



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
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**Re:** Deadly Drugs and Stolen Firearm Located by Alert Deputies

**Date:** July 16, 2019

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In two separate incidents, just hours apart, Hernando County Sheriff's deputies located and removed numerous deadly drugs and a stolen firearm from the streets of Hernando County.

On 07-15-19 just after 8 p.m., Deputy Matthew LaPalme received information regarding a vehicle stopped/parked in the middle of the roadway near 5057 Bromley Avenue in Spring Hill. The vehicle was reportedly running and had a driver/occupants inside.

Upon arrival, Deputy LaPalme observed the vehicle in the roadway and made contact with the three occupants. The driver, identified as Keith Dowling, was found to be operating the vehicle with a suspended driver's license (with knowledge) and was in possession of a glass smoking pipe. Dowling was issued a Criminal Citation and a Notice to Appear.

A passenger, Juan Alvarado was found to have 6.3 grams of powder cocaine, 33.5 grams of crystal methamphetamine, and a stolen firearm (Sumter County) near where he was seated in the vehicle. Alvarado told deputies he bought the gun from a "friend" but could not remember the friend's name.

**Juan Javier Alvarado H/M DOB/04-29-1986** was placed under arrest and charged as follows:

- Trafficking in Methamphetamine w/Firearm
- Possession of Cocaine (2 counts)
- Possession of Paraphernalia
- Grand Theft (firearm)
- Bond - \$66,000

Additionally, a Sheriff's Star was located in the vehicle. It appears the star was at one time affixed to a plaque/award of some sort, presented by the Florida Sheriff's Association (FSA).

All items were seized by deputies.

A few hours later, on 07-16-19 just after 2 a.m., Lieutenant Scott Lamia, Night Watch Commander, observed a silver Chevy Impala travelling northbound on Commercial Way at an extremely high rate of speed.

Lt. Lamia caught up to the vehicle in the area of Northcliffe Boulevard and Chase Street in Spring Hill and attempted to conduct a Traffic Stop. The driver refused to stop and fled from law enforcement.

Lt. Lamia located the vehicle, abandoned, a few blocks away in the front yard of 9211 Century Drive. There was fresh damage on the exterior of the vehicle.

Deputies were unable to locate the driver.

An inventory search of the vehicle yielded 11.7 grams of heroin, 26.5 Ecstasy pills, 12 grams of marijuana, various items of drug paraphernalia, and \$3,200 in U.S. currency. Again, all items were seized by deputies.

This case remains under investigation.

“Getting this poison off the street is a huge priority for my office. Drugs drive crime. These same drugs drain the initiative that it takes for addicts to become productive members of our community. Since many of these offenders are very transient, moving from county to county, these proactive traffic stops are very useful tools in confronting and stopping these threats to our community,” said Sheriff Al Nienhuis.

#### **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, ran unopposed in 2016, and remains accountable to them.**