



# **Release of Public Information**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: 11/13/2008

**Larry Campbell**  
*Sheriff*

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### **Arrests Made in Criminal Mischief Investigation in Golden Eagle**

On Sunday October 26, 2008, Leon County Sheriff's Deputy John Johnson responded to a report of criminal mischief in the area of Doral Drive in the Golden Eagle Subdivision. According to a resident, sometime between Saturday night October, 25, 2008, at 8:00pm and Sunday morning October 26, 2008, at 10:00am, unknown suspect(s) spray painted the stop signs at Doral Drive at Inverness Drive and Glen Abby Drive at Glenmore Drive. The unknown suspect(s) used white spray paint to write racial slurs on the stop signs. During this investigation it was discovered that another resident in the 2100 block of Doral Drive had a fire at his residence during the night.

Earlier Sunday morning, at approximately 2:40am, the Tallahassee Fire Department responded to a residence on Doral Drive in reference to a small fiberglass boat which had caught fire and burned. The boat had been parked along side the street in front of the residence on Doral Drive. TFD extinguished the fire and there was no other damage. At the time of the fire an examination of the burnt remains of the boat did not readily reveal the cause of the fire.

Due to the proximity of the boat fire in relation to the stop signs that were sprayed painted with racial slurs, and that the location of the boat fire is the residence of an African-American family living on Doral Drive, Leon County Sheriff's Detectives, Tallahassee Fire Department Arson Investigators and the Florida State Fire Marshal's Office inspected the boat and determined the fire was an act of arson. Detectives and Investigators believed it was possible that these incidents were related and committed by the same suspect(s).

At the time of the investigation Sheriff Larry Campbell said "I find these acts personally disgusting and my Detectives will be working diligently to find those responsible and hold them accountable."

The diligence and methodical work of Deputy Johnson, Detective John Rudd, Detective Scott Sullivan, State Fire Marshall Chris Scavoda and Tallahassee Fire Department Arson Investigator Frank Mohr have led to the arrest of three juveniles aged 14, 15 and 16. After following up on several leads of possible suspects, it was determined that these individuals had been roaming the Golden Eagle Neighborhood on the night these crimes occurred. The 15yoa and 16yoa took a can of white spray paint from a friend's garage early Sunday morning and began to spray paint the stop signs with racial slurs. The 14yoa was with these juveniles and stated at one point they rummaged through the boat that was later set on fire. According to the 14yoa, as the 15yoa and 16yoa rummaged through the boat, they looked at seats and commented the seats would look good in his boat. During this conversation one of them stated "a n\*\*\*\*\* lives here".

The first time the 16yoa was interviewed he denied any knowledge or involvement in these crimes. As the evidence and witnesses began to come forward placing him at the scene of the crimes, he asked to give a revised statement in which he stated he and the 15yoa did spray paint the racial slurs on the stop signs and on the road way, but they did not set fire to the boat. According to the 16yoa they did look through the boat, but they did not set it on fire.

When the 15yoa was interviewed he stated the 16yoa sprayed painted the racial slurs, but he did not take part in the crimes. The 15yoa could not explain why the 16yoa and 14yoa stated he had been part of the vandalism.

Sheriff Larry Campbell said of these arrest “while it is unfortunate and revolting that these criminals targeted a neighborhood to spread hate and fear, I am very pleased of the investigative efforts of my Detectives and the Investigators from the State Fire Marshals Office and the Tallahassee Fire Department. These acts are not indicative of the values of this community and these arrest will hold those responsible accountable for their crimes”.

The arson investigation remains active and these individuals remain persons of interest in that crime; however there is currently no physical evidence to link them to the fire. Any person who has additional information about this case is asked to contact the Leon County Sheriff Office at (850) 922-3300 or Crime Stoppers at (850) 574-TIPS (8477). Remember, Crime Stoppers does not want your name, just your information. You could be eligible for a reward of up to \$1000.

### **Arrested**

**14 yoa Juvenile**

**15 yoa Juvenile**

**16 yoa Juvenile**

**\*Florida public record law prohibits the release of the names of juveniles arrested for misdemeanors.**

### **Charges**

**Criminal Mischief (Misdemeanor)**



***Leon County Sheriff's Office***

