



CITRUS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
A Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

SHERIFF
MIKE PRENDERGAST



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 2017

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Double Shooting & House Fire Leads to Early Morning Arrest

(Citrus County, Lecanto) William Gonsisko, 59 years old, from Lecanto is behind bars after shooting two men and hitting a female victim with a shovel. This complicated incident all unfolded just after 4pm on Tuesday, October 17 when dispatchers received a call from one of the victims. All three victims were driving in a silver Chevy S10 pickup, traveling eastbound on Hwy 44 in Lecanto headed to Citrus Memorial Hospital when deputies caught up with them.

Deputies and EMS started treating all three victims at the scene. Melinda Ward, 61 years old, of 7089 Gilbert Terrace, Lecanto told deputies an unknown man at her home hit her in the arm and the face with a shovel and shot her two sons. Jeremiah Ward, 33 year old from Lecanto was suffering from two gunshot wounds to the head. Joseph Ward, 37 years old from Floral City, had been shot in the arm. Ms. Ward stated the suspect was still at her residence, dousing her home with gasoline, when they left to seek medical attention. All three victims were transported to area hospitals for their injuries.

Meanwhile, while deputies were aiding the three victims, our Communications Center received a call stating that a mobile home was on fire at this same address on Gilbert Terrace. Both Citrus County Fire Rescue and CCSO personnel arrived on scene to find a mobile home fully engulfed in flames. Detectives immediately started talking with neighbors about what they witnessed. Suspect information was limited but investigators started zeroing in on a nearby neighbor who matched the description of witness statements. Detectives were led to 7224 S Gilbert Terrace in Lecanto to talk with Gonsisko. After interviewing him, detectives obtained a search warrant and found several items linking him to the scene of the shooting.



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After more investigation, it was revealed that when Ms. Ward and her two sons arrived at her home on Gilbert Terrace, they were met in the front yard by the suspect, Mr. Gonsisko, whom they did not recognize. He was carrying her birdcage with her bird inside, and a glass of clear liquid. When the two sons got out of the vehicle to confront the suspect, an altercation ensued and both male victims were shot. It was then that the suspect hit Ms. Ward with the shovel. Ms. Ward stated that she could smell what appeared to be gasoline and saw the suspect dousing items with the liquid.

After Fire Rescue officials put out the blaze at the home, several items from the altercation were found at the premises including the shovel and a pistol. Investigators were able to talk more with the victims and gather enough information to positively identify Mr. Gonsisko as the shooter. Mr. Gonsisko was arrested and taken to the Citrus County Detention Center charged with three counts of Attempted Murder with no bond. Possible arson and armed robbery charges are also pending.

“This case was extensive with a lot of moving parts,” says Sheriff Mike Prendergast. “I’m proud of our team who moved quickly in making sure nearby residents were safe and after intense investigation located and arrested the suspect without incident. They did an outstanding job.”

At this time, Melinda Ward and Joseph Ward have been treated and released for their injuries. Jeremiah Ward remains at the hospital recovering from gunshot wounds to the head.