



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: Sheriff Warns of Sextortion Scam

Date: September 11, 2018

Sheriff Al Nienhuis is warning citizens of sextortion scams taking place via the internet.

Since 10-17-17, Hernando County Sheriff's detectives have investigated seven cases involving Sextortion, Threats, Fraud, and/or Sexual Abuse via the internet, involving Hernando County residents.

The cases involve an individual who alleges to be a very attractive female. The individual (suspect) sends photos of "herself" to the victim via the internet in a chatroom or a messenger application, usually Facebook messenger. After conversing for a time, a video chat is initiated. The suspect then convinces the victim to perform various sex acts on video.

Almost immediately, the suspect cuts off the video and demands money from the victim (to be sent in the form of gift cards to an anonymous address in a Western African nation). If the money is not paid, the suspect threatens to share the video with the victim's family and friends, listed on Facebook. In some cases, video has been shared.

The age range of the victims varies, with the youngest being only 13 years old. Detectives fear that teens or young adults may consider self-harm, if they are frightened by the threat, afraid to speak to a responsible adult, embarrassed by the incident, think that they really need to pay to "make it go away" and do not have the means, etc.

It is important to note that the suspect in these cases can be posing as a male or a female. Any contact with a person you do not know personally should be avoided.

If you feel you have been a victim of this type of crime, please contact Detective Tom Breedlove at 352-754-6830.

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.