

Highway burglary/theft ring solved with help of local witnesses and officers

Written by George Browning

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An observant witness to a burglary in Orange County and due diligence from flea market owners in Washington County lead to the arrest of three suspects last week.

Charges are pending in both Orange and Washington counties on Joshua Troutman, Megan Bryant and Daniel Troutman.

According to Orange County Chief Deputy Josh Babcock, the arrest puts an end to a series of highway burglaries that had law enforcement baffled.

They were so baffled, that they put out a call to the media looking for help in finding information.

They were searching for a blue truck and informed citizens that the burglaries were all taking place on state highways.

Washington County Sheriff's Department Detective Brent Miller said when he heard of the call out of Orange County, there were no thefts or burglaries that were taking place on state highways in our area.

That all changed in the course of a couple of days and early last week when Miller got information on two burglaries/thefts that took place. Both of which were on state highways.

Miller informed the victims to start out by checking local flea markets to see if they see any of their stolen items were there.

One item was located at a local flea market and Miller was able to gather enough information to come up with a suspect name.

"A lot of people played a part in breaking this case," Miller said. "They tried taking the item to one flea market and because they had no identification, they wouldn't buy it. The other flea market bought it, but not without first getting vital information."

Part of that information was information about the blue truck.

Miller said the license plate the local flea market owner got matched was close to the license plate number a witness in Orange County had taken down.

"She saw these folks loading a lawn mower and went over and asked them what they were doing," Miller said. "They told her they were borrowing the lawn mower. She had got a great description of the truck and was very close on the license plate. She just had a couple of numbers transposed."

That all lead to finding an address on the suspects and a search warrant was issued for a house in Orleans.

Miller said items were found at the house that were from the two burglaries that took place earlier in the week in Washington County.

Both Miller and Babcock agreed that the solid working relationship the Washington County and Orange County departments have is one reason the case was solved so quickly.

"It's a great working relationship we have," Miller said. "This is not the first time our working relationship has led to solving a case."

Babcock alleges that the suspects were responsible for at least 14 burglaries/thefts and possibly more. Two of those from Washington County and two more from Harrison County.

Miller and Babcock weren't the only two helping with the investigation. He said, Orange County Detective Dennis Lanham and Washington County Chief Deputy Roger Newlon were also heavily involved.

"We had a lot of hours in this case and Orange County had even more," he said. "A lot of people helped get this one solved quickly."