



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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**From:** Michael Terry  
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**Re:** Habitual Retail Theft Suspect Targeted Walmart Stores More Than 20 Times  
in November

**Date:** January 7, 2019

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A Spring Hill woman with a history of retail theft convictions was recently arrested by Hernando County Sheriff's deputies for committing more than 20 retail/petit thefts at two Hernando County Walmart stores during the month of November.

**Michele Lindsay Bowen, W/F DOB/05-04-1980**, was first arrested in Hernando County on 11-27-18 on two counts of **Retail Theft**, which is a felony due to her prior convictions.

Bowen was stopped by loss prevention officers while shopping at the Walmart located at 13300 Cortez Blvd., in Brooksville.

Loss prevention personnel recognized Bowen from video surveillance captured on 11-25-18 that showed her altering price tags on various items, including an HP Pavilion Laptop computer valued at \$499.99.

Bowen was using the price tag from a 37 cent can opener to cover the price tag of the original item as she scanned each item at the self-checkout register. She was seen exiting the store and placing the stolen items inside her vehicle before returning back into the store and stealing another computer using the same scam.

Bowen was attempting to alter price tags once again on 11-27-18 when she was confronted by Walmart loss prevention.

When law enforcement arrived, Bowen refused to speak with deputies. She was arrested on two counts of **Retail Theft** relating to the two incidents on 11-25-18.

On 12-16-18, a loss prevention officer reviewing video surveillance at the Walmart located at 1485 Commercial Way in Spring Hill saw Bowen at a self-checkout register altering price tags prior to scanning items in her shopping cart.

On this occasion Bowen was using a price tag from a piece of fabric valued at 23 cents as she scanned various items to include a battery jump box, kids clothing, a tool set, and a speaker. The items were valued at \$176.78 for which she paid a total of 92 cents.

On 12-17-18, deputies made contact with Bowen at her home near Bassingthorpe Drive in Spring Hill. She was arrested and charged with one count of **Petit Theft**.

A subsequent investigation by Loss Prevention revealed that Bowen had visited both Walmart stores on a number of occasions throughout November.

A closer inspection of the video showed Bowen altering price tags each time prior to scanning various items.

Between the two stores, Bowen committed 22 transactions where she was caught on video altering price tags during the month on November.

On 01-05-19, deputies arrested Bowen on 22 additional counts of Retail/Petit Theft.

The total value of items taken from both Walmart stores totaled nearly \$5,000, while she paid less than \$100 for all of the items using the self-checkout register.

Bowen has two previous convictions for Retail Theft in Georgia back in 2012.

Additional charges are pending further investigation as additional store video is reviewed.

Bowen is currently incarcerated at the Hernando County Detention Center in lieu of \$44,000 bond.