



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Two Juveniles Charged with Felony Criminal Mischief at County Park

Date: September 27, 2019

Between 08-26-19 and 09-07-19, several incidents of Criminal Mischief were reported at the Ridge Manor Park, located at 34030 Ridge Manor Boulevard in Ridge Manor.

In one of the incidents, the walls and flooring were destroyed in both the men's and women's restrooms. Damage was estimated at over \$1,000.

On 09-07-19, District One detectives received a tip, which included video evidence, of a male juvenile inside one of the restroom stalls smashing tile with a metal handrail. The two persons who provided the tip were able to positively identify the male who was smashing the tile as Elijah Kelly.

When the detectives reviewed the video evidence, the male was observed to be wearing a physical education uniform from a local middle school. The juvenile's name was imprinted on the back of the shirt.

Detectives made contact with the School Resource Deputy at the middle school. Upon showing the deputy photos taken from video evidence, the deputy positively identified one of the juveniles as Elijah Kelly DOB/01-29-07 and the other as Justin Lewis DOB/11-07-05.

Detectives then spoke with Elijah Kelly in the front office of the school. During the interview, Elijah Kelly confessed to committing acts of Criminal Mischief in the restrooms at the park on two separate occasions. He told detectives on the second occasion he utilized a metal pole to smash the wall tiles, and he committed the Criminal Mischief with his friend, Justin Lewis.

Detectives then spoke with Justin Lewis in the front office of the school. During the interview, Justin Lewis also confessed to committing Criminal Mischief in the restrooms at

the park. He went on to tell detectives that he only did it one time but he knew that Elijah Kelly did it more than once.

Both juveniles were arrested for Felony Criminal Mischief/Over \$1,000 and were transported to the Department of Juvenile Justice in Ocala.

Both juveniles cooperated with detectives during the investigation.

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.