



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Michael Terry
Community Relations Specialist, 352-797-3608

Re: Burglary Report Leads Deputies to Four Malnourished Dogs in Brooksville

Date: January 23, 2017

On 1-19-17 at 5:30 p.m., deputies were dispatched to 13259 Convent Garden Road in Brooksville in reference to the report of a possible residential burglary in progress.

When deputies arrived, they found five men who had gained access to the property by using bolt cutters to remove the lock on a gate to a chain link fence.

The men were in possession of four dogs that deputies noted appeared to be malnourished and may have been used in animal fighting due to the number of old wounds that covered their bodies.

Only one of the five suspects, **Barbaro Lopez H/M DOB/3-26-1955**, spoke English.

Barbaro, who lives in Tampa, initially told deputies he and the other men were there to drop off the dogs and provide them with food and water until the owner could arrive to care for the animals. Deputies noted no food was found in either of the vehicles the men used to transport the dogs.

Barbaro said he did not know the name of the owner. After continued questioning he indicated the dogs' owner was Oscar Betancourt, who is also the registered owner of the property the men were found on.

Barbaro, however, could not provide any contact information.

Barbaro said they picked up the dogs from Miami and brought them to Brooksville.

With the help of a translator, deputies then spoke to **Yoel Martinez H/M DOB/12-19-1973**.

Martinez, the only suspect who currently resides in Hernando County, said he was planning to rent the property from Betancourt. The three remaining suspects reside in Miami. Martinez said he did not speak to Betancourt, but rather Betancourt's cousin. He was not able to provide a name or any contact information for the person who spoke to him about the property.

Martinez said the men picked up the dogs in the area of Cortez Boulevard and I-75 from a friend from Miami. Later Martinez said they picked up the dogs just around the corner from the 13259 Convent Garden Road address. Once again Martinez could not provide a name or contact information on who the men acquired the dogs from.

Authorities were unable to make contact with the property owner. Deputies also noted that, according to neighbors, the property has been vacant for at least two years.

Following questioning all five individuals were arrested and charged as follows:

Barbaro Lopez H/M DOB/3-26-1955

- Trespass Other Than Structure or Conveyance
- Bond - \$1,000

Yoel Martinez H/M DOB/12-19-1973

- Trespass Other Than Structure or Conveyance
- Bond - \$1,000

Lidier Gonzalez H/M DOB/2-5-1974

- Trespass Other Than Structure or Conveyance
- Bond - \$1,000

Ernesto Hernandez H/M DOB/10-2-1993

- Trespass Other Than Structure or Conveyance
- Bond - \$1,000

Iraldo Rodriguez Manso H/M DOB/11-13-1972

- Trespass Other Than Structure or Conveyance
- Bond - \$1,000.

Additional charges are pending the outcome of the investigation.

All four dogs remain at Hernando County Animal Services.

Several photos will be posted on the HCSO FB page.

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.

