

NEWS RELEASE



Russel E. Burger, Sheriff
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CASE NUMBER: 09-531

DATE / TIME OF INCIDENT: 01-20-09 - 4:56 pm

DATE / TIME OF RELEASE: 01-20-09 - 10:25 pm

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Child Abduction

LOCATION: 1000 Block of River Loop #1

SUSPECT: Gerlach, Malcom Michael, 25
Formerly of Santa Rosa, California
Recently transient in the Douglas County area

VICTIM: Female Juvenile, Name Withheld

DETAILS:

At approximately 4:56 pm on 01-20-09, the Lane County Sheriff's Office was advised of a child abduction that had just taken place on River Loop #1 in the Santa Clara area. Initial reports indicated that a female child had been forced into small 4-door sedan and the vehicle then left the area. The description and reported license plate of the vehicle matched that of stolen vehicle seen about an hour earlier in another Santa Clara neighborhood and reported to the Sheriff's Office as a suspicious vehicle. Deputies were in the area of that call when the abduction occurred.

Witnesses in the area reported that the driver of the vehicle forcibly approached the girl, who had been on her bicycle, and put her into the car. As Sheriff's Deputies were beginning to search and other law enforcement agencies were notified, Lane County Deputy Scot Denham observed the vehicle in the area of Clear Lake Road and Territorial Hwy. The vehicle failed to stop for Deputy Denham and a pursuit began.

The chase continued along county roads in the Elmira area for just over twenty minutes at moderate speeds (varying between 40 and 60 mph), while other Sheriff's units (as well as units from the Oregon State Police and Eugene Police) rushed to the area. Using special equipment, Sheriff's Deputies were able to deflate at least one of the tires on the suspect vehicle at the intersection of Knight Road and Sheffler Road. Then a

Eugene Police K-9 officer, Robert Rosales, who was assisting in the chase, was in position to use a driving intervention technique to cause the suspect vehicle, now slowed by the tire deflation, to lose control. The driver was quickly apprehended and the girl removed to safety.

The victim was transported to a local hospital with non-life threatening injuries. The suspect was transported to a separate hospital for evaluation and then released into the custody of the Sheriff's Office. The Lane County Sheriff's Office, as well as the District Attorney's Office, are continuing to investigate this incident in anticipation of formal charges against Gerlach.

From the time the incident was reported until the girl was rescued, 58 minutes elapsed.

The name of the victim, a 10 year old girl, is being withheld at this time.

Lane County Sheriff Russ Burger has scheduled a press conference for 10:00 am, Wednesday 01-21-09, at the Sheriff's Office, 125 E. 8th Avenue in Eugene, to release additional information on this incident.

Prepared by: Captain William Thompson

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