

Giant robbed by wannabe ninja

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Robber takes batteries, sunglasses

A Yatahey man jailed Christmas Eve on an armed robbery charge bonded out of the McKinley County Adult Detention Center a few days later, records show.

Robert Brown, 30, had no idea that the moment he decided to rob the Giant at 3340 E. Historic Highway 66 was the same instance that a deputy sheriff from the McKinley County Sheriff's Office was at the store. Brown was carrying a 4-foot silver ninja sword at the time of the robbery.

"I was on routine patrol to use the air pump," Deputy Merlin Benally wrote in a police report on the matter. Benally saw Brown, who was wearing all black and carrying "a long silver item," quickly walk away from the store. This prompted the deputy to go inside of the store and check on the clerk. "He went that way," a terrified store clerk told Benally.

Benally recorded in the report that Brown entered the business at 6:52 am, and left the business in a huff, only to find the deputy trailing. Brown was found with a pack of Energizer batteries, a lighter and a pair of sunglasses. He told the store clerk to give him a fifth of Jack Daniels, too, which the store was out of.

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During arrest procedures, Benally said he noticed a strong alcoholic odor coming from Brown's breath. At the point of entering the jail, Benally recorded in the report that Brown began to cry and said he committed the robbery because he ran out of gas "and needed some gas money."

Brown bonded out of jail on a \$6,000 bond. The charges in the incident were armed robbery, assault with the intent to commit a violent felony, tampering with evidence and resisting and evading or obstructing an officer.

A supplemental report of the robbery by Benally indicates that Brown stole \$35.75 from the Giant gas station and convenience store.

The robbery is one of several gas station robberies that occurred on Gallup's east side in 2016.

The Shell gas station at 3306 E. Historic Highway 66 was broken into and robbed twice this year.

***By Bernie Dotson
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