



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

NEWS RELEASE

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FCSO Encourages Residents to Utilize Safe-Exchange Locations Following Robbery During Meetup to Sell Earrings

BUNNELL, Fla. — After a Palm Coast resident was robbed while making an exchange arranged through Facebook Marketplace, Sheriff Rick Staly encourages residents to stay vigilant and utilize the Flagler County Sheriff's Office's safe-exchange locations when conducting transactions with strangers.

On the afternoon of Dec. 22, deputies responded to a reported robbery at a residence on Birchfield Place in Palm Coast. The victim reported that she had been robbed while attempting to sell diamond earrings through Facebook Marketplace. According to the victim, the suspect — a black male who said his name was "Jonathan Williams" — arranged for the victim to meet him at the residence so that he could purchase the earrings. The victim also stated that she had been texting with another individual whom she believed to be the suspect's wife, "Latoya," all day about buying the earrings.

During the meetup, the suspect requested to see the earrings and, when the victim got them out, grabbed the earrings from her hand. After a brief struggle, during which the victim suffered small cuts from the suspect's nails, the suspect took the earrings and ran.

Deputies established a perimeter to search for the suspect and Major Case Unit detectives responded to investigate. During the search, deputies spoke to a nearby witness who stated he saw someone matching the suspect's description running in front of his house and into the woods. The witness also stated he recognized the suspect as a resident of Birchview Place, one street away from where the robbery took place.

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Through investigative means and with assistance from FCSO's Real Time Crime Center, detectives identified the suspect as Davonta King, 17, of Palm Coast. The victim confirmed King as the suspect after viewing a photo lineup.

Deputies contacted King's mother, who then attempted to contact her son. She was unable to, but told deputies that, to her knowledge, he should be at home.

Deputies responded to the residence and began to make announcements ordering King to exit, who refused. After a significant standoff where King was non-compliant, a younger child exited, who stated he was King's little brother and that King was in a bathroom inside the home. The FCSO SWAT team arrived and was able to apprehend King without further incident.

Detectives interviewed King, who initially stated that a friend paid him for the earrings and he no longer had them. King later changed his story and eventually provided detectives with the location of the earrings, which he had hidden in the laundry room. Detectives served a search warrant and located the earrings, as well as two cellphones — one of which King had attempted to destroy in the washing machine. After finding multiple phones, detectives determined that both individuals the victim was communicating with — "Jonathan" and "Latoya" — were actually King.



Davonta King (Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility mug shot)

Detectives arrested King for robbery by sudden snatching, battery on a person over 65, grand theft, and unlawful use of a two-way communications device. King was also found to have violated his probation from a pair of similar larceny arrests earlier in the year in Orange County. He was transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility, where he was later turned over to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

"This kid is old enough to know better than to try stealing from our residents and think he can get away with it," said Sheriff Staly. "Thanks to the victim who quickly reported the incident; a neighbor who 'saw something and said something;' and the hard work of our RTCC analysts, deputies, and detectives, we quickly apprehended him and recovered the victim's earrings. This kid has a history of

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robbery like this and is not learning his lesson. I hope our State Attorney will charge him as an adult since he keeps wanting to commit adult crimes.”

The victim later told detectives that she had tried to arrange the exchange with “Latoya” to take place first at one of the Daytona Beach Police Department’s stations, then at the FCSO District 2 Office in Palm Coast; however, “Latoya” was unable to meet at either location, and the victim eventually agreed to meet at the address on Birchfield Place.

The Flagler County Sheriff’s Office provides safe-exchange locations at both the Flagler County Sheriff’s Operations Center in Bunnell and the District 2 Office in Palm Coast. Both locations — marked with signage designating them as Child Exchange & E-Commerce Safe Zones — are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week; well-lit; and under 24-hour video surveillance. The locations can be used to safely exchange items purchased on Facebook Marketplace or other online sites from private sellers, as well as provide parents a neutral location to meet for child custody exchanges.



A sign outside the Flagler County Sheriff’s Operations Center designates the Child Exchange & E-Commerce Safe Zone.

“Our safe-exchange locations are available to give residents peace of mind when meeting a stranger to conduct safe transactions and discourage people from attempting to take advantage of our residents like what happened in this situation,” Sheriff Staly added. “I encourage everyone to use them. This seller had the right idea when she tried to arrange for the meeting to take place at one of these locations, but our thief convinced her to meet somewhere else. This should raise red flags that something is not right and is a lesson that everyone can take away from this incident.”

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