



TARPON SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT MEDIA RELEASE

Robert P. Kochen
CHIEF OF POLICE

"Building a Better Future Through Excellence in Policing"

On September 24, 2013 at approximately 5:09 a.m. while on routine patrol in a marked TSPD police vehicle Officer Kim Mannion observed two males walking on the sidewalk in-front of 555 E Pine St (Tarpon Springs Elementary School). Upon seeing her turn her vehicle around the two fled on foot into the wooded area next to the school. One of the two (Joseph Lang) was caught (approx. 5:30 am) in the rear area of a residence in the 500 block of Pent St the other headed south over a fence away from the area, other officers maintained a perimeter and K-9 called out to conduct a search; however, this was limited due to heavy rains.

During this time (only a few blocks to the south) officers located a 2007 blue Chrysler Sebring rear parking lot of 501 E Tarpon Ave (First United Methodist Church, rear parking lot is located off of Orange St directly behind the Church). Upon making contact with the owner of this vehicle (contacted by phone) the victim who was unaware that it was missing advised that it was stolen from their residence in Pinellas Park while they were sleeping. Pinellas Park PD was then notified to take a stolen vehicle report. A firearm was located under the driver's seat, and a stun gun on the ground outside of the vehicle was also located. Neither of these belonged to the vehicle owner, but presumed to be stolen (not yet reported).

At this point, believing that the other suspect may attempt to come back to the vehicle officers disabled the vehicle and set surveillance up on the vehicle in hopes the suspect would return. At approximately 7:59 am, officers observed three (3) males enter the vehicle in an attempt to drive away in the vehicle. Officers moved in and subsequently arrested all three without incident.

During this time period officers worked with staff from the nearby Methodist Church to have their pre-school (Gospel Train Pre-School) locked down. They also coordinated with the staff at Tarpon Springs Elementary (Campus SRO on scene) as students were arriving as this situation was unfolding. Administration at both schools was advised after the arrest of the last three suspects so that normal operations of each school could begin.

Detectives interviewed the suspects who admitted to the stolen vehicle, along with vehicle burglaries between St. Petersburg, Pinellas Park and Tarpon Springs. Detectives are working with these other jurisdictions in an attempt to identify locations. One of the suspects advised that while being chased they dropped a pink book bag which contained stolen items. Officers have been searching the area but unable to locate this bag, a reverse 911 to the area was sent out asking residents to check their yards and if located asked to call Police department at (727)938-2840.



444 S. HUEY AVE., TARPON SPRINGS, FL 34689 - PHONE (727) 938-2849
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Suspect Information (2 adult and 2 juveniles, additional charges are pending):

Joseph Richard Lang
W/M, 1/23/1995
8170 50th Ave
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

Bailey Miller
B/M, 9/14/1997 (juvenile)
3484 51st Ave N
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

Charged with: Grand Theft Auto and Loitering and Prowling (two which fled from Ofc. Mannion through yards)

George Vincent Philpott
W/M, 11/7/1997 (juvenile)
4521 45th St N
St. Petersburg, FL 33714

Michael J. Ward
W/M, 7/25/1995
4205 42nd Ave N
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

Charged with: Grand Theft Auto

All four transported to Pinellas County Jail and JDC (booking photos can be obtained through Pinellas County who's in jail once available).

Respectfully,

Capt Jeffrey P. Young



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