



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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From: Denise M. Moloney  
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Re: UPDATE – ARREST MADE - Detectives Investigating Reports of Shots Fired in  
Bar Parking Lot – 2024-00120583

Date: April 5, 2024

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#### UPDATE

On 03-28-24, detectives and forensic technicians located and collected numerous shell casings from the front yard of a residence on Berkeley Manor Boulevard.

Detectives continued their investigation into the incident in an effort to identify and locate the person(s) responsible for firing the shots.

Investigation revealed a possible suspect, identified as Derrel Thomas Jr.

On 04-04-24, Thomas was located and arrested on an unrelated warrant.

Thomas was brought to the HCSO to be interviewed by detectives. Post Miranda, Thomas admitted to being the person who fired a single round in the Mermaid's parking lot on 03-27-24. Thomas also admitted to being the person who fired several rounds at the victims on Berkeley Manor Boulevard, because 'they were following him'.

Derrel Leonard Thomas Jr. DOB/03-26-2000 was arrested and charged as follows:

- Aggravated Assault w/Firearm (2 counts)
- No Bond
  
- Unrelated Arrest Warrant
  - o Possession/Sale of Cocaine

- Possession of Opium or Derivative w/Intent to Sell
- Unlawful Use of Two-Way Communication Device to Facilitate a Felony
- Possession of a Structure/Vehicle to Traffic Drugs
- No Bond.

## ORIGINAL INFORMATION – 03-28-2024

On 03-27-24 just after 1 a.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to Mermaid's Lounge, located at 4564 Commercial Way in Spring Hill regarding possible shots fired.

Callers told 9-1-1 operators a male was standing in the parking lot of the establishment, firing a weapon. Shortly after the initial calls to 9-1-1, additional calls were placed, reporting a secondary incident, possibly involving gunfire, on Berkeley Manor Boulevard.

Multiple units arrived at both locations and were unable to locate anyone with a firearm.

Upon speaking to individuals in the parking lot of Mermaid's Lounge, deputies were unable to gather any information, as some claimed they did not see or hear anything, while others were completely uncooperative with the investigation, refusing to speak at all.

Deputies then spoke with some residents on Berkeley Manor Boulevard. Each of the residents reported being awakened by possible gunfire; however, none of the residents were able to provide a physical description of any vehicles and/or persons involved in the incident.

While still in the parking lot conducting their investigation, two individuals returned to the scene to report being victims in both incidents.

The victims reported being at the bar before going out to the parking lot to retrieve an item from their vehicle. While in the parking lot, the pair heard a male (the suspect) arguing with a small group of people. During the argument, the suspect retrieved a firearm from his vehicle and began firing shots into the air.

The victims got into their vehicle and fled the scene.

While driving on Berkeley Manor Boulevard, the victims discovered the suspect's vehicle was in front of them. The suspect reportedly slammed on the brakes, exited the vehicle, pointed the firearm in the direction of the victims, and began firing again.

The victims turned their car around and again fled from the area. The suspect did not follow the victims.

No one was injured during either incident.

Detectives responded to the scene and took over the investigation. They are still in the process of interviewing witnesses and collecting physical evidence.

There is no additional information available at this time.

If you have any information on this incident, please call the Hernando County Sheriff's Office and request to speak with a detective in the Major Cases section – 352-754-6830.

**Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips**

***If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!***

***Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or \*\*TIPS from a cell phone.***

***You may also submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> .***

***You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000 cash!***