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Sting Operation Nets One Arrest; More to Come

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Editor

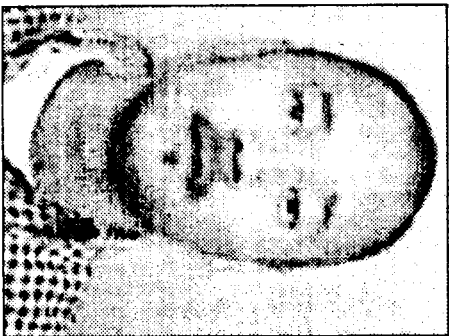
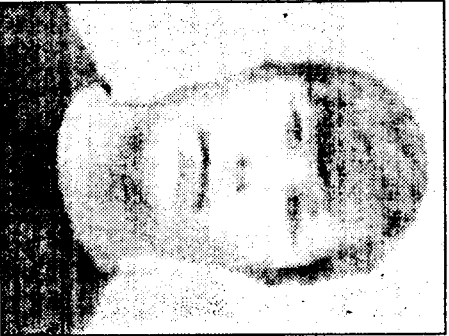
A sting operation led by the Geneva Police led to one arrest on Wednesday night while several other arrests are likely to follow according to Geneva Police Chief Frankie Lindsey. The arrest however didn't come easy as several agencies were led on a high speed chase throughout a portion of Geneva County and eventually into the state of Florida.

Lindsey said the investigation of several thefts began on July 22 when he was awakened by his grandson who reported to him that there was a vehicle in the Chief's yard. Lindsey said that he got up and went outside where he did a check of the vehicle and found that there were no occupants but that the vehicle had a set of ramps similar to what would be used to load all terrain vehicles.

While doing the search of the vehicle at his home on Simmons Avenue, Lindsey said another vehicle passed his house that was also suspicious. Lindsey proceeded to get in his patrol car and locate the vehicle. It was at this time that a routine traffic stop took place.

During the stop, Lindsey talked with two individuals, Brandon Miller and Nathan Richards. Both stated that a friend contacted them for help in getting his vehicle out of a bog. "This was the first red flag because we had not had any rainy weather in recent days which would result in someone getting their vehicle bogged in," said Lindsey.

Although he knew the story provided didn't add up, Lindsey also knew that he didn't have enough information to hold the two suspects. Doing a follow-up of the questioning the next day, Lindsey confirmed that the individual the suspects were claiming to be helping was at work in Dothan. It was at this time that Lindsey contacted the Alabama Bureau of Investigation Investigator JR Ward who had been investigating the theft of several motorcycles



Brandon Miller and Nathan Richards are both suspects in several recent thefts in the county. (Submitted Photos)

recently. Upon giving the names in question to Ward, he informed Lindsey that both had been investigated before for thefts and that one of the individuals, Richards, was currently on probation.

After discussing his findings with Ward, Lindsey said that the investigation into numerous thefts began to come together. "We found out through our investigation that they were supposed to come back to the area to commit more thefts which resulted in us putting

together a sting operation."

The operation in question took place on August 24 at approximately 10:00 p.m. just west of Geneva. Officers from several agencies were able to observe a theft in progress and proceeded to make an arrest. It was at this time that Miller and Richards took off in a van but not before ramming a Geneva County Drug Task Force vehicle in the process. A chase ensued that led law enforcement officials down several backroads in the county and eventually

came out on State Highway 87 South. During the chase the two suspects dumped the four-wheeler that they had just stolen out of the van and it was retrieved.

The chase led authorities into Holmes County where the van's engine eventually blew up on Highway 2A. Both Miller and Richards left the vehicle and went in opposite directions into the woods.

A request for backup was given once the suspects fled into the woods and search and rescue dogs were provided by Holmes and Walton counties. It took approximately 45 minutes for the dogs to find Miller who was then taken to the Geneva County Jail.

A search continued for Richards but was eventually called off late in the morning on Thursday, August 25. He is still wanted by authorities and is known to carry weapons so anyone that comes into contact with him is advised to use extreme caution.

Through this investigation, authorities learned that tools from a theft involving a car hauler and race car in Geneva may be at a business in Daleville called Letz Ride. After conducting warrants and a search on Friday, officials did come up with tools that belong to the same individuals that own the car hauler and car.

Lindsey went on to state that he feel like more arrests are pending and that thefts in other states may be involved as well.

The racing ATV that was stolen and later retrieved in the Sting Operation Wednesday was valued at \$12,500 but was going to be sold for just \$1,500 to a buyer in Pensacola, Florida. This seems to be what was taking place with all the merchandise that had been stolen according to Lindsey.

Helping in the investigation was the Geneva PD, ABI, State Troopers, Holmes County Sheriff's Department, Walton County Sheriff's Department, Geneva County Sheriff's Department and the Geneva County Drug Task Force.