



Gulf County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Mike Harrison

418 Cecil G Costin Sr Blvd • Port St. Joe, Florida 32456 • www.gulfsheriff.com
850-227-1115 • 850-639-5717 • Fax 850-227-2097

Contact: Capt. Chris Buchanan
Telephone: 850-227-1115
Email: cbuchanan@gcso.fl.gov

PRESS RELEASE
September 8, 2021

ESCAPEE REMAINS AT LARGE

The search for Chad Edward Johnson (43) expanded outside of Gulf County. Yesterday, Johnson and Rex Arron Veasey, Jr., escaped from the Gulf County Detention Facility (GCDF) in Port St. Joe. Veasey was captured by Franklin County Sheriff's Deputies around 11:05 a.m., just inside Franklin County, after he was observed in the woods by a civilian employee of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The Gulf County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) received the call just before 12:30 a.m. on Tuesday, September 7, from a correctional officer reporting that another officer was attacked by two inmates, and they were loose in the jail. Once law enforcement arrived, it was determined the two inmates escaped and the search began. The correctional officer sustained injuries and was transported to a local hospital.

The criminal investigation revealed the correctional officer approached the door of the cell Johnson and Veasey were housed and was immediately struck in the face by Johnson when the cell door was opened. Both Johnson and Veasey pulled the officer into the cell and began attacking him. During the attack, the officer told the investigator he was punched approximately ten, or twelve, times in the face. He further stated that Johnson made a statement about killing him and then pulled a homemade knife from his pants and attempted to stab him. Using both hands, the officer was able to grab Johnson's hand with the knife to keep him from stabbing him. Johnson continued to strike the officer in the head with his other hand. The officer told the investigator that he almost lost consciousness. Johnson and Veasey were able to gain access to the common areas of the jail facility, removed an air condition window unit from a wall and escaped through the hole.

After his capture, Veasey was booked into the Franklin County Jail and faces new charges of Escape from a Correctional Facility and one count of Attempted Murder. He was in the custody of the GCDF on charges of Sexual Battery with a Weapon on a Victim between 12 and 17 years of age, Aggravated Assault, False Imprisonment and Escape.

Johnson remains at large and is wanted for Escape from a Correctional Facility, Attempted Murder, and Introduction of Contraband into a County Detention Facility. He is a 43-year-old white male, 6' 00" tall, weighs approximately 215 lbs. and has blue eyes with short

brown hair and possibly a beard. He was held for the Liberty County Jail at the GCDF on charges of Possession of Child Pornography (15 counts), Grand Theft of a Motor Vehicle, Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer and Attempted Escape. Johnson has tattoos on his left and right arms, including his hands. He is suspected in the theft of a 2006 Ford van (15 passenger) that displayed Florida tag 7039XP (corrected from the victim's initial report yesterday of a 2008 Ford). The vehicle was last seen at approximately 6:20 a.m. yesterday morning travelling north on Highway 71 near the Calhoun and Gulf County line.

“There is a \$5,000 reward offered by the Florida Sheriffs’ Association Criminal Apprehension Assistance Program (CAAP) for information that leads to the arrest of Johnson,” said Sheriff Mike Harrison. “In addition, the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force is offering an additional \$1,000.” Anyone with information may contact the Gulf County Sheriff’s Office directly at 850-227-1115 (opt 4), contact their local authorities or remain anonymous by calling Panhandle Crime Stoppers at 850-785-TIPS (8477). Panhandle Crime Stoppers continues to honor their \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest Johnson. Tips may also be reported through the Gulf County Sheriff’s Office App or online at pcstips.com.

Prepared by: Capt. Chris Buchanan
Approved by: Sheriff Mike Harrison