

Legislation Text

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Congratulations to Detective Joel Rios, recipient of the City of Coral Gables “Detective of the Quarter Award,” for the Third Quarter of 2020.

ACTION/RECOMMENDATION:

I would like to nominate Detective Joel Rios for the Detective of the 3rd Quarter Award. During this quarter, Detective Rios was successful in identifying seven subjects where four were arrested and charged for grand theft of a 2003 E-Z-GO Golf Cart (20-004092) and locating/recovering a stolen vehicle (20-004912).

BACKGROUND:

Detective Rios was assigned a case where a golf cart was stolen from 2525 Ponce de Leon Blvd., on the night of August 6. All he had was video of 6 subjects riding bicycles into the garage of the building. One of the subjects was captured jumping into the golf cart and driving off in it without permission or authority. The reporter/victim in this case was not very cooperative; nonetheless, this did not break Detective Rios' determination in investigating this case. Once Detective Rios obtained the video, he immediately prepared a Need to Identify BOLO (CGPD BOLO 20-232). As a result of Detective Rios' keen investigative skills, he was able to obtain video from a post on the "Next-Door App", pertaining to two bicycles and a golf cart being driven by what appeared to be a juvenile knocking over trash bins. The post was dated the day of the theft.

Detective Rios was able to identify the vicinity of the incident from the post. He then conducted an area canvas in the area he identified and interviewed various residents, who were able to identify four of his subjects captured on video. Detective Rios continued with his investigation and again identified an intersection of NW 66 Street and 251 Avenue from an Instagram post from one of the identified subjects. He then responded to that intersection and knocked on the residence captured on the post (6025 NW 25 Avenue). Amazingly, the mother of the identified subject answered the door. Detective Rios was able to positively identify the juvenile subject from the Instagram account, who identified himself in Detective Rios' BOLO. The subject admitted to the theft. Detective Rios' investigation continued for several days and due to his tenacity, hard work, and interrogation skills, Detective Rios successfully identified all the subjects involved in the theft of the golf cart. Ultimately, he arrested four out of the seven involved and recovered the golf cart.

During this quarter, Detective Rios also exhibited keen investigative skills and determination in locating and recovering a stolen Mercedes (20-004912). This case was assigned to Detective Rios back on September 22, 2020. The vehicle did not have its factory tracking system activated. Detective Rios was instrumental in getting the victim to initiate that service. Detective Rios was able to obtain an image of the offenders in the stolen vehicle from Sun Pass. The offenders look very similar to offenders captured by Sun Pass for another stolen vehicle case. The factory tracking system advised Detective Rios that they will call him once they obtain coordinates on the stolen vehicle. After about a week, Detective Rios called the tracking service and after being transferred various times to different agents, they were able to provide him with its current location in Pembroke Pines. As a result, Detective Rios had Pembroke Pines PD respond to locate the vehicle.

Unfortunately, the officers that responded were unable to locate the stolen vehicle. Detective Rios contacted the officers and asked them to describe the area. They advised that it's a residential area of single-

family homes. At that point, Detective Rios briefed me on what he had. I authorized him to respond to Pembroke Pines. Detective Rios knocked on every door looking for the stolen vehicle. He even asked the residents to allow him to see their closed garages. He was unable to locate the vehicle within that residential area. Again, due to his persistence, he drove around the immediate area and located a vehicle matching the description of our stolen vehicle in an alley behind a restaurant. The VIN and tag attached did not match that of our stolen vehicle, but it did have distinctive damage that was consistent to the damages described by our victim. Detective Rios had the Pembroke Pines officers respond back to his location to assist in his investigation.

Detective Rios was able to contact the registered owner of the tag, who advised that her daughter recently purchased the vehicle in question. He requested for the daughter to respond to his location. It turned out that the daughter was one of the residents he questioned in the residential area. She advised that she purchased the vehicle for \$16,000. He asked if she would allow him to plug in his OBD scanner, which is used to identify the factory VIN. Detective Rios was able to obtain the factory VIN, which matched the VIN of our stolen vehicle. The vehicle had been re-vined. It is currently unknown what the female's involvement is in this case. Detective Rios believes she may also be a victim of fraud. Investigation is ongoing. This case appears to be linked to our current high end vehicle theft trend. We strongly believe that this case will shed some light into the operation and what is happening to the stolen vehicles.

SYNOPSIS/CONCLUSION:

These investigations are an example of excellent investigative work. Detective Rios' hard work and dedication to the citizens of Coral Gables should be recognized; therefore, I believe he is deserving of this award.