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Councilman's Persistence Leads to Safety Change at Dangerous Intersection

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

RAY CITY, Georgia – Ray City Councilman Wesley Bennefield's persistent inquiry into a needed safety change has finally brought a positive response by Mayor Brenda Exum. The intersection in question is the intersection of the highly traveled corner of Samuel Street/Georgia State Route 64 and Main Street/Georgia State Route 37/U.S. Highway 129 which cross each other.

The intersection is also the location at which the Royal's Automotive business is located (20 Samuel Street). Often, the Royal's Automotive staff has numerous vehicles parked on both the east and west side of Samuel Street in the right-of-way easement area. The manner in which the business's manager David Schools authorizes vehicles to be parked blocks the view of south bound drivers on Samuel Street. Schools has authorized his employees to park vehicles overnight and often during the day, who have to make a turn onto Main Street. Schools is one of Ray City's councilmen.

Sometime in past few years, the Ray City Council required a property owner to cut back thick shrubbery because the shrubs blocked driver's view and, therefore, their ability to make a safe turn at the intersection. Despite some recent discussion on the problem in council meetings, usually led by Councilman Wesley Bennefield, visitors to council meetings observe seemingly indifferent attitudes to Councilman Bennefield's safety question, by Mayor Exum and other Ray City Council members to the identified problem.

Jeff Royals owns the property on both sides of Samuel Street – the one on which the Royals Automotive was built as well as the lot across the street.

Bennefield enlisted assistance from Jeff Royals, and the Georgia Department of Highway Safety (GDOT). The Department of Highway Safety identified a long time ago that Royals Automotive's employees were unsafely parking vehicles on what was a government right-of-way easement and should refrain from parking vehicles on the easement area.

Persons who have been concerned about safely making a turn from the southbound Samuel Street have repeatedly indicated the difficulty in safely negotiating the turn. Drivers indicate that they have to move out into the intersection to try to see to determine whether or not a turn can be made safely before actually making the turn.

Last week a Georgia Department of Transportation, in response to the identified problem, sent out an investigator to again check out the intersection. GDOT found it was a public safety issue.

As the Lanier County News (LCN) has learned, GDOT has required the business to park about 15 feet back from the curb ... outside the easement area.

The change will hopefully improve visibility for drivers and pedestrians.



74-Year-Old Mom's Altercation with 54 Year-Old Son Leads to His 3rd Arrest

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

Coffee County, Georgia – The Coffee County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) has documented a Wednesday, January 30th incident. According to CCSO's report, CCSO Deputies responded to an E911 call on Douglas' West Walker Street. The caller identified that there had been a gunshot victim at the residence.

The responding CCSO Deputy entered the residence and cleared the scene in order for the Emergency Medical Service personnel to enter it. The deputy discovered Julian Keith Roberson (54) in his bedroom at the residence. The deputy realized that Roberson had a wound to his right leg in the mid-thigh area.

According to the investigation report, Roberson struck his mother (74) with a ball cap while she was asleep. His mother had refused to give Roberson her car keys. When Julian Roberson became unrelenting in his effort to get his mother's vehicle keys, his mother shot him in the leg.

The incident led to Roberson's third (3) arrest in January for striking his mother with a ball cap. The man was arrested on January 3, when a bag of

methamphetamine fell out of his pocket while he was speaking to a deputy about putting a riding lawnmower into the trunk compartment of a 2007 Toyota Camry. On January 14th, Roberson was arrested for shoplifting at Walmart.

During the January 30th incident investigation, the DCSO Deputy observed a glass pipe which is commonly used to smoke methamphetamine. It was located in plain sight in the man's bedroom. When asked, Roberson told the deputy that he had last smoked meth about 10:00 p.m. the night before. Roberson stated that his mother had shot him.

The same deputy noted that the victim, Roberson's 74-year-old mother, also had a wound. Her wound was located on her left elbow. The victim revealed that she had turned down her son's demand for her car keys, because he was unlicensed. Her refusal was despite the fact that he had been persistent and relentless in trying to take her keys and her car.

The victim indicated that at about 2:00 a.m., Julian Roberson woke her up while she was asleep again demanding her car keys. When Roberson's mother

refused the keys again, he "struck her with a ball cap". When the older woman refused, her adult son "reached and grabbed her pants pockets in an attempt to get her keys anyway." This led to her choice to reach for her rifle and fire one shot into his leg.

The woman made the E911 call for help after she placed her rifle back behind the door. The victim also indicated that she was very afraid of Roberson, because he was larger and stronger than she is.

The CCSO report indicates that Keith Roberson was transported to Coffee Regional Medical Center (CRMC) for treatment. The Emergency Room (ER) physician told the deputy that a projectile was not located in the man's leg. He also stated that there was an apparent exit wound.

Roberson was transported to the Coffee County Jail (CCJ) after receiving medical treatment. He was charged on one count of criminal trespass for family violence, and one count of exploiting/inflicting pain on/depriving essential services to a disabled or elderly person.

Julian Keith Roberson was denied bond, according to CCJ records.

America's Most Wanted episode featured South Georgia Fugitive

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

GEORGIA – Operation Ghost Busted (OGB) which was reported by the Lanier County news in January 2023, is identified as "one of the largest and most widespread joint law enforcement operations in recent Georgia history", according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The television program, America's Most Wanted will feature an episode on Monday, February 19th at 8 p.m. on Fox Television.

According to Fox Television, the episode will focus on David D. Young, also known as "Khaos." Young's criminal involvement outlined in the Operation Ghost Busted (OGB) will be the focus of the broadcast.

Still at large, David Young remains at large after the January 11, 2023 OGB took place. Young, (AKA 'Khaos') will be the feature. Young is a South Georgia fugitive. OGB involved a number of arrests across Southeast Georgia. Glynn County Sheriff's Office, federal investigators as well as other Georgia and

federal agencies were involved in the OGB investigation and arrests. Their goal was to end a "massive, gang-related drug trafficking conspiracy that led to multiple convictions".

One of the people convicted from the OGB investigation was James D. NeSmith. NeSmith was convicted and is now serving a life in prison sentence for murder and multiple drug-related crimes. The Glynn County Sheriff's Office says that NeSmith's collaborators, known as the "Ghost Face Gangsters," worked with other criminal and white supremacist street gangs around Georgia.

Young is accused of being one of NeSmith's collaborators, and is the focus of the upcoming episode. David D. Young is named in a federal arrest warrant which was issued in December 2022. Young has been charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute a controlled substance.

Young is still at large and on the FBI's "Wanted" list.



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