



Suspects beat, robbed victim in Walmart parking lot

According to records at the McKinley County Adult Detention Center, two suspects who carjacked a female in the parking lot of the Walmart Supercenter at 1656 W. Maloney Ave. on Sept. 7 remained in jail Sept. 15, each on a $50,000 cash-only bond.

Patterson Cleveland, 23, and Philbert Smith, 27, were arrested on aggravated battery and robbery charges.

According to a police report, Gallup Police Department Officer Jeremy Shirley, responded to a call at about 6:50 pm on Sept. 7 in regards to a female who was assaulted and dragged from a maroon 2007 Ford F-150 pickup truck by two males.

The suspects stole the truck and headed east on Maloney Avenue, according to a witness statement in the police report.

According to the affidavit for an arrest warrant, the female victim was seated in her truck in the west-side Walmart parking lot when she was accosted by Patterson and Smith. The victim said she believed the men were going to ask for money, as they looked like the “drunks” who panhandle from people around Gallup.

The victim was dragged from her vehicle, kicked in the stomach, and suffered scrapes to her knees. She also said that one of the thieves nearly ran her over with her own truck.

The men then drove toward the mall and left the vehicle at Lowe’s, 200 Marguerite St., on the west side. Patterson said he told his accomplice that he needed to go home, and he’s not sure what they did with the vehicle after that.

The victim was treated at the scene by local paramedics. As of press time, the victim’s car and personal belongings have not been recovered.

The affidavit also states that Patterson admitted to being intoxicated the day of the incident. He said that he “was blacking out.”

While there was video surveillance taken of the incident, what helped to seal the deal for detectives was the brazen behavior of the suspects.

GPD Lt. Rosanne Morrissette said the men returned to the area on Sept. 11, but this time they were casing vehicles parked at Home Depot. They were identified by witnesses. Next, a photo lineup was put together for the victim, in which she ID’d them.

“That’s how we got them both,” Morrissette said. “The patrol officers along with the detective division collaborated on this incident which resulted in the timely apprehension and arrest of the suspects.”

By Bernie Dotson

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