



Chelan County Sheriff's Office

Brian Burnett, Sheriff

Law and Justice Bldg ★ 401 Washington Street #1 ★ Wenatchee, WA 98801
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For Immediate Release

Contact: Brian Burnett

Incident #: 21C07968- STOLEN SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT

Phone: 509-667-6850

Date: 7/26/2021

<http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/sheriff>

CHELAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATEMENT ON STOLEN SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT

Chelan County Sheriff Brian Burnett today provided a summary of an incident over the weekend related to a stolen school bus vehicle and how law enforcement's response was dictated by new Washington state police reform policies

On Saturday July 24 at 1940 hrs. employees of Osprey Rafting witnessed a man wearing a yellow dress drive away in the company's privately owned large yellow school bus from an area east of Leavenworth on SR 2 (milepost 102). Sheriff's deputies responded and located the vehicle driving eastbound near milepost 111, and witnessed the vehicle running a red light near Monitor, WA. They tried to initiate a traffic stop but the bus did not stop. Washington's new police reform laws no longer allow law enforcement to pursue a fleeing vehicle unless there is probable cause that a serious felony (see the 4 required elements below) has occurred so the deputies had to abandon the pursuit.

Douglas County Sheriff's deputies followed the vehicle eastbound on SR28 after it traveled through the city limits of Wenatchee and across the Senator George Sellar Bridge. They also discontinued pursuit per the new reform laws.

On Saturday July 25 at 1853 hrs. Chelan County Sheriff's Office was contacted by the Chewelah Police Department who indicated they believed they had the driver in custody. His identify was verified by Chelan County deputies and he was wearing the same yellow dress.



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Thirty-nine-year-old Andrew S. Loudon allegedly stole a front-end loader and drove it through his home in Chewelah. The suspect's wife had fled the home when she learned her estranged husband may be nearby. Loudon had been released from Western State Hospital early on Saturday and had made his way to Leavenworth where he allegedly stole the bus, then abandoned the bus near Moses Lake and made his way to Spokane and then Chewelah.

He is being held on charges of Theft of a Motor Vehicle, Possession of a Stolen Vehicle, Malicious Mischief 1st degree/domestic violence and Attempting to Elude Police Vehicle.

Chronology of the events (times are approximate)

7-24-21 morning - Loudon is released from Western Hospital

7-24-21 1916 hrs - Loudon is seen walking east bound wearing a dress near milepost 102

7-24-21 1940 hrs - Loudon allegedly steals the bus

7-24-21 1948 hrs - Located the bus east bound on Hwy 2. Driver fails to stop.

7-24-21 1955 hrs – Chelan County deputies terminate pursuit after driver goes through a red light.

7-24-21 2010 hrs - Vehicle drives through Wenatchee

7-24-21 2018 hrs - Vehicle enters Douglas County.



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7-24-21 2037 hrs - Douglas County attempts traffic stop. Driver fails to stop.

7-24-21 2047 hrs - Douglas County stops following the Bus

Unknown time – The bus is left near Moses Lake the suspect hitch hikes to Spokane and then Chewelah

7-25-21 – 1853 hrs – Suspect allegedly steals a large front-end loader and drives it through a house, flipping a vehicle into the structure. Loudon is subsequently arrested and booked into jail.

How this incident highlights changes in police response:

The new law sets very strict guidelines for law enforcement that takes away our ability to pursue stolen vehicles. It states four elements are required for law enforcement to pursue a vehicle:

1. Probable Cause for a VIOLENT OFFENSE, SEX OFFENSE or ESCAPE (from custody or detention facility) or reasonable suspicion for DUI
2. Pursuit is necessary to identify or apprehend the person AND
3. The driver possess an imminent threat to the safety of OTHERS, AND the risk of failing to apprehend or identify the person is greater than the risks of vehicle pursuit AND
4. Supervisor has provided authorization.

If these four prongs are not all met, we as law enforcement cannot pursue vehicles in Washington State any longer.



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