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Section: News

Three store holdups; 1 robber

Article Text:

The Winder man killed in a high-speed chase after robbing a Dollar General in Monroe also held up Dollar General stores last week in Bethlehem and Hoschton, police said.

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Durwin Anthony Schofield, 41, of Winder, died Sunday when his speeding sport utility vehicle hit a tree on Georgia Highway 11 in Barrow County as he fled police shortly after the 2 p.m. robbery in Monroe.

Schofield robbed the Dollar General in Hoschton the day before and the Bethlehem outlet last Wednesday morning, investigators said.

After he robbed the Monroe store, Georgia State Patrol troopers were chasing Schofield's Jeep Cherokee, and he ran off Ga. 11. A state trooper trying to stop the chase, hit Schofield's SUV with his own cruiser; the Jeep ran off the road and hit a tree.

Schofield was taken to Barrow Regional Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead, according to Cpl. Marc Meeler of the patrol's Monroe post.

"Ultimately, the trooper had to find a way to stop this pursuit before it got to Bethlehem and/or to Georgia (Highway) 316, where there would have been much more traffic and it would have been much more dangerous," Meeler said.

Walton County sheriff's deputies and officers from the Monroe Police Department began searching for Schofield after employees at the Dollar General on Georgia Highway 138 called 911. A deputy patrolling Ga. 11 spotted the Cherokee and attempted to get him to stop, Meeler said. Instead, the Jeep sped up and the deputy chased after.

"(Schofield) maliciously tried to get away, zooming around other drivers, speeding and passing on the double yellow line," said Bruce Wright, chief deputy of the Walton County Sheriff's Office. "He put many, many people's lives in danger."

Meeler and other troopers joined the pursuit right outside of Monroe and followed the Cherokee for a few miles before the trooper directly behind Schofield hit the SUV.

Investigators with the Barrow County Sheriff's Office and the Hoschton Police Department determined that Schofield robbed the Dollar General stores in Hoschton and Bethlehem as well. Schofield went into the Bethlehem Dollar General on Gifton-Thomas Road, near the intersection of Ga. 316 and 11, about 9:30 a.m. last Wednesday and threatened a cashier until she turned over an undisclosed amount of money, deputies said.

Investigators with the Hoschton Police Department say Schofield robbed the Dollar General on Georgia Highway 53 on Saturday afternoon. The robber came into the store, told cashiers that he had a gun and demanded money, police Chief Jeremy Howell said.

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