



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Michael Terry
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Re: Pasco County Man Arrested for Sexual Battery of 10-year-old Brooksville Girl

Date: October 15, 2019

On 10-12-19 at 10:20 a.m., deputies responded to a residence in Brooksville regarding a missing 10-year-old girl.

The child was last seen around 3 a.m. when a family member saw her going to use the bathroom. When family members awoke at 6:40 a.m., they were unable to locate the child. The family searched for the child prior to contacting law enforcement.

Upon speaking to a friend of the child, deputies learned the girl was seen on Friday talking to a male in a red truck. The girl told friends she planned on running away with a person she met on Snapchat, a popular social media platform.

Upon further investigation, investigators learned a deputy from a previous shift had conducted a field information report on the driver of a suspicious vehicle in the area where the missing girl lived.

The driver of a red truck was identified in the report as **Austin Altman W/M DOB/05-07-1997**.

Investigators in Hernando County contacted the Pasco Sheriff Office to respond to Altman's residence located at 16411 Tiger Trail Road, in Pasco County.

Initially, Altman told deputies he was home alone and didn't know the missing girl.

As a deputy accompanied Altman inside the residence to retrieve his cell phone, the deputy located the missing girl in Altman's bedroom.

Altman said he met the girl on Snapchat; however, he did not know her name.

Both Altman and the girl told investigators they had sexual intercourse.

Altman was arrested and transported to the Pasco County Jail where he was charged with **Sexual Battery, Interference with Child Custody, and Violation of Probation**. He's currently being held without bond. Altman faces additional charges in Hernando County.

Many of the investigators working on this case recently attended Child Abduction Response Team Training, also known as CART. During the 4-hour program deputies are given an hour of instruction followed by breaking up into teams and working through a table top scenario of a missing child.

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.