



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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Media Release

From: Sergeant Donna Black
Public Information Officer, 352-797-3609

Re: Spring Hill Car Burglars Arrested

Date: January 30, 2009

Case#: 2009-01358 (key case)

An investigation into a series of 34 vehicle burglaries that plagued the Spring Hill area of Hernando County has been solved; four subjects have been arrested.

Arrested:

ASHLEE BELL, DOB 03/12/90, 7125 Coral Reef Dr, Port Richey, Charges: **Vehicle Burglary- 5 counts, Violation of Probation- 1 count, Driving while License Suspended- 1 count**

JOANNA MONTANEZ, DOB 09/13/86, 6233 Kelvin Ct, Spring Hill, Charges: **Vehicle Burglary- 10 counts**

CHRISTOPHER FOX, DOB 11/23/93, 1453 Escobar Ave, Spring Hill, Charges: **Vehicle Burglary- 10 counts**

HOWARD SHAEER, DOB 03/20/92, 9207 Gerona St. Spring Hill, Charges: **Vehicle Burglary- 10 counts** including **1 count of Armed Burglary** (because he stole a .38 cal handgun from inside an unlocked vehicle).

On 01/11/2009 at approximately 0306 hours, in the area of 9312 Noddy Tern Road, Deputy William Cooper spotted a silver Ford 500, driving up and down several dead-end streets appearing as if the driver was looking to pick up another subject. This vehicle matched the description of a vehicle that was seen leaving a residence where an attempted vehicle burglary had just occurred. Deputy Cooper made a traffic stop on the vehicle and found Ashlee Bell to be the driver. Post Miranda, Bell admitted that she and Howard Shaeer were in the area committing vehicle burglaries. Bell was looking for Shaeer. Shaeer was later found and arrested.

Detective Jeff Swartz continued on with the investigation which ultimately revealed that Bell, Montanez, Fox and Shaeer were involved in a burglary ring that targeted unlocked vehicles in residential areas of Spring Hill. During the months of October 2008 through January 2009, the four subjects would roam neighborhoods during the late evening-early morning hours entering **unlocked** cars looking specifically for GPS, radios, speakers, change, sunglasses, IPODS or

anything else of value left in the car. The subjects would take the items and sell them for whatever cash they could get.

Collectively, BELL, MONTANEZ, FOX AND SHAEER racked up a total of 35 Vehicle Burglary charges; conservatively over \$12, 000.00 worth of property was stolen by this group out of unlocked vehicles parked in owner's driveways/property.

Even though the members of this group have been arrested, there are other crooks out there looking for crimes of opportunity. Sheriff Richard Nugent encourages everyone to lock your vehicle when you park it. Remember to remove valuable items and don't leave tempting items in plain sight.