



Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

826 Fourth Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Date: 11-19-2012

From: Lt. Steve Knight
(707) 268-3630

Subject: Robbery/ Kidnapping / Assault with Deadly Weapon

Case: 201205698

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 11-16-2012, approximately 11:20 a.m. the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office received a call from Blue Lake Casino Security regarding a possible armed robbery that had occurred to one of their customers. When a deputy arrived they met with 24 year old male victim, who resides in the Garberville area. The victim told the deputies he was at the Blue Lake Casino at approximately 6:00 a.m. gambling, when the two suspects approached and sat down on gambling machines on either side of him. The suspects began talking with him and acted like they knew him. During their conversation, they offered him alcohol at their vehicle outside the casino since the casino was not serving alcohol at that time of the morning. The victim agreed to go outside with them to have an alcoholic drink after he cashed out his winnings. The suspects agreed to meet him outside. When the victim exited the casino, one of the suspects, along with a third suspect were standing by the front door. A small red newer four door vehicle pulled up when he exited the Casino. The victim got into the front seat of the car and the two males got in the back seat. One of the males he met at the casino was driving the car; one of the males he met was now in the back seat along with a third male he just met. The driver, later identified as suspect Donald Lester, told the victim the Casino had cameras in the parking lot so they had to leave so they would not get into trouble drinking there. He suggested they drive to Cher-Ae Heights Casino to see what was going on up

there. The victim agreed and thought that was a good idea. The suspects told the victim they would bring him back to Blue Lake Casino.

When they arrived in the Westhaven area the suspects exited US 101 and pulled off the road, off of Scenic Drive. The driver, Lester, parked the car, got out of the vehicle, walked around it, opened the passenger side door and shoved a semi automatic handgun into the victim's mouth, while the victim was still seated. Meantime the suspect seated behind the victim began beating him in the throat while repeatedly telling him to empty his pockets. The suspects then yanked the victim out of the vehicle and threw him on the ground. The suspects made the victim remove all his clothing other than his underwear, while pointing the handgun at him. They then told him to walk to the nearby cliffs. The suspects ordered the victim not to look at them while doing so. The victim was convinced the suspects were going to kill him, so he made a run for it.

The victim escaped and hid in the area until he believed the suspects were gone. The victim then walked back up the trail, found some articles of his clothing and then contacted a citizen parked in a nearby parking lot. The citizen gave the victim a ride back to Blue Lake Casino where the victim notified Casino Security and met with Sheriff's deputies. The victim declined medical attention, but was visibly distraught when speaking with the deputies.

Blue Lake Casino Security assisted the Sheriff's Office with identifying the suspect vehicle and license plate utilizing their security system. Deputies and a detective located the vehicle parked in the 4400 Block of Excelsior Road, Eureka. Deputies located two of the suspects at a residence in the 4400 block of Excelsior Road. They were Donald Lee Lester, 27 years old, from Arcata, and Zachary Michael Davis, 25 years old from Fields Landing. Lester was located by the deputies hiding in the attic of the residence.

Deputies conducted a probation search on the residence and located some of the victims stolen property, a black semi-auto handgun marked Smith and Wesson, that shot simulated ammunition, 23 grams of Tar Heroin, 7 grams of suspected methamphetamine, syringes, packaging material, and 19 grams of dried marijuana.

Lester was transported and booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility on charges of kidnapping, robbery, assault with a deadly weapon other than a firearm, possession of a controlled substance, accessory to a crime, possession of an illicit drug, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of stolen property. He was also booked on six outstanding arrest warrants, one for felony possession and transportation of a controlled substance and marijuana, and five warrants for violation of probation. He is being held without bail.

Davis was booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility on charges of robbery, violation of probation, accessory to a crime, possession of an illicit drug, kidnapping, assault a deadly weapon other than a firearm, illicit possession of a drug, possession of a controlled substance and possession of stolen property.

The Sheriffs Office is still seeking a third suspect in this case. That suspect is described as a black male adult, 20's to 30's, between 6-0 to 6-2 in height, muscular, wearing a hat, close cut hair and a scruffy beard. That suspect spoke in "Gangster Style" per the victim.

Anyone with information for the Sheriffs Office regarding this case or related criminal activity is encouraged to call the Sheriffs Office at 707-445-7251 or the Sheriffs Office Crime Tip line at 707-268-2539.

Mike Downey
Sheriff

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