



Greg
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Public Information

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News Release

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MISSING KAYAKER ARRESTED IN GEORGIA AFTER FAKING HIS OWN DEATH BY DROWNING IN ST CHARLES PARISH

Luling, Louisiana September 18, 2023:

Sheriff Greg Champagne reports that Melvin Phillip Emde was arrested by authorities in Tift County, Georgia on Sunday, September 17, 2023.

Just after midnight on August 7, 2023, Melvin Emde, a forty-one-year-old male from Talihina, Oklahoma was reported missing by his son Seth after allegedly going overboard and drowning while kayaking in the Mississippi River near Matis Road in Hahnville, Louisiana.

Detectives learned the following day that Emde had pending charges of Indecent Liberties with a Child and Statutory Rape of a Child by an Adult in Brunswick County, North Carolina, and was due in court that same day.

“We immediately became quite suspicious that this may have been a faked accidental drowning and death in order for Mr. Emde to escape charges in Brunswick County, North Carolina. However, we could not publicly expose our suspicions for fear of tipping him off,” said Sheriff Champagne.

After consulting with authorities in North Carolina, detectives learned Emde was wearing an ankle monitor as a condition of bail. Through investigation detectives learned earlier on the day of the reported drowning, Emde visited Walmart in Boutte and purchased two prepaid phones.

Detectives worked with authorities in North Carolina and the United States Marshals Service to track the phones. Emde discreetly used one phone and only turned it on for short periods of time. The original search focused on Oklahoma until it became obvious the phones were no longer being used.

On Sunday, September 17, 2023, around 3:30 a.m., a Georgia State Highway Patrol officer attempted to stop a motorcycle for not having a license plate. The motorcycle fled and ultimately crashed. The driver attempted to flee on foot but was taken into custody. The driver gave a false name, and once fingerprinted it was learned that he was Melvin Emde.

Sheriff Greg Champagne thanks the Georgia State Highway Patrol, the United States Marshals Service, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office, St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office Detective Joshua Deroche, and all of those involved for revealing the facts surrounding the disappearance of Emde.

Sheriff Greg Champagne concludes, "Now it's time for Mr. Emde to face the music for his charges in North Carolina."

If anyone has any information, they are urged to contact Detective Joshua Deroche with the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office at (985) 783-6807, (985) 783-1135, or jderoche@stcharlessheriff.org.