



# San Diego County SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

## NEWS RELEASE INFORMATION SHEET

Subject: Loss Prevention Operations  
Person Providing Information: Sergeant W. Amavisca  
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Date of Release: 01/24/2018  
Time of Release: 4:00 p.m.

### SYNOPSIS:

On 01/24/2018, Deputies assigned to the Sheriff's Santee Station COPPS Unit and the Area Investigations Unit worked with Loss Prevention Officers from multiple retail stores within the city of Santee in an attempt to make contact with persons in the act of committing crimes of theft or fraud.

At 9:38 a.m., Asset Protection Specialists working at the Home Depot in Santee observed a male, later identified as Justin Charlton, stealing items from the store by concealing them in a backpack in his possession. They attempted to detain Charlton in the parking lot after he passed all points of sale without paying for the items. When they contacted him, he tried to run. Charlton abandoned the backpack and entered the passenger seat of a blue Nissan Altima, which drove away. The vehicle was driven by a subject who was identified as Chikora Ward. The Asset Protection Specialists provided the license plate to the deputies working the detail.

A record check of the license plate revealed it was stolen. Detectives in unmarked cars followed the vehicle until Sheriff's Deputies in marked patrol vehicles could enact a traffic stop. The suspects immediately pulled over and were taken into custody. Both subjects were booked into the Sheriff's San Diego Central Jail. Chikora Ward was charged with auto theft, possession of stolen property, possession of controlled substance and paraphernalia, and driving under the influence. Justin Charlton was charged with commercial burglary.

At 1:45 p.m., deputies working with the Loss Prevention Officers at the Lowes in Santee observed Stewart Asmar attempting to return an item at the customer service counter. The item was not eligible for return. This upset Asmar and he became belligerent and boisterous. He made vague threats to the employee working at the customer service desk. Asmar was contacted by deputies. During the contact, it was discovered he was under the influence of drugs. An evaluation was conducted and Asmar was arrested for Driving Under the Influence of Drugs and Disturbing the Peace. He was later booked into the Sheriff's San Diego Central Jail.