

Catch of the Quarter 2008

Ofc. D. Steele and K9 Blitz

Sterling Heights Police Department

On September 10, 2008 at about 2200 hrs. I received a phone call at home from Sgt. Holmes requesting a K-9 track for an ATM Armed Robbery that had just occurred. I responded with my K-9 partner Blitz. The RA took place at the National City Bank on Mound Rd. just south of M-59. This was the fifth such robbery in the past week and a half. When I arrived I was told that the armed suspects approached a car at the ATM took their money and fled south on foot. I was then informed that two civilians on the Catalpa, the first side street south of the bank, chased the suspects north into their back yard. The witnesses said that they lost sight of them in a small wooded area in the rear of their yard and went around the yard back towards the bank to wait for the suspects to come on Waldo, which was the street north of their house. When the suspects never appeared they walk east down Waldo, which was the street that the bank was located on.

I decided to start the track at the edge of the wooded area in the witnesses; neighbors back yard, where I knew the only people that had traveled through there were the suspects. I casted Blitz in the yard and he immediately started tracking north through the back yard. About 20 feet into the track I noted that Blitz threw his head to the east, hesitated for a moment and then continued tracking north bound. I made a mental note to check that area for evidence after the track was completed. Blitz tracked about 100 yards and came to Waldo. After working through the distractions that the witnesses had left by walking up and down the street, Blitz turned northwest and tracked into an empty parking lot of a medical building. Blitz tracked to an empty space behind a large pine tree. Blitz

circled around and then began tracking south bound, crossing Waldo and entering the bank parking lot. With the direction that Blitz had tracked, I believed that the suspects had parked their getaway vehicle in the lot of the medical plaza.

After giving Blitz a short breather, I took him back to the yard of the witnesses on Catalpa to do an article search for any property that they suspects may have dropped. I was told that the two suspects had both lost their hats on Catalpa. As we neared the wooded area in the back yard, Blitz shot into the woods. He returned with a white bandana in his mouth. I told Blitz to spit it out and he did. I informed Detective Bisdorf who was with me for the article search that Blitz had found evidence. He told me that one of the suspect did use the bandana as a mask. Blitz then went back into the woods and exited quickly. He looked at me and then ran back into the woods only to exit again. I followed him back in and on the other side of the fence was a blue hooded sweatshirt, which was worn by one of the robbers. Again I informed Det. Bisdorf. I took Blitz around the fence in order not to disturb the evidence and continued my article search. We were now in the yard where the track was started. Blitz immediately ran to the area where he threw his head at the start of the track and I observed what appeared to be the handle of a gun. As I neared the article it was found to be the plastic grip of an unknown handgun. An evidence tech was called to handle the items. Blitz made no other indications and no other property was found. I cleared the scene.

I was told later that the hooded sweatshirt that was found had a name written on the inside of it and after further investigation it was determined that the name belonged to one of the suspects. The suspect along with his partner was arrested the next morning. Several pieces of evidence were also located during search warrants of their homes,

including a gun with a missing grip. I believe that without the track and article search by K-9 Blitz these suspects will still be on the loose robbing people.

Ofc. Darren Steele #75