



IRON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF MARK O. GOWER

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

Date: 12-05-17

RE: Kidnapping / Amber Alert Follow-up

On December 1, 2017 the Iron County Sheriff's office received court documents from Micha Coltharp regarding her four biological children. Micha believed her children were in the Iron County area somewhere near Beryl junction about 30 miles west of Cedar City. Deputies responded to the general area and attempted to locate the children and Jonathan Coltharp. Based on the information provided at that time Deputies were unable to locate an area where the children may be located.

On the evening of December 3, 2017 Iron County Sheriff's Office received a tip Keith and Catherine Coltharp were in a remote area of northern Iron County approximate 1 mile west of Lund, Utah. Deputies responded to the area and attempted to locate a vehicle matching the description provided. Deputies located the vehicle at a compound made up of shipping containers. It appeared as though people were living in the shipping containers at that time.

On December 4, 2017 at approximately 1115 hours a vehicle was located leaving the compound area. A traffic stop was made on the vehicle and deputies contacted Keith Coltharp. It was determined two of the children on the court order; Seth Coltharp and William Coltharp were at the compound with Catherine Coltharp.

At approximately 1145 hours contact was made at the compound where Seth and William were reported to be located with Catherine Coltharp. Both children were taken into custody pursuant to the court order provided to our office. Both boys were later transported to the Cedar City area where they were medically checked and an interview occurred.

Through the investigation it was determined Samuel Shaffer was last seen with Dina Coltharp and Hattie Coltharp. Samuel also had in his custody his two biological children identified as Lily Shaffer age 7 and Samantha Shaffer age 5. It was believed Samuel had left the compound Sunday, December 3 sometime after 1600 hours on foot. It was reported Samuel had spent the previous night with all four girls in a tent on or near the property.

Southern Utah University aviation was contacted and they deployed a helicopter to help search the area. They later deployed additional helicopters and fixed wing aircraft to help in the search for these children.



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At approximately 1500 hours Iron County Sheriff's Office issued an Amber Alert for the two Coltharp children Dina and Hattie Coltharp.

At approximate 1715 hours a subject who had heard the Amber Alert called Cedar Communications advising of a white male walking alone on the dirt road several miles west of the compound. Deputies responded to the area and identified the male as Shaffer. Shaffer was taken into custody without incident. Shaffer at that time provided law enforcement with a general location of two of the females. Deputies responded to the area and located the children Lily Shaffer and Hattie Coltharp inside two blue plastic 50 gallon water barrels located approximate 1000 yard south of the Coltharp property. At that time Shaffer stated the children had been placed in the water barrels to conceal or hide them from being found by searching law enforcement.

At this time it appears the children had spent approximately 24 hours inside the Barrel in subfreezing temperatures. These two children were not properly dressed for the cold temperatures and did not have food or water at that time. Shaffer also made statements he had left a firearm behind on the ground next to the barrel.

Shaffer then refused initially to tell us where the other two girls where located Dinah Coltharp and Samantha Shaffer were located. At this time Utah Department of Public Safety helicopter arrived on scene to assist with the search. Gold Cross Ambulance and Intermountain Life Flight helicopter were also called to the scene. A search by approximately 20 law enforcement officials began to try and locate Samantha and Dinah.

After approximately one hour Shaffer then provided a location of Dinah and Samantha which were located in an abandoned single wide mobile home. Diane and Samantha were located in poor health with signs of dehydration and acting lethargic.

All four girls were brought to the command center where they were checked by medical personnel and then transported by ambulance to the Cedar City hospital where emergency medical care was provided. The youngest child: Samantha Shaffer has since been flown by Life Flight helicopter to Primary Children's Hospital due to her condition. Her condition is unknown at this time. The other three children have been released from the hospital.

It is currently believed Johnathan Coltharp and Samuel Shaffer are part of the Knights of the Crystal Blade. It was believed Samuel Shaffer was the Prophet of the Knights of the Crystal Blade. During an interview with Shaffer he stated he had turned over the position of Prophet to Johnathan Coltharp.

A search warrant for the three (3) locations has been obtained and a search of the three locations is currently underway. The FBI forensic team is assisting in collecting evidence at the three locations.



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Samuel Shaffer has been arrested for two (2) counts of Kidnapping and four (4) counts of Child abuse all felony charges. At this time Johnathan Coltharp is in custody at the Sanpete County Jail.

This case continues to be under investigation.

For more information contact:

Lt. Del Schlosser

Iron County Sheriff's Office

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