

Bounty hunters catch fraud crooks in Gallup

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 02 March 2018 10:26



The search for the two fugitives wanted for credit card fraud began on Feb. 23 with a phone call from Dog the Bounty Hunter.

Duane Chapman, who is better known as Dog because of his popular cable television program of that name, had called Alex Wooten for help in finding Jeffery Rees, 34, of Honolulu, and Joshua Kingsley, 33, of Waipahu, Hawaii.

Wooten and his wife Hermicia started a branch of the Gerald Madrid Bail Bond Company in Gallup about two years ago, and besides tracking down people who skipped out on bail in the area, Wooten has also done some bounty hunting and helped track fugitives being sought by other bail bondsmen.

Chapman had tracked the two from Las Vegas to Anaheim, Calif. before receiving a tip they were in Gallup. Where in Gallup, he had no idea.

So Wooten, working with his wife and two other men, began searching for the two, working 12 to 16 hours a day to find them. Finally, with the use of confidential informants and some detective work, he tracked them down to a house in the Mentmore area and contacted the McKinley County Sheriff's Office for help.

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Wooten said he usually does the takedown himself but in this case, the two men were considered to be armed and dangerous so for everyone's safety, he called in law enforcement.

Using the Gallup Police Department's Rapid Response team, the police went to the house and found one man outside armed with a gun. He was taken into custody without incident while the other fugitive, along with a woman, blockaded himself inside the house.

It took police more than two hours to get into the house where they found Kingsley and the woman hiding under a table.

For Wooten, this was one of his most trying searches with Chapman keeping in touch with him, calling him as many as 20 times a day to get updates.

In fact, Chapman said he had been in contact with Wooten as the takedown occurred and then, in the middle of it, he became worried when Wooten didn't answer his phone. And as time progressed with no update, he said he became even more worried because the men being sought were considered to be dangerous.

Finally, Wooten called back and said everyone was in custody and no one was injured.

Both Chapman and Madrid, who spoke by phone from his Albuquerque headquarters, credit Wooten with doing a great job in tracking down the fugitives and getting them arrested with no one getting injured.

"At the time the police got involved Wooten had been without sleep for more than 48 hours," said Chapman, praising his dedication to the task.

But Wooten said his job was not over.

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The two are fighting extradition and as their case goes through the Gallup judicial system, Wooten will continue to keep Chapman updated. Until then, Rees is being held under a \$100,000 bond, and Kingsley twice that much.

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