



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Michael Terry
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Re: Spring Hill Pest Control Technician Arrested on Theft Charges

Date: December 6, 2016

On 11-15-16, a Brooksville resident reported to authorities that an unknown person had made entry into his home on Appalachian Drive and stolen thousands of dollars of jewelry and an Apple MacBook.

The victim told deputies that he had received a call earlier in the day from a technician at Tropicare Pest Control. The technician, **Jorge Garcia, H/M DOB/7-20-90**, had called requesting permission to enter a screened area of the home while no one was home. The victim said he denied the request.

When the victim returned home later that day he immediately noticed several items were missing.

On 12-2-16, Detective Wayne Peterson met with representatives from Tropicare Pest Control who were able to confirm Garcia had responded to the victim's address on the date in question to complete a service call.

A routine check of pawn activity by investigators revealed several suspicious pawn transactions at a local pawn shop around the time when the burglary was believed to have occurred. The victim went to the pawn shop in question where he was able to identify various items that belonging to the victim.

Detective Peterson then made contact with representatives from Tropicare Pest Control who were able to provide GPS information for Garcia's company truck. On the date in question the GPS information showed that Garcia first went to the address on Appalachian Drive and then to the pawn shop shortly thereafter. Garcia had provided a copy of his driver's license and a thumb print when he pawned the stolen items.

In speaking with a Tropicare Pest Control representative, Detective Peterson also learned they had found a ring and cuff links inside Garcia's company vehicle.

Detective Peterson then made contact with Garcia at work. Garcia admitted to entering the home through an unlocked garage window where once inside he stole several pieces of jewelry, which he then pawned at a local pawn shop. He told detectives the items found in his truck were stolen from the Appalachian Drive address.

During questioning, Garcia also admitted to taking a ring from a Quane Avenue home in Spring Hill. Garcia said he found the ring in the yard while on a service call. Garcia said he made no attempt to see if the ring belonged to the homeowner. The next day Garcia pawned the ring for \$100 at a local pawn shop.

Garcia returned to the Spring Hill home on a subsequent day for a service call where the homeowner accused Garcia of stealing the ring from the house. Garcia said he advised the homeowner he didn't steal anything from the house. However, Garcia did not tell the homeowner about finding a ring outside. Garcia told investigators since he found the ring outside he technically didn't lie to the homeowner.

When contacted, the ring's owner told investigators that she noticed the 2 1/2 – karat diamond wedding ring was missing on 11-9-16. Law enforcement responded and attempted to help the woman locate her ring at that time.

A check of Tropicare Pest Control service records showed Garcia completed an in-house service call on the date the ring went missing. GPS tracking of Garcia's company vehicle confirmed his presence at the home. The ring was located at a local pawn shop. The pawn shop valued the ring at \$24,000.

The owner of Tropicare Pest Control met each of the victims at the respective pawn shops and purchased all the items back for the victims. While Garcia also mentioned additional items he had stolen, additional victims have yet to be located. The owners of Tropicare Pest Control agreed to contact other customers who Garcia might have had contact with to ensure they weren't missing any items.

Garcia was charged with multiple counts of Grand Theft, Burglary, Providing False Information to a Pawn Broker and Dealing in Stolen Property. His bond was set at \$46,000.

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.