

Police find marijuana, edibles during traffic stop

Written by By: Molly Adamson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 14 May 2021 04:53



When Deputy Johnson Lee from the McKinley County Sheriff's Office pulled over a car on April 13, he found over five pounds of marijuana and 150 edibles.

It was around 10:30 am when Lee was traveling east on Interstate 40. He spotted a silver Mitsubishi Eclipse tailgating a semi-truck transporting fuel around the 27.5-mile marker.

He conducted a traffic stop and approached the car on the passenger side. When the passenger rolled down the window Lee could smell marijuana.

He asked the driver for his license, registration, and insurance. The driver was Larry Hunt, 46 of Glen Heights, Tex. Hunt told Lee the car was a rental, and the passenger was getting the registration and insurance off his phone. Lee told Hunt to get out of the car while he ran his information.

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Lee asked Hunt who had rented the car, and Lee said that his friend's girlfriend had. But she wasn't in the car.

Lee finished writing Hunt's warning citation, and in his report, he noted that the man appeared to be nervous. The deputy told the Hunt he smelled marijuana and asked him if there was any in the car.

Hunt said they had a little bit of marijuana in the back and that he had gotten it from a dispensary.

When Lee asked if he could search the car, Hunt said he would get the drugs out for him. Lee said that he wanted to search the entire car. He began to explain the McKinley County Consent to Search form to Hunt, and Hunt said he did not give the deputy consent to search the car, and that he wanted to talk to the other person in the car first.

McKinley County Sheriff's Office's Deputy Brandon Salazar was also at the scene, and he asked the front passenger to get out of the car. After a conversation, they allowed the deputies to search the car.

There were two other passengers in the back of the car, and the deputies asked them to get out.

The deputies found five large bags of marijuana in the trunk and three boxes containing several packages of THC-infused edibles. They detained everyone in the car and put them into separate patrol units.

Salazar was going to speak to two of the people, Oshoke Ameh, 30, of Irving, Tex., and Jehron Ruckes, 29 of Garland, Tex., while Lee spoke with Hunt and a 23-year-old woman from Irving, Tex.. After Lee read him his Miranda Rights, Hunt agreed to speak with him.

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Lee asked Hunt who bought the marijuana. Hunt didn't answer, so Lee asked if it belonged to all of them or if it was just his. Hunt asked Lee if it would be easier to say it was all of theirs or just his. Lee explained that if it belonged to all of them, then everyone is responsible, but if it only belonged to him, he would be the one held responsible.

After Lee explained this, Hunt didn't answer, so Lee put the man back into his police car. Then he spoke to Evans.

The woman agreed to speak with Lee. She stated that she hadn't known about the drugs and that she had just gone along for the road trip to California.

After talking to her, Lee met back up with Salazar, who had just finished questioning the other two men. Salazar said that he thought all three of the men knew about the marijuana in the car, but that the woman did not.

Salazar took a look at the bags the marijuana had been in and noticed there was some mail addressed to Ruckes in it.

Lee arrested the men and released the woman. Deputy Clayton Etsitty gave her a ride into town.

When Lee spoke to Hunt again, he said that all of the marijuana belonged to him. Lee told Hunt that he believed all three men knew about the marijuana in the car.

The men were taken to the McKinley County Adult Detention Center where they were all booked. Dispatch informed Lee that Hunt had a bench warrant out of Tucumcari, N.M. and he was booked on it.

Dispatch also said Ruckes had a warrant out of Dallas, Tex. that was extraditable. A fugitive of justice form was completed, and he was booked on the warrant, as well.

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Once they had finished booking the men, Salazar and Lee drove to the McKinley County Sheriff's Office to weigh the evidence. The bags had over five pounds of marijuana in them and they found over 150 edibles.

Hunt was released on his own recognizance. Oshoke was required to put up \$1,000 cash or surety. Ruckes was required to put up \$2,000 cash or surety.

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