



LEA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Byron Wester • Sheriff

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News Release

Lea County Sheriff's Office

May 8, 2017 around 11pm a Lea County Sheriff's Office Deputy conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle traveling west bound on US Highway 62/180 near Mini Ranch Road. The vehicle was stopped for speeding. The driver of the vehicle was identified as Jerry Johnson 29, Lubbock, Texas. A license check revealed Mr. Johnson does not possess a valid driver license. The Deputy also observed an open container of an alcoholic beverage in plain sight within the passenger compartment. Present in the vehicle were Toquan Yates 22, Lubbock, Texas, Dequante Jackson 22, Lubbock, Texas along with a juvenile female.

During an interview with the juvenile it was discovered the group was traveling from Lubbock, Texas to Carlsbad, New Mexico to engage in the criminal offense of prostitution. It was also learned the juvenile was being taken against her will.

All occupants were detained for investigation purposes and transported to the Lea County Sheriff's Office for interviews. During the investigation, criminal charges were filed against Jerry Johnson, Toquan Yates and Dequante Jackson, each was arrested and charged with 1 count Human Trafficking (3rd Degree Felony) and 1 count False Imprisonment (4th Degree Felony). All three suspects were booked into the Lea County Detention Facility in Lovington. At the time of arrests, no bond was set. The juvenile was taken into protective custody through Children Youth and Family Divisions (CYFD).

Due to the nature of the criminal offense of Human Trafficking the Department of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) was contacted. HSI will be reviewing the investigation with the possibility of adopting the case for federal prosecution.

The Lea County Sheriff's Office would like to remind citizens to request a Deputy to please call the Lea County Sheriff's Office at (575) 396-3611 or to report criminal or suspicious activities to the Lea County Crime Stoppers at (575) 393-8005. Caller may remain anonymous.



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Jerry Johnson



Dequante Jackson



Toquan Yates

Anthony Budrow, Chief Deputy

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