



"Safety, Professionalism & Community Service"

Thomas Corning
Chief of Police

PRESS RELEASE: UPD CASE 25-1656

Date: 08/01/25
Location: Walgreens (308 East Perkins Street) Ukiah, CA
Suspects:
Dejon Wilkes
34-year-old Oakland, CA resident
Birdean Gaines
52-year-old Salinas, CA resident

On 08/01/25, the Ukiah Police Department was contacted by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office in regards to an Organized Retail Crime (ORC) shoplifting that just occurred in Cloverdale, CA. The UPD was provided a license plate number for a white Mazda SUV that was used as the getaway vehicle. The SUV was believed to possibly be enroute to the Ukiah area to target more drugstores and steal merchandise. UPD Officers were also made aware that the suspected shoplifter was possibly Dejon Wilkes from Oakland, CA. Wilkes was confirmed to have multiple felony warrants for his arrest from multiple counties.

As this information was being relayed to the UPD, a call for service was broadcasted for a shoplift that just occurred at Walgreens (308 East Perkins Street). UPD officers immediately responded to the area, but learned the suspect fled the scene before their arrival in a white Mazda SUV. UPD officers utilized the FLOCK camera system and observed that the suspect vehicle had already left the city and confirmed that the vehicle was the same one associated with the Cloverdale theft.

The UPD then notified multiple surrounding law enforcement agencies and provided them with the vehicle's identifying information and Wilkes' information. Later in the day, an MCSO Deputy located the suspect vehicle in the area of Willits and attempted to conduct a traffic enforcement stop. The vehicle fled the scene, and a vehicle pursuit was initiated. The suspect vehicle ultimately began driving south on Hwy 101 with California Highway Patrol, Willits Police Department and MCSO Deputies in pursuit. The suspect vehicle was eventually stopped after the use of "spike strips" successfully deflated the vehicle's tires.

Following the end of the pursuit, Dejon Wilkes was taken into custody by the MCSO without further incident. The driver of the vehicle was also taken into custody and positively identified as Birdean Gaines. UPD officers responded to the location to assist the other agencies and conducted our own investigation regarding the Walgreens shoplift. Inside the suspect's vehicle, Officers located a large amount of hygiene



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products and over the counter medication believed to be stolen from multiple different businesses. Officers also located the items reported to be stolen from the Ukiah Walgreens.

Organized Retail Theft (ORT), also known as Organized Retail Crime (ORC), is the large-scale theft of retail merchandise with the intent to resell the stolen items for financial gain. ORT may involve a criminal enterprise that employs a group of individuals to steal large quantities of merchandise from multiple stores. These ORT groups maintain or utilize fencing operations to convert the stolen goods into cash.

Both Wilkes and Gaines were arrested by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office and transported to the MCSO jail where they were booked and lodged for charges relating to the pursuit and other crimes.

The UPD subsequently charged Wilkes with:

Felony - 487(a) PC - Grand Theft

Felony - 666.1(a)(1) PC (Theft with 2 or more priors)

The UPD would like to express our gratitude to all the allied agencies that assisted with the safe apprehension of Gaines and Wilkes. As always, our mission at UPD is to make Ukiah as safe a place as possible. If you would like to know more about crime in your neighborhood, you can sign up for telephone, cell phone, and email notifications by clicking the Nixle button on our website; www.ukiahpolice.com



POLICE
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