



SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



SHERIFF **BEN WOLFINGER**

UNDERSHERIFF **DAN MATTOS**

Media Release December 7, 2015

Hayden, ID – Shoplifting suspect in custody for multiple offenses following his brazen attempt to flee.

On December 5, 2015 at about 4:00 pm, Sheriff's deputies were called to the Hayden Walmart for a shoplifter. During their response, Dispatch updated the deputies that the shoplifting suspect had fled the store in a green Dodge Caravan and rammed into the driver's door of a pickup truck as the pickup's driver attempted to block his exit. Neither the pickup's driver nor his passenger was injured.

Once deputies arrived at the Walmart, they were told by the pickup's driver and passenger that they saw a male being chased from the store by a loss prevention officer and the male suspect ran to the green van and drove toward the rear of the store. They in turn followed the van for a short distance where they were able to contact the female driver of the van while the suspect was in the passenger seat. The witnesses told the van's driver that they needed to turn around and pay for the stolen property, to which the van's driver complied and returned to the Walmart parking lot, near the front entrance.

However, upon returning to the store, the male suspect took over the driver's position as the female moved to the rear seat area. They then fled the parking lot to the rear of the store as the witnesses attempted to block their escape with their pickup. According to both the witnesses, the van accelerated as it approached the pickup and rammed into the driver's door, as well as a semi trailer. The van then fled at a high rate of speed, driving into oncoming lanes of travel and forcing vehicles off the road.

According to the Walmart loss prevention officer, the suspect had stolen a Bluetooth radio speaker valued at \$150.00 and fled the store after cutting off the store's security device that was attached to the merchandise.

While deputies were still on scene interviewing witnesses and collecting evidence, Dispatch radioed them and said Coeur d'Alene Police officers had located the suspect's van parked in the rear lot of the Shiloh Inn on Appleway. They also located the female that had been in the van at the Motel 6.

According to the female, she was unaware that her friend, later identified as Robert H. Baker, 36 years old of Coeur d'Alene, had stolen anything until the people in the pickup told her after

she left the parking lot. She said when she went back to pay for the merchandise, Baker told her to get out of the driver's seat. She complied and Baker drove away but the people in the pickup attempted to block their exit and Baker hit them. The female said that she repeatedly told Baker to stop and let her out but Baker refused and drove on.

Baker was located in his room at the Motel 6. At first he refused to exit, but later complied with commands after deputies retrieved a key from the motel's manager.

Baker was taken to the Kootenai County Jail and is currently being held without bond on felony charges of Burglary, two counts of Aggravated Assault for ramming the witnesses' pickup and Kidnapping in the 2nd Degree for not allowing the female in the van to get out. Baker was also cited for misdemeanor charges of driving without a valid license, petit theft, removing a theft detection device, malicious injury to property and reckless driving.

Baker has four previous adult arrests in Kootenai County since 1997:

- Booked for Criminal Contempt in 8/1997
- Booked for possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia in 3/2008
- Booked for drug paraphernalia in 5/2008
- Booked for a Warrant of Detention in 5/2014

Ben Wolfinger, Sheriff

By: Lieutenant Stu Miller