

Man caught red-handed trying to steal vehicle

Written by Staff Reports

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A police officer caught a man trying to hotwire a car at TravelCenters of America, 3405 W. Highway 66, Dec. 8.

Gallup Police Department Officer John Gonzales responded to the call shortly after 11 am. The suspect was reportedly trying to break into a vehicle at U Save Truck Stop, 3405 W. Highway 66, when the call came in.

With the help of a passerby, police located the suspect Ruben Pena, Jr. at TA, across the street from U Save.

Gonzales drove up to the teal-colored car that Pena was sitting in. The front and rear windshields were broken out. He had the fuse panel open, and “it appeared that Ruben Pena, Jr. was trying to hot wire the vehicle,” the report states.

The officer asked Pena, 45, what he was up to, and he responded by saying that he was “looking for things that belonged to him.” However, he had no idea who the car belonged to.

As Pena was being placed under arrest, he had claimed that he was sprayed with mace at U Save. Gonzales called paramedics, but Pena refused treatment and appeared to be OK.

Pena was booked into McKinley County Adult Detention Center for trespassing and breaking and entering.