

LAKELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Media Release

Issuing Authority: Sergeant Terri Smith, Acting PIO

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Home Invasion Suspects Arrested in Georgia



An arrest has been made in Douglas County, Georgia, of two suspects believed to be responsible for the home invasion that occurred in Lakeland, Florida, on April 2, 2008. The suspects were arrested for committing a crime in Georgia using methods similar to the ones used in the Lakeland home invasion.

During the Lakeland home invasion, the two suspects contacted a realtor and posed as potential renters. When the realtor arrived to show the property, they held the realtor at knifepoint, tied the victim up, and took the victim's vehicle. The suspects then used the victim's credit card to purchase merchandise at local department stores.

On April 10, 2008, two men drove the vehicle taken from the home invasion in Lakeland (green Nissan) into a car dealership in Douglas County, Georgia, and posed as prospective vehicle buyers. The suspects then left with a dealership employee for a test drive in a white mustang. During the test drive, they pulled a knife on the dealership employee and forced him to remove money from an ATM. The suspects then bound him with duct tape and forced him out of the vehicle. The victim called police and the vehicle was spotted by a deputy on Interstate 20.

A deputy began pursuing the vehicle when it failed to stop. The suspects lost control of the vehicle during the pursuit and it crashed. One of the suspects was ejected and airlifted to a local hospital. The passenger was also injured. Both suspects were treated at area hospitals and are now in jail in Georgia.

One of the suspects was identified as Steven Ray Swords. Swords has been charged with Armed Burglary, Armed Robbery, Armed Kidnapping, and Armed Carjacking by Lakeland police. Swords also has pending charges in Georgia.

Lakeland Police will be charging the other suspect, Robert Lewis, with similar charges. At the time of his arrest, Lewis had an outstanding warrant for violation of probation/aggravated child molestation. Lewis is a registered sex offender. Lewis also has pending charges in Georgia.

Media inquiries should be directed to Sergeant Terri Smith,
863.834.6917.

This information is also posted on www.lpdonlinenews.com.