



**Rick Staly, Sheriff**

## **FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

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

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Date:** February 20, 2024

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## **Weekend Roundup February 17-18**

### *Traffic Stop Leads Deputies to Armed Convicted Felon, Family Dispute Leads to Arrest for Aggravated Assault*

**BUNNELL, FL** – Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) deputies made 16 arrests this past weekend between 6 p.m. on Friday, February 16, 2024, and 6 a.m. on Monday, February 19, 2024. They handled 588 calls for service and made 90 traffic stops.

“Despite the miserable weather, deputies still had their hands full this weekend,” said Sheriff Rick Staly. “A convicted felon found out the hard way not to pass through Flagler County with illegal drugs, and another man let his emotions get the better of him. In both of these cases, we ended up with more visitors to the Green Roof Inn.”

#### **Convicted Felon Carrying Firearm and Drugs Caught Speeding**

On Friday, February 16 just before midnight, deputies conducted a traffic stop on a red Kia Sportage that was traveling east on County Road 304 in Bunnell at 72mph where the posted speed limit is 55 mph.



During the investigation, deputies located 146 grams of cannabis in various plastic bags and jars, a

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loaded 9mm firearm, and drug paraphernalia.

The driver of the vehicle, Melvin Jennings, 31, of Orange Park is a convicted felon, found guilty in Putnam County in 2013 of Burglary of an Unoccupied Dwelling and Grand Theft. In 2021, he was convicted in Clay County for Possession of a Weapon or Ammunition by a Convicted Felon, Possession of Cocaine, and Possession of Cannabis over 20g.

Jennings was arrested for Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, Possession of Ammunition by a Convicted Felon, Possession of Cannabis over 20g, and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Jennings was transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility without incident, where he is currently being held on \$36,000 bond.



*Melvin Jennings (Flagler County Jail Mugshot)*

“This convicted felon doesn’t learn his lesson,” said Sheriff Staly. “He made the mistake of coming to Flagler County and found himself back behind bars at the Green Roof Inn.

An excellent job by Deputies Prevatt and Hirschi for looking beyond the traffic violation and getting a convicted, armed felon off the streets.

Hopefully due to their efforts, this career criminal will be back in prison where he belongs.”

#### **Man Arrested for Aggravated Assault during Domestic Dispute**

On Saturday, February 17 just after 6 p.m., a deputy responded to a residence in Bunnell after a woman called 911 and stated that her mother’s boyfriend was intoxicated and causing a disturbance inside of the residence.

Luis Belardo, 53, who lives at the home with his girlfriend, Jaqueline Hunter, threatened one of her adult children with a kitchen knife after being excluded from a conversation. The incident was witnessed by the other two adult children.



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After conducting an investigation, deputies placed Belardo under arrest for Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon without Intent to Kill and. Belardo transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility, where he is currently being held on \$10,000 bond.



*Luis Belardo (Flagler County Jail Mugshot)*

“Domestic incidents continue to account for the majority of assault cases we see in Flagler County,” said Sheriff Staly. “In almost all of the situations, like this one, all parties need to de-escalate without resorting to violence or threats of violence.”

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