



# Ft. Pierce Police Department News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**R. Sean Baldwin**  
*Chief of Police*

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Ft. Pierce, FL 34950

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## Assault rifle seized in arrest of gang member

FORT PIERCE – Detectives arrested an admitted gang member in connection with the theft of 9 guns three days ago.

With the arrest of gang member John William Howard yesterday, the number of suspects arrested in connection with the burglary increased to 5. Detectives are searching for one more suspect.

Howard was charged with grand theft of a firearm, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of marijuana over 20 grams, possession of marijuana with the intent to sell, cultivation of marijuana and tampering/destroying evidence. Detectives received a tip that the SKS assault rifle taken during the burglary was at Howard's residence, 2908 Carver Street.

“The Fort Pierce Police Department is committed to ridding our community of the violence associated with criminal street gangs and this case is an example of this commitment,” said Chief R. Sean Baldwin. “Every time a gang member is involved in an act of violence or crime associated with violence, like theft or possession of a firearm, the police department will respond with relentless investigation and prosecution.”

“Gang members need to understand that the violence must stop – it will not be tolerated in this community,” Baldwin said.

Detective Sally Hurly, who is assigned to the case, has been persistent in investigating the theft of the guns. So far, one adult, three teens and an 11-year-old have been arrested and eight of the nine guns stolen (four handguns, four long guns and the assault rifle) have been recovered. There is still one suspect at large and a handgun is still missing.

Suspects previously arrested and all were charged with three felonies in connection with the burglary:

Arrested on July 23: Jatavish G. Harriell, 16, 521 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street

Arrested on July 22: Kevin Joseph, 14, 1923 Royal Palm Drive

Earnest Belis, 14, 1856 Nantucket Avenue

Christopher Grimes, 11, 1702 Ponce De Leon

**Note: Incident and Howard's arrest affidavit attached**

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