



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Arrest Made in New Year's Eve Robbery-Shooting

Date: January 2, 2020

On 12-31-19 at approximately 10:40 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the 11000 block of Pickford Street in Spring Hill regarding a possible Physical Disturbance.

Prior to deputies arriving in the area, additional information was received by dispatchers that at least one person on scene was armed with a firearm and that one person had possibly been shot.

Upon arrival, deputies observed several people on the front lawn of a residence and several others in the roadway. As deputies approached the residence, they observed an adult male holding a male (later determined to be a juvenile) down on the ground. The adult male was holding the juvenile down with one hand and holding a handgun in his other hand. As deputies approached, he quickly told them he was holding down the suspect who had just shot a male juvenile.

Deputies retrieved the handgun from the adult male and took custody of the suspect.

Deputies were directed to another part of the yard where the victim (another juvenile) was being treated by bystanders for a gunshot wound(s) to the back/shoulder.

Hernando County Fire Rescue was then cleared to move in to provide treatment to the victim. The victim was treated on scene then transported by ambulance to a local trauma center for advanced care.

Investigation revealed the victim was approached by the suspect, identified as Joseph Robert Pierson, regarding the sale of marijuana. After the initial meeting, Pierson produced a 380 Caliber semi-automatic handgun and demanded money from the victim.

During the Armed Robbery, Pierson shot the victim in the left shoulder. The pair then began fighting on the ground. A person who was with the victim during the incident ran to get help.

An adult male (the person mentioned earlier) came to the victim's aid. The adult male subdued the suspect and removed the handgun from the suspect's possession.

Post Miranda, Pierson admitted to detectives that he went to the victim's residence to sell marijuana to the victim. Pierson was actually in possession of tobacco, attempting to pass it off as marijuana. Pierson told detectives that when the victim declined the purchase, he (Pierson) produced the handgun and demanded the victim's money. Pierson said when the victim "came at him" he fired twice, striking the victim in the shoulder, and that he wasn't trying to kill the victim. Pierson also told detectives that he planned to take the victim's jewelry and sell it to get some cash.

Joseph Robert Pierson DOB/06-26-2002 (JUVENILE) was placed under arrest and charged as follows:

- Aggravated Battery w/Firearm
- Robbery w/Firearm
- Possession of Firearm by Felon

Being that Pierson is a juvenile, he was delivered to the Department of Juvenile Justice in Ocala.

The victim, who was not identified due to Marsy's Law, was treated for injuries deemed to non-life-threatening.

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.