

Man Opens Fire on Pokémon Go Hunters Outside His Home

Pokemon Go is sweeping the world with millions stepping foot into the outside world to hunt the small “pocket monsters” in a phenomenon known as augmented reality. But the game is dangerous, and even life-threatening in some cases. In one situation, a home owner shot at hunters who were on his property.

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office is investigating a Saturday morning shooting that occurred in front of 41 Primrose Lane in Palm Coast.

After arriving at the incident location, deputies interviewed the homeowner and learned that he was awakened by a loud noise coming from outside of his home. He got up from bed and looked outside and noticed a small white car with its brake lights on in the roadway in front of his home.

He armed himself with a handgun and went outside to investigate and as he approached the vehicle, he heard someone say something like “did you get anything.”

He told deputies that he then stepped in front of the vehicle and ordered the vehicle not to move. The homeowner stated the vehicle accelerated toward him causing him to flee the roadway. Because he believed the vehicle was attempting to strike him, he discharged his handgun several times at the vehicle. The vehicle sped away and was not located after a search of the area was conducted.

Later that morning, the FCSO received a call from a parent of a 19-year-old Palm Coast man stating her son just advised her that he and a 16-year-old friend were playing “Pokémon Go” using the smartphone app at approximately 1:30 that morning when they were confronted by a man who came out from his home

and shot at them several times.

She stated they did not tell her until this morning when they observed the car had a flat tire and bullet holes in the rear tire, hubcap and fender. After speaking to the teens, deputies learned that while they were sitting in the car on Primrose Lane, they heard someone say "did you catch him" and one of the teens stated "yeah, did you?"

It was at this time that they heard gunshots and they sped away and drove immediately home. When they arrived at the home, they checked themselves to see if they were injured and they inspected the car to the best of their ability, but did not find any noticeable damage. Since they were not injured and there was no damage to the vehicle, they thought it was someone trying to scare them and this is why they did not contact law enforcement or tell their parents.

The investigation is continuing and additional details will be provided as they become available. Deputies remind citizens that much could have been done differently in this case and are urged to follow the listed safety tips:

Homeowners:

- Call 911 immediately when you suspect someone is trying to break into your home.
- If at all possible, be an excellent witness for law enforcement by providing valuable information on what is occurring.
- Avoid leaving the protection of your home to confront suspects. This should be handled by trained law enforcement officers.

Pokémon Go Hunters:

- Use common sense, be alert at all times and stay aware of your surroundings. In law enforcement, we call this

situational awareness.

- Watch where you are going.
- Do not drive or ride your bike, skateboard or other device while interacting with the Pokémon Go app. You cannot do both safely at the same time.
- Do not trespass, go onto private property or into any area you usually would not if you weren't playing Pokémon Go.
- Understand that people can use your location to lure you to "Pokéstops" so they can victimize you.
- Take a friend with you.
- If you are a minor, check with a parent before going anywhere and tell an adult or law enforcement officer immediately if anything happens.

Parents of Pokémon Go Hunters:

- Talk to your kids about strangers and set limits on where your kids can go.
- Be aware of third-party software apps claiming to enhance the gaming experience. Unfortunately, many of these apps allow access to sensitive personal data.