

Sporting goods store employee stops robbery

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 12 August 2022 05:33



A man and a woman tried robbing a local sporting goods store but were surprised when they found an employee sleeping in the store.

On July 28, Gallup Police Officers Aaron Marquez and Matthew Strandy were dispatched to Sports World at 1500 S. Second St. when a man called Metro Dispatch and said someone had broken into the business and was still there.

The officers arrived at the scene around 5:15 am. According to his police report, Marquez noticed that the business's glass door was shattered. The officers saw a man, who was later identified as Bartholomew Whitegoat, run from the business. They also found a woman, who was later identified as Charlene Hannaweeka, hiding behind a pillar next to the business.

When police approached Hannaweeka, 38, she told them she had nothing to do with the situation, and that she had just walked up to the store.

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Strandy was able to catch up with Whitegoat, 25.

More officers arrived on the scene to help handle the situation. Marquez placed Hannaweeka in the back of his patrol car, and then walked up to the business, where he noticed a blue bike sitting next to the business's entrance.

When Marquez spoke to the man who was inside the store, he identified himself as a store employee. The man's hands were bleeding and medical personnel were called in to check on him.

The store employee said he'd been sleeping in the back of the business when around 5 am he woke up to the sound of footsteps. According to the employee, he got up and and noticed someone walking around with a flashlight. The employee asked the man what he was doing, and the man replied by saying he was robbing the store.

The man told the employee he'd gotten in through the window. The employee explained that he'd tried calling the police, but the man knocked his phone out of his hand.

According to the employee, he tried to grab the man to prevent him from leaving, and that's when the two of them started fighting. The employee said a woman appeared in the doorway and yelled at him to let the man go.

The woman then allegedly began grabbing items from the store.

The employee said that he eventually got tired while he was fighting the man, and stopped fighting him. The man then went to the broken door and began handing the woman things from the store.

The employee said that the man had a skateboard with him, and he did swing it at his head, but he was able to move out of the way. That's when the officers arrived at the scene.

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After Marquez got done talking with the employee, the store's owner arrived at the scene. The owner told police that he'd left the store around 8 pm the night before and there hadn't been any damages.

During a walk through with the store's owner, Marquez noted that eight skateboards were scratched. The store owner said each of the skateboards cost \$60. Sixteen t-shirts were scattered around the business, and they all had blood, dirt, and scuff marks on them. The store owner said each shirt cost \$20.

Two pairs of bike gloves had also been damaged, and the store owner valued them at \$20 each.

The store owner estimated that the broken glass door would cost about \$1,200 to replace, and the logo sticker that had been on the door would cost \$500 to replace.

A bike that belonged to the store was found outside, and it was scratched up as well. The owner said it would cost \$7,500 to fix it. The owner also noted that another bike was missing, and that it would cost another \$7,500 to replace it.

When officers were finally able to talk to Whitegoat, he said he wasn't involved, and that the store employee had just started randomly hitting him in the face.

According to the police report, officers found Whitegoat with two skateboards and two long-sleeved gray t-shirts on him. Whitegoat also admitted to having lost a blue cellphone, which officers had found at the crime scene.

When the officers talked to Hannaweeka, she restated that she wasn't involved. She said she'd only been there to try and convince Whitegoat not to steal anything.

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The store employee identified Whitegoat as the man he'd been fighting with and Hannaweeka as the woman who was taking things out of the store.

The officers were able to view some video footage of the incident, and the footage matched the employee's story.

Whitegoat was charged with one count of armed robbery, one count of aggravated burglary with a deadly weapon, one count of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, criminal damage to property (over \$1,000), and breaking and entering. Hannaweeka was charged with armed robbery, aggravated burglary with a deadly weapon, criminal damage to property (over \$1,000), and breaking and entering.

Whitegoat and Hannaweeka's first court appearances were on July 29.

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