



NEWS RELEASE

CASE UPDATE: Criminal Investigation of Inmate Escape Continues, Deputy Sheriff Resigns

Date: August 2, 2024
Prepared by: Public Affairs Office
Phone and Email: 386-586-2637, PAO@flaglersheriff.com
Release #: 2024 – 132

BUNNELL, Fla. — A criminal investigation continues on the inmate escape which occurred last Saturday, July 27, resulting in AdventHeath hospital going into lockdown and a massive law enforcement search.

A preliminary review of the incident indicates that policy violations by the Deputy assigned to guard him at the hospital led to the escape of the inmate. Witnesses indicate that Deputy Tyrique Harper was likely sleeping during the time of the escape and the inmate was not properly restrained in accordance to policy. On the day of the escape, Deputy Harper was relieved of law enforcement duties and assigned to administrative duties, while a preliminary review of the incident was being conducted. On July 30, 2024, Deputy Tyrique Harper resigned immediately, prior to the start of a formal Internal investigation under Florida’s Police Officers Bill of Rights.

“Our review of this incident indicates there was a failure to follow policies that are designed to keep the community safe and an inmate in custody when they are taken to an outside facility for medical treatment,” said Chief of Staff Mark Strobridge. “Fortunately, Romine was apprehended, and no additional crimes were committed by him in his escape attempt. Sheriff Staly expects all deputies will follow our policies and not sleep while on-duty. Our Agency motto is ‘An Honor to Serve, A Duty to Protect,’ and that did not occur in this incident by Deputy Harper.”

Deputy Harper was employed with the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office since June 7, 2021.

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Original news release below:

Date: July 27, 2024

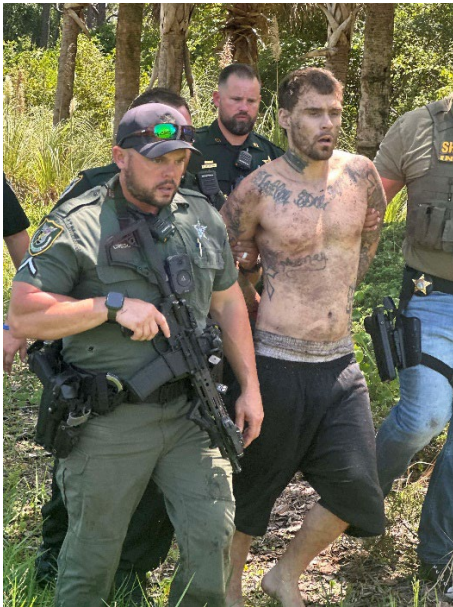
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“See Something, Say Something” Leads to Inmate Apprehension After Escaping Hospital

BUNNELL, Fla. — On the morning of Saturday, July 27, Flagler County Sheriff’s Office inmate Anthony Romine was being treated at AdventHealth Palm Coast and escaped on foot. Seven hours later, he was caught after an extensive search and is back in custody at the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility.



Romine, 29, was apprehended in the woods by the Amoco gas station near the southbound ramp at Interstate 95 and State Road 100 in Palm Coast after he was tracked and located by an FCSO K-9 patrol team. Romine had been hiding underneath foliage and underbrush. Deputies had been notified that he was possibly in the area after the clerk at the gas station reported that Romine had come into the store and asked to use the phone.

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When notified of the early-morning escape, Sheriff Rick Staly responded to AdventHealth and worked with the on-duty watch commander to direct the search. Over the course of the seven-hour search, the FCSO Communications Center received multiple calls on possible sightings, which were investigated by deputies with the help of the FCSO K-9 Unit, Drone Unit, Flagler County Fire Rescue's FireFlight helicopter, the Volusia Sheriff's Office's Air One helicopter, and bloodhounds from Tomoka Correctional Center.



Romine was originally arrested on July 3 on a felony warrant for Petit Theft, Violation of Pre-Trial Release, and two counts of Counterfeit. After a fall in the jail, he was transported to AdventHealth for treatment. Through investigative means, detectives determined that Romine had faked an injury in hopes that he could escape and return to Ohio, where he is originally from.

"We worked until we got him. I commend our team for staying on his trail, and the community for 'seeing something, saying something' until this dirtbag was captured," said Sheriff Staly. "All he accomplished was to add additional arrests to his list of crimes and got bitten by our K-9, who gets a special treat for taking 'a bite out of crime' when he tried to flee again. Fortunately, no one was hurt except this dirtbag who was crying after he was caught by our K-9."

After being apprehended, Romine was arrested on a felony warrant for his escape, as well as Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer and Resisting without Violence.

Sheriff Staly added, "Now that he has been apprehended, we will start a review of the incident to determine how the deputy assigned to watch him was distracted that resulted in his escape."

View bodycam of arrest here: <https://bit.ly/3YrRPI7>

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