



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

Date: Friday, March 15, 2019

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Felon Flees from Deputies, Causes Multiple Hit-and-Run Crashes, Now in Custody

On Sunday, March 10, around 3:00 p.m. a Flagler County Sheriff's Deputy observed a silver Ford Mustang stopped diagonally on Belle Terre Parkway in Palm Coast. As the deputy approached the vehicle, the Mustang began to travel at inconsistent speeds and failed to maintain a single lane. The deputy attempted to conduct a traffic stop but the Mustang fled and accelerated rapidly. A deputy observed a shiny object thrown from the vehicle which was later located and found to be a handgun.

Deputies tracked the Mustang, without pursuing it, throughout Palm Coast where it crashed into several vehicles and eventually lost the rear bumper on Interstate 95 Southbound. FCSO notified the Volusia County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) and the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) that the vehicle was entering Volusia County. FCSO Motor Deputy Celico was able to give a description of the driver; a heavy set black male with a round face and an afro-style haircut.

VCSO located the vehicle, abandoned, at an apartment complex located at 110 Acklins Circle in Daytona Beach. Numerous narcotics were observed inside the vehicle as it was impounded for evidence.

A photo array was shown to Deputy Celico in an attempt to identify the driver. Deputy Celico positively identified Christian Melendez, 19, as the driver of the Mustang. Deputy Celico advised that he had not had prior knowledge of the identity of the subject that he selected in the photo lineup.



Christian Melendez in a March 14, 2019 booking photo.

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Melendez was located by deputies on Thursday afternoon and taken into custody. He has been charged with Aggravated Fleeing with Injury or Damage, Leaving the Scene of a Crash with Injury, and Leaving the Scene of a Crash with Property Damage. He was booked into the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility where he is being held on a \$35,500.00 bond.

“Our deputies are actively patrolling our roadways and when they spotted a vehicle driving erratically, they attempted a traffic stop,” Sheriff Rick Staly said. “We can only assume that he chose to flee due to having a firearm and narcotics in the vehicle. Due to his actions, he put many lives in danger and caused damage to numerous vehicles. Now he is back in the Green Roof Inn, unfortunately a place very familiar to him.”

Melendez has previous arrests for Driving with a Suspended License, Willful Wanton Reckless Driving, No Motorcycle Endorsement, Failure to Register a Motor Vehicle, Marijuana Possession, Resisting an Officer without Violence, and Violation of Probation.

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