



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

### MEDIA RELEASE

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**From:** Michael Terry  
Community Relations Specialist, 352-238-4801

**Re:** HCSO Apprehends Retail Theft Suspects

**Date:** August 21, 2019

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During the months of June and July, District 2 detectives investigated a series of retail thefts believed to be committed by at least three known individuals.

Those individuals are as follows:

- **Matthew David Collins W/M DOB/09-23-1989**
- **Amanda Lee Lawson W/F DOB/06-08-1982**
- **Charles John Christiansen W/M DOB/10-15-1985**

Collins was considered the primary suspect as he would enter businesses and steal various items. Lawson, who would be in a vehicle, would serve as a look out. Christiansen was the primary getaway driver and would utilize his personal vehicle to commit the offenses.

Both Collins and Christiansen were caught on video surveillance selling stolen merchandise at various pawn shops throughout Hernando County.

Some of the businesses that were victimized by the group include the following:

- **Walmart - 1485 Commercial Way, Spring Hill**
- **Walmart – 13300 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville**
- **Prestige Pawn & Jewelry – 5115 Commercial Way, Spring Hill**

On 07-17-19, Collins and Lawson fled from deputies in Christiansen's vehicle. The pair eventually crashed the vehicle in the Weeki Wachee Preserve and proceeded to flee on foot. A K-9 unit was called in to assist in the search.

Lawson was found and arrested on active warrants for Possession of Methamphetamine, Sale Methamphetamine, Possession of a Conveyance for sale of Methamphetamine, Unlawful Use of a Two-Way-Device and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Lawson was also charged with Possession of Methamphetamine, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia, Criminal Mischief, Fleeing or Attempting to Elude an Officers and Resisting an Officer without Violence in connection with the chase.

Deputies were unable to locate Collins.

A day later, Christiansen was arrested at the District 2 office in Spring Hill after he turned himself in on a charge of Grand Theft following a July 9 incident at the Target store located at 4401 Commercial Way, Spring Hill. Christiansen is accused of stealing two Roomba vacuum cleaners valued at \$750.

On 08-13-19, detectives learned that Collins was identified as a suspect in at least four retail thefts at the Walmart located at 1485 Commercial Way, Spring Hill.

He was seen leaving that location in a white 2007 Pontiac G6, along with **Bridgette Eisenhart W/F DOB/02-25-1987**, who detectives believe was serving as a look out.

On 08-16-19, detective observed a white Pontiac G6 parked at Prestige Pawn & Jewelry. Collins was seen sitting in the driver's seat, along with Eisenhart, who was in the front passenger seat. As detectives attempted to get into position to make an arrest, Collins left Prestige Pawn & Jewelry and drove to Rural King, 2468 Commercial Way, in Spring Hill.

Detectives watched as Collins entered Rural King. Detectives quickly established a perimeter around the business. As Collins exited the store, he noticed law enforcement and attempted to flee. He was quickly apprehended.

Eisenhart was also apprehended at the scene as she attempted to drive away. A search of the vehicle revealed several power tools and electronics, all in original boxes, that appeared to have been stolen.

Due to Eisenhart's cooperation with the investigation, she was released on her own recognizance pending further investigation into other crimes.

Collins was transported to the Hernando County Detention Center for numerous active warrants to include Fleeing and Eluding, Criminal Mischief, Resisting an Officer, Defrauding a Pawn Broker, Dealing in Stolen Property, Sale of Methamphetamine, Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Sell, Uttering Forged Bills, Grand Theft and Grand Theft of a Motor Vehicle. Collins continues to be held without bond due to his numerous probation violations.

#### **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.**