FOUR JUVENILE INMATES ESCAPE FROM FACILITY AND ARE CAPTURED AFTER STEALING A CAR
7 April 2017

Four inmates from the Hastings Youth Academy overpowered an elderly guard, took his keys and radio, then jumped the rear perimeter fence early this (Friday) morning. Three hours later, they were captured after allegedly stealing a vehicle.

The four suspects were identified as Ramah Devon Hicks, 16, Michael Steven Neal, 15, Kenneth Pfuntner, 17, and Dominic Robert Putnam, 16. All four are charged with battery on detention staff, robbery, depriving an officer of communication, false imprisonment, petit theft, and escape from a juvenile detention facility and were booked into the County Jail.

The investigation by Major Crimes Detectives has revealed that the four were housed in a secure dorm for sentenced juvenile prisoners. Shortly after 12:00 a.m., Hicks knocked on the dorm door and asked to use the restroom. When he returned, Hicks allegedly struck the 76-year old security guard in the head causing him to fall to the ground. The suspect took the guards keys and radio and locked him in the room. He then allegedly let the other inmates out and they fled from the facility. A short time later, a co-worker of the guard returned from a break and discovered the escape and notified the Sheriff’s Office.

At 2:45 a.m., the Sheriff’s Office was advised that a 2014 GMC Sierra pick-up truck was reported stolen from a residence in the 6000 block of Cracker Swamp Rd. Deputies observed the vehicle a short time later and attempted to conduct a traffic stop, however, the driver refused to stop and a short pursuit was initiated. The four suspects were located inside the vehicle a short time later following the deployment of Stop Sticks and a PIT maneuver was conducted in the area of S.R. 206 & S.R. 207.

Detectives are continuing the investigation.

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