



Putnam County Justice Center
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 8/17/2015

Man Arrested in Case of Missing/Endangered 14-Year Old Girl

PUTNAM COUNTY, TN – Yesterday at about 5:00 p.m., Sergeant Eric Hall of the Putnam County Sheriff's Office was in Baxter when he received a call about a speeding car that crashed into a ditch at the junction of Old Gainesboro Highway and Cumby Road. While enroute to the call, he was informed that the car had the same description as the Amber Alert issued by Cookeville Police Department for the Missing/Endangered 14-year old girl that was released Friday.

Upon arriving on the scene, Sergeant Hall found a man unloading items from the vehicle and immediately took him into custody. The man was identified as Elijah Smith, a 28-year old man from Davidson County who was named as a suspect in the Amber Alert. Open containers of alcohol were found in the vehicle and Smith had the smell of alcohol on his person.

Sergeant Hall and assisting officers from Cookeville Police Department, Tennessee Highway Patrol, and Baxter Police Department set up a perimeter and issued a BOLO ("Be On the Lookout") for the missing girl, assuming that she was somewhere nearby. Putnam County Sheriff's Office K9 Unit sent bloodhound Maggie with Deputies Matt Scott and Tory Womack to the scene. Within 10-15 minutes, the missing girl was found unharmed, lying down in the grass nearby. She is now safely home with her parents.

"I am extremely proud of the quick and decisive actions taken by our deputies in conjunction with THP and our municipal police officers," said Sheriff Eddie Farris. "As a result of their quick thinking and decisive actions, we were able to apprehend the subject without incident and deliver the young lady safely home to her parents."

Deputy Tory Womack charged Smith with DUI, Contributing to the delinquency of a minor, filing a false report, failure to exercise due course and open container. His bond was set at \$7,000 for these charges. Cookeville Police Department charged Smith with Statutory Rape and set bond at \$30,000 for this charge. He was booked into Putnam County Jail. Cookeville Police Department is conducting an ongoing investigation into this matter.

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