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**Date: 10/5/09**

**Released By: Wendy Rose**

**NR #:09-190**

## **Arrest in String of Violent Home Invasions**



The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, working in conjunction with the Sarasota Police Department, Manatee County Sheriff's Office, Bradenton Police Department and Venice Police Department, has arrested 38-year-old Delmer Smith, III, in connection with several violent home invasion robbery cases that have been under investigation since February.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Venice Police Department arrested Delmer Smith on a federal warrant for violation of probation. During the arrest, officers learned Smith was suspected of a North Port residential burglary. They also gained information about his prior arrest record, and that Smith was in possession of a number of laptop computers and other electronic devices. The Venice Police Department recovered these items and identified Smith to Task Force members as a possible suspect.

Detectives discovered two of the laptops belonged to the victims in the Bougainvillea Street and Carmilfra Drive attacks. These two cases were previously forensically linked by DNA evidence independently collected by the Sarasota Police Department and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and submitted to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement DNA lab in Ft. Myers. DNA evidence with the same genetic profile was recovered from the crime scene on Whispering Sands.

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Investigators determined that a DNA sample was taken from Smith by the Federal Department of Corrections in Indiana. That sample was entered into CODIS and through a computerized comparison provided a match of Smith's DNA to the three samples obtained from the previously listed crime scenes.

Smith has remained in the Pinellas County Jail since his arrest on September 10th. Investigators have spent the last several weeks developing background information, interviewing associates, executing related search warrants, and examining additional evidence including phone and financial records. Additional items recovered from Smith's possessions have linked him to the crimes, including items belonging to victims from the attack that occurred on Osage Terrace. As of this time, Smith has refused to cooperate with investigators.

In relation to these attacks, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office today charged Smith with Three Counts of Home Invasion Robbery, Four Counts of False Imprisonment and Two Counts of Sexual Battery, for the attacks on Carmilfra Drive, Osage Terrace and Whispering Sands Drive. The Sarasota Police Department has charged Smith with One Count of Home Invasion Robbery and One Count of False Imprisonment for the attack on Bougainvillea Street.

Smith remains a prime suspect in the other unsolved cases and those investigations are continuing. Additional charges will be filed if and when they are appropriate.

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office would like to recognize the cooperative efforts and contributions of all agencies involved in this joint investigation, including: the Venice Police Department, Sarasota Police Department, Manatee County Sheriff's Office, Bradenton Police Department, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Federal Bureau of Investigations, the State Attorney's Office, Federal Department of Corrections Probation and Parole, and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

Anyone with information about Delmer Smith is encouraged to call Criminal Investigations at 941-861-4900 or leave an anonymous tip with Crime Stoppers by calling 941-366-TIPS (8477), online at [www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com](http://www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com) or via text message by texting TIP109 plus a message to CRIMES (274637).

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