



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Chatham County Police Department Manhunt Ends When Officers Dive Into Alligator-Inhabited Pond to Capture Suspect

Chatham County, GA -- (July 1, 2022) — The Chatham County Police Department’s manhunt for a person accused in a string of crimes ended this afternoon when two officers dove into an alligator-inhabited pond to capture the suspect.

Twenty-nine-year-old Billy Sloan was arrested and charged with multiple offenses following incidents that involved a suspect fleeing from police in a stolen car, unlawfully entering multiple homes, and a standoff with officers in a golf course pond with two alligators lurking nearby.

The incident began around 10:30 this morning when Chatham County Police Department officers spotted a stolen vehicle in the Interstate 95 and Highway 204 area. The vehicle stopped at a gas station, and as a Chatham County Police Department officer approached the vehicle in an attempt to speak with the driver, the vehicle sped away.

Moments later, a Georgia State Patrol officer spotted the same vehicle and pursued it. The driver bailed from the vehicle and took off on foot on Al Henderson Blvd.

Reports then began coming in about a man unlawfully entering five homes in the Al Henderson Golf Course Community through unlocked doors while residents were inside. The suspect description matched that of the man who fled from the stolen vehicle, and a safety alert was issued to the public. No one inside any of the homes was injured. (There was no forced entry as originally reported in the safety alert).

Commanding officers at the scene requested assistance in their search from Chatham County’s helicopter, Eagle One, and the Chatham County Sheriff’s Office K-9 unit.

The suspect was soon spotted and seen running into a pond at the Al Henderson Golf Course. Officers watched as the suspect disobeyed orders and swam to the middle of the pond. Officers on the scene quickly noticed two alligators in the pond, including one that began swimming straight for the suspect and started circling him.

Officers used several methods to scare the alligators away from the suspect, including requesting Eagle One to hover over the pond near the alligators. The alligators swam away from the suspect, and Eagle One tossed a life jacket to the suspect, which he initially refused to grab ahold of.

Officers continued to try to convince the suspect to come out of the water, and he continued to refuse. The Chatham County Police Department's Marine Patrol Unit deployed its amphibious vehicle on to the pond to attempt to remove the suspect from the water. However, the suspect continued to disobey commands. After the suspect had been in the water for approximately one hour, Chatham County Police Department Officer Joseph Lohr and Marine Patrol Officer Heath Wynn jumped into the water to bring the suspect aboard the amphibious vehicle and to shore.

A Chatham Emergency Services ambulance was on scene to check out the suspect. He was taken to the hospital where he stayed for a short time this afternoon for an evaluation before being transported to the Chatham County Detention Center.

Sloan is charged with one count of theft by receiving stolen property (auto), one count of burglary, four counts of criminal trespass, one count of drug possession, and one count of obstruction by fleeing.

Neither the suspect, officers, or innocent bystanders were injured during the incident. The alligators were also unharmed.

In addition to the law enforcement and emergency services agencies that assisted, The Chatham County Police Department would also like to thank the citizens at the Al Henderson Golf Course and the neighborhood who assisted officers by giving them use of golf carts, life vests and bottled water while the situation unfolded.

NOTE TO EDITORS: A booking photo of Sloan is not yet available.

Attached are photos from the scene, including a photo of Officer Wynn (left) and Lohr after the water apprehension.

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