



POLICE
CITY OF UKIAH

"Safety, Professionalism & Community Service"

Cedric Crook
Chief of Police

PRESS RELEASE: UPD CASE 24-1284

Date: 06/24/2024

Location: 275 South Orchard Avenue, Ukiah, CA

Suspect: Justin Michael Hietala

41-year-old-male from Ukiah

Victim: 51-year-old-male from Ukiah

Violations: 215(a) PC – Carjacking (**Felony**)

422(a) PC – Criminal Threats (**Felony**)

On 06/24/2024 at approximately 9:51 AM, Ukiah Police Department (UPD) Officers responded to 275 South Orchard Avenue for a report of a subject who held a knife to a taxi driver's throat and took possession of a silver-colored Toyota Prius taxi. The suspect was later identified as Justin Hietala. Hietala made threats to kill the victim before leaving in the stolen taxi. The victim was able to provide a picture of the subject driving away in the stolen taxi. The picture clearly showed Hietala driving the stolen taxi away from the victim.

UPD Dispatch utilized the FLOCK camera system to obtain the license plate of the stolen taxi and provided it to UPD Officers. UPD Officers checked the surrounding area and a be on the lookout-BOLO was issued to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

CHP Officers located the stolen taxi in the area of Southbound Highway 101 at Henry Station Road in Ukiah. CHP advised Hietala was driving the stolen taxi erratically. A CHP Officer used a "Spike Strip" device and was able to disable the vehicle's tires. A felony stop was conducted by CHP and Hietala was placed into custody without issue.

The victim was later transported to the location of the traffic stop. The victim positively identified Hietala as the subject who threatened him with a knife and took the Toyota Prius.

The Toyota Prius was turned back over to the taxi company and Hietala was placed under arrest. Hietala was charged with the above-mentioned charges and booked at the Mendocino County Jail.

The Ukiah Police Department would like to thank the California Highway Patrol and the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office for their assistance with this investigation.

Ukiah Police Department

300 Seminary Avenue | Ukiah, California 95482

Telephone: (707) 463-6262 | Fax: (707) 462-6068 | www.ukiahpolice.com



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As always, our mission at UPD is to make Ukiah as safe a place as possible. If you would like to know more about crime in your neighborhood, you can sign up for telephone, cell phone, and email notifications by clicking the Nixle button on our website; www.ukiahpolice.com

Prepared by: Sergeant Randall #34

