were fired. Both occupants of the vehicle were wounded. The female occupant was treated at Cannon Memorial Hospital for a gunshot wound to the shoulder, and the male was transported to Johnson City Medical Center for more serious injuries. A medical helicopter picked the man up from a landing zone set up near Lowes Foods in Banner Elk.

Names of the suspects and their medical conditions are being withheld, but according to Frye, they will be released after the family is notified. The State Bureau of Investigation has been called in to investigate the incident, as is routine with officer involved shootings. According to Frye, more information will be released in the next 48 hours and a press release is expected for Monday. Officers have ideas as to illegal activities the suspects were involved in, but are unwilling to release those at this time.