



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA RELEASE

From: Michael Terry
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Re: Spring Hill Teen Arrested on Vehicle Burglary Charges

Date: May 24, 2019

On 05-14-19, residents living in Sterling Hills reported vehicle burglaries had occurred in the subdivision during the early morning hours.

Video surveillance showed an individual attempting to enter vehicles.

The suspect was only able to enter two of the vehicles.

The suspect was able to remove \$140 in cash from a 2016 GMC Yukon parked at a residence located at Copper Hill Drive in Spring Hill.

Deputies were able to develop a physical description of the suspect using the video surveillance.

The suspect was described as heavy set wearing a hood-style facemask with a white skull on it, along with a black sweatshirt with two white paw prints on the chest.

Investigators created an agency alert bulletin to distribute to law enforcement in hopes of identifying the suspect.

Video of the suspect was shown to faculty and staff at Powell Middle School due to its proximity to the crimes.

Staff was able to identify the suspect as **Nicholas BelKnap W/M DOB/02-18-02**.

BelKnap was also known to live in the Sterling Hills area. Investigators proceeded to talk to BelKnap's parents who invoked their son's rights to counsel.

On 05-22-19, deputies met with BelKnap and his attorney where the teen confessed to committing the burglaries.

BelKnap was charged with two counts of **Burglary of Conveyance**.

BelKnap was transported to the Hernando County Detention Center for processing then released into the custody of his parents.

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.