



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

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

Re: Arrest Made in Disfigure Tomb/Monument

Date: June 15, 2009

Case#: 2009-21084

Date: 06/13/09 at 3:45 pm

Location: Spring Hill Cemetery 8580 Fort Dade Ave, Brooksville

Arrested: Joel Rivera W/M, DOB 05/23/90, 6217 Cartwrite Rd, Brooksville

Seth McCarty, W/M, DOB 08/15/90, 33368 Ridge Manor Blvd, Ridge Manor

Hernando County Deputy during routine patrol of the Spring Hill Cemetery noticed an unoccupied vehicle parked in a remote area of the cemetery. Since this area of the cemetery is a known drug area and frequently used for illegal dumping of trash and household goods, the deputy started actively looking for the occupants.

At the back of the cemetery the deputy discovered a concrete tomb that appeared to be partially open. Many of the old graves in this cemetery have a concrete tomb top that is partially exposed and sticks up out of the ground. This particular grave site displayed no markings or writing on the top; however, had a hole in the side approximately 8x10 inches. Inside this concrete tomb was a badly decayed wooden casket with no top on it. It appeared as though the top must have decayed and was extremely old and in poor condition. Looking inside the coffin, deputies observed the remains of a deceased subject, dressed in a suit consistent with a male's attire. Missing however, from the grave was this unknown subject's skull.

As deputies were investigating the crime, subjects emerged from the woods. Seth McCarty age 18 and Joel Rivera, age 19 told deputies they learned that the cemetery was possibly haunted and they were looking for antique landmarks in the woods. The deputy questioned the subjects about the disturbed grave and they first denied any knowledge. The subjects later told deputies they had been in the cemetery the night before and observed the partially broken tomb. They saw a skull inside the coffin but due to the small hole they could not remove the skull so they used a piece of concrete from the tomb to make a larger hole in order to get it out. They took the skull to a home of an associate and put it in a 5 gallon bucket of bleach. The skull was later recovered by deputies.

Joel A, Rivera W/M, DOB 05/23/1990 and Seth Andrew MCCarty, W/M, DOB 08/15/1990 were arrested for the desecration of the unidentified grave site and the removing of the skull from the remains. Both were transported and booked into the Hernando County Jail.

Deputies made notification to the caretaker of the cemetery to ensure arraignments would be made to repair the damage to the grave site. Assistance was also requested to help in identifying the grave site for our records and for family notification.

According to detectives there is no indication of satanic ritual or occult activity with this case. This case is still ongoing.