

## Fugitive Wanted for Drug Crimes Found Hiding Under Sweetwater Home

August 8, 2025

— Categories: Crime



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Federal and local law enforcement officers joined forces to apprehend a fugitive wanted on drug-related charges after discovering him hiding in the ductwork beneath a residence on Old Highway 68 in Sweetwater.

Michael Blackwell was taken into custody on Wednesday after authorities located him concealed underneath the home. Officials described the arrest as particularly challenging

due to Blackwell's attempt to evade capture by hiding in the confined and difficult-to-access ductwork.

The operation involved close collaboration among several agencies, including the U.S. Marshals Service, Sweetwater Police Department, Blount County Sheriff's Office, Monroe County Sheriff's Office, and the 10th Judicial Drug Task Force. Their combined efforts were crucial in successfully locating and safely arresting the suspect.

Sheriff Tommy Jones of Monroe County praised the teamwork, stating, "Working alongside our federal partners, our deputies provided critical support in locating and safely taking the suspect into custody. This operation highlights the strong partnerships between local and federal law enforcement and our shared commitment to keeping our communities safe."

Blackwell had previously avoided arrest during a Drug Task Force operation, but ongoing investigative efforts led to his eventual capture. Law enforcement officials have emphasized their dedication to pursuing fugitives connected to drug crimes, aiming to disrupt illegal activity and enhance public safety.

The use of unconventional hiding places like ductwork highlights the lengths to which some suspects go to avoid law enforcement. Officers had to carefully navigate the narrow space under the home to safely remove Blackwell without injury to themselves or the suspect.

This arrest adds to a series of recent successes by Tennessee law enforcement agencies targeting drug trafficking and related criminal activities in the region. Authorities have increased collaboration and resource-sharing across jurisdictions to improve response times and effectiveness in apprehending individuals evading justice.

The presence of drug-related crime remains a concern for communities in Sweetwater and surrounding areas. Officials encourage residents to remain vigilant and report suspicious activity to local law enforcement to aid ongoing investigations.

Michael Blackwell now faces charges related to drug offenses, and his case will proceed through the judicial system. Prosecutors are expected to pursue the charges rigorously, reflecting the seriousness of the alleged crimes.

Law enforcement agencies continue to stress the importance of cooperation among federal, state, and local partners. This approach has proven effective in addressing complex cases and ensuring that fugitives do not remain at large.

Community safety remains a top priority for agencies involved in this operation. Efforts to dismantle drug networks and remove dangerous individuals from the streets contribute to safer neighborhoods and improved quality of life for residents.

The U.S. Marshals Service, in particular, plays a vital role in apprehending fugitives nationwide. Their participation alongside local officers in Sweetwater demonstrates the combined commitment to law enforcement at all levels.