



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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

Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: Arrests Made in Powell Middle School Burglary

Date: July 16, 2018

During the early morning hours of 07-07-2018, a Commercial Burglary occurred at Powell Middle School, located at 4100 Barclay Avenue in Spring Hill. During the burglary, a total of 19 laptop computers, which had a value of \$9500, were stolen from various classrooms. On the same morning just hours after the burglary, citizens traveling along the Suncoast Parkway bike trail located 14 of the stolen laptops along the wood line of the trail. Patrol deputies and Forensics specialists responded to the school and began the burglary investigation.

District Two detectives assigned to the investigation retrieved surveillance video from the school. The video indicated that there were two suspects, with one of the suspects being clearly captured on video. A community alert bulletin was issued and detectives began investigating leads while also reviewing evidence in the case.

As a result of the investigation, the two suspects were identified as **Justin Hopkins W/M 04-16-1997** and **Brendon Pestana W/M 03-30-1996**.

On 7-13-2018, Pestana was located by patrol deputies at his residence and taken into custody without incident. Pestana provided a full confession while confirming that the individual in the community alert bulletin was him. Pestana led detectives to his bedroom where the five remaining stolen laptops were located. Those laptops will eventually be returned to school officials at the conclusion of the investigation.

On 7-14-2018, deputies located Hopkins near his residence. Upon attempting to take Hopkins into custody, he fled on foot. A perimeter was quickly established and a K-9 team began tracking Hopkins. Shortly after the track began, Hopkins was located and placed under arrest without further incident. Hopkins admitted to knowledge of the burglary and placed himself at the scene during his statement with detectives.

Both Pestana and Hopkins were transported to the Hernando County Detention Center and charged as follows:

- Burglary – Unoccupied Structure
- Bond - \$5,000.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.