

“For Immediate Release”



Auburndale Police Department News Release

1/23/2020

Media Contact:

Deputy Chief Carin Ketcham

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Arrest Made in Numerous Vehicle Burglaries and Grand Theft Auto

At approximately 1:19 a.m. today, January 23, 2020, the Auburndale Police received a call of a vehicle burglary in the Diamond Ridge subdivision. While investigating the burglary in the Diamond Ridge subdivision a second call was received in the Lake Whistler subdivision of a person reporting an in-progress burglary to a vehicle. The caller followed the suspects as they left the Lake Whistler subdivision in possibly three or four vehicles. The caller stated three of the vehicles were closely following one another. The three vehicles were described as a silver Acura sedan, a gold unknown make or model sedan, and a dark in color mid-sized sports utility vehicle. The caller was unable to provide a description of the fourth vehicle. The Auburndale Police along with members from the Polk County Sheriff's Office responded to the area in attempts to locate the vehicles and suspects. Three vehicles were observed by officers in the vicinity of the in-progress vehicle burglary, a tan Chevrolet Tahoe SUV following two sedans. The vehicles were travelling north on SR 559 when the Tahoe passed the other two sedans. Officers activated their emergency lights in and attempted to conduct a traffic stop on the Tahoe. The Tahoe accelerated in attempts for flee from the officers. Officers deactivated their emergency equipment. The Tahoe continued north on SR 559, and drove off of the roadway and crashed into a utility pole. After the crash the driver fled on foot. A perimeter was established and with assistance from Polk County Sheriff's Office and Winter Haven Police Department's K-9, Godsend Alex Francois, 16, Chantry Street, Orlando, was located and arrested.

A dark blue Chevrolet Traverse was located on Adams Road near Diamond Ridge subdivision. The Traverse was reported stolen, with Orange County Sheriff's Office on January 21, 2020. Through investigation it has been determined that Francois and his accomplices arrived in Auburndale in the stolen Traverse

Francois, who is currently on probation, was charged with the following: Violation of Probation, (10) counts Burglary to a Vehicle, (1) count Grand Theft Motor Vehicle, (1) count Grand Theft, (1) count Petit Theft, (1) count Leaving the Scene of a Traffic Crash, (1) count Fleeing to Elude, and (1) count No Valid Driver's License. As the investigation continues more charges may be forthcoming.

During the crime spree Francois and his unidentified accomplices stole (2) vehicles from the Lake Whistler Estates subdivision, a tan 2011 Chevrolet Tahoe and a silver

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2013 Acura. During the same time Francois and his accomplices committed numerous burglaries to unlocked vehicles.

The Auburndale Police Department encourages everyone after exiting you vehicle, to lock your doors, and avoid being the victim of a crime of opportunity.

If you have any additional information regarding this investigation please contact Detective Harry Anderson at 863-965-5555 or you may report information anonymously to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-226-TIPS or www.heartlandcrimestoppers.com.

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