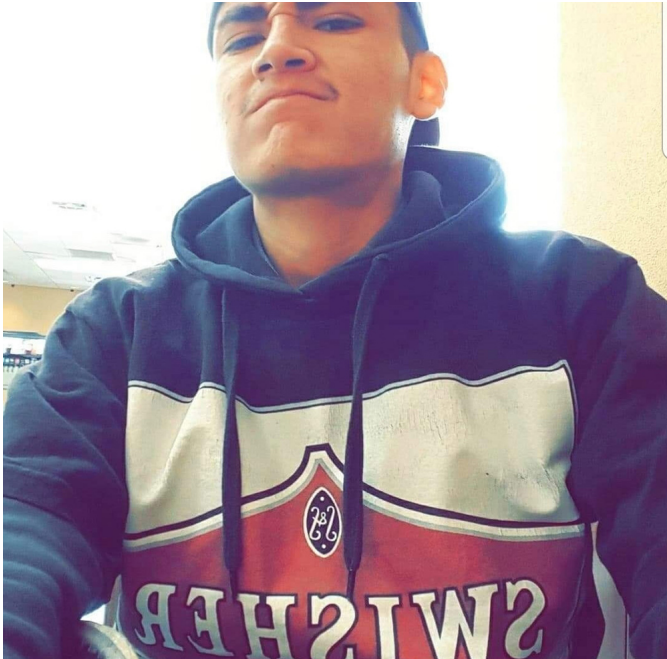


Man wanted for violent armed robbery

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 16 August 2019 01:50



The McKinley County Sheriff's Office released an arrest warrant for Karl Thompson, 19, of Ganado.

The State of New Mexico authorized any officer to execute the warrant and arrest Thompson and bring him to the Magistrate Court to answer to 13 charges.

Thompson is wanted for one count of armed robbery; one count of conspiracy to commit armed robbery; one count of accessory to commit armed robbery; five counts of assault to commit armed robbery; three counts of abuse to a child; one count of unlawfully carrying a firearm into a licensed liquor establishment; and one count of negligent use of a deadly weapon.

These incidents occurred at the Mustang store in Bread Springs, 1060 Hwy. 602, April 18. Thompson attempted to steal various alcoholic beverages using a Jennings .22 caliber semi-automatic pistol and threatened a number of patrons inside the store.

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On the day of the robbery, McKinley County Chief Investigator Lt. Merle Bates overheard radio traffic of the incident and left for the Mustang station.

Upon arriving at the scene, Bates spotted several vehicles and a number of people who were either inside or outside the establishment when the robbery occurred. Bates met McKinley County Sheriff Lt. Eric Jim, who was the first officer to arrive and briefed Bates on what he had learned.

Bates noted several unopened, broken bottles of various alcoholic beverages on the ground inside and outside the building. A .40 caliber cartridge was located near the entrance, and there was a bullet casing near the refrigerator coolers. There was a mark in the ceiling that was consistent with a subject shooting a firearm into the air. Jim said there was a firearm behind the counter that had apparently been left behind by one of the suspects.

Bates then spoke with several witnesses, who relayed what they had seen.

The first pair of witnesses said they were traveling near the intersection of Breadsprings Road and Highway 602, when they saw a vehicle blocking traffic on Breadsprings Road. The vehicle was a white pickup truck with peeling paint. One witness said there were four people either near or inside the vehicle, and they all appeared intoxicated.

The other witness identified one of the suspects as a relative, Julian Eddie, who had shouted at him when they drove by.

The first witness said they had passed the white truck and stopped at the Mustang store. She exited the vehicle with two children and went inside. They were in the store when three people, identified as having been in the white truck, robbed the store.

One suspect had a silver .380 caliber pistol while another had a black pistol. One of the suspects yelled at the cashier to get down and ordered all the other people to get out, while waving his gun in the air.

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The second witness waited outside and watched the scene unfold. He saw the three men get dropped off by his relative Eddie. The suspects fired a shot into the air and left the store with a number of alcoholic beverages. The witness described the three suspects as all being Native American, over five feet tall, and looking around 18 years old.

Jim spoke with other witnesses at the scene and reaffirmed the accounts of three men entering the store and telling people to get out. One shot had been fired into the ceiling at the scene.

After the incident, the suspects and vehicle were not seen again that evening.

Bates learned about potential persons of interest through investigation: Aurelius Jamal Eddie and Kevin Marquez. The identity of the driver was confirmed to be Julian Eddie, also known as Julian Silversmith.

Later on the same day, April 18, Bates heard a Navajo Nation Police Officer who was responding to an incident in Bread Springs was shot at by a suspect in a vehicle matching the description of the white truck involved in the Mustang robbery. The vehicle fled the scene once more.

The truck was located and those inside apprehended April 19 by Navajo Nation Police and McKinley County Sheriff's Office deputies. Aurelius Jamal Eddie and Julian Silversmith were arrested on Blue Medicine Well Road, and another suspect, Bruce Wilson, was also arrested for possible involvement in the crimes.

The three suspects were transported to the Navajo Nation Jail in Crownpoint.

On April 21, Bates and Navajo Nation Investigator Larry Etsitty interviewed Aurelius Jamal Eddie, where he admitted to being involved in the Mustang robbery and shooting the gun in the store, as well as shooting at Navajo Police when they approached him the night of April 18.

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Aurelius Jamal Eddie admitted Marquez was with him in the robbery, and his father Julian Eddie was the driver of the vehicle used in the robbery.

Aurelius Jamal Eddie also noted the third suspect was not someone he knew, and was told to call him "Carlton," which he said was not his real name.

Bates reviewed surveillance footage and verified it was Aurelius Jamal Eddie who fired the shot into the air at the scene.

McKinley County Investigator Frank Villa and Etsitty spoke with Wilson, who told them he had met with the suspects after the robbery occurred. Wilson said the three men were talking and laughing about how they had robbed the store.

On April 24, Bates received an anonymous call from Crime Stoppers, who identified the third robbery suspect as Karl Thompson. The caller said Thompson was a friend of her son's from when they attended school in Ganado.

Bates then searched on Facebook and found photos of Thompson. Bates noted the similarities between the Facebook photos of Thompson and the suspect in the surveillance footage.

Afterwards, Bates contacted Thompson's mother April 25, who said her son had admitted to her he had been involved in the robbery but they had only stolen beer. She also identified Thompson in one of the photographs taken at the scene.

Bates concluded after the investigation that there is a probable cause to issue an arrest warrant for Thompson.

Thompson is considered armed and dangerous. He is estimated to be just under six feet tall

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and was last seen in the Gallup and Ganado areas.

If you make contact with or have any information on the suspect, please contact Chief Investigator Lt. Merle Bates at the McKinley County Sheriff's Office Investigations Division at (505)722-8514, or Crime Stoppers at 1-877-722-6161.

By Cody Begaye
Sun Correspondent