



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Four Teens Arrested for Commercial Burglary at Hernando High School

Date: March 23, 2020

On 03-20-20 just after 4 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to Hernando High School, located at 700 Bell Avenue in Brooksville, regarding possible stolen golf carts.

An individual who was in the area of the baseball field at the school called 9-1-1 to report suspicious activity behind the school. The individual reported hearing a loud bang come from the rear of the school, then moments later, seeing golf carts driving away from the same area.

Deputies arrived on scene within two minutes and observed four individuals on golf carts near the practice football fields, near Oakwood Drive, just behind the school.

When Deputy N. Belfrey attempted contact with the individuals, they abandoned the golf carts and fled on foot. After a brief foot chase, all four individuals were taken into custody by separate deputies who quickly arrived on scene.

The suspects were identified as Eli Pruitt, Javari Williams, Jayden Williams, and Vantrell Henley.

Investigation revealed that each suspect took a golf cart from the back of the school and drove around, causing a large amount of damage to each of the golf carts. One golf cart was damaged beyond repair.

Detectives learned that one of the suspects used a sledgehammer to break the lock on the gate where the golf carts were stored. The suspects removed the golf carts from the bay and began driving them around. While driving around, the suspects began crashing into each other and into various other objects, including a vehicle owned by the HCSD, and a gate they rammed in an attempt to leave the school property.

Before breaking into the golf cart bay, the suspects entered the cafeteria and consumed several bags of chips and bottles of soda. They also attempted to break into the Suncoast Credit Union ATM in the cafeteria by trying to pry the front facing off. No entry was made to the ATM, but it was damaged.

When interviewed by detectives, one of the suspects advised he and his three friends originally went to the school to play basketball. After playing basketball, they entered the cafeteria and consumed the chips and soda.

During this time they saw the ATM and decided to try to break into it. After realizing they were unable to gain entry to the ATM, they went outside and headed to the equipment shed. After gaining entry to the shed, the suspects all took a golf cart and began joyriding and crashing into each other and other objects.

A preliminary estimate of the damage caused was estimated at well over \$5,000.

All four suspects were placed under arrest and transported to the Hernando County Detention Center. The suspects were charged as follows:

- **Eli Pruitt DOB/12-31-2004**
 - Burglary of a Structure
 - Criminal Mischief (Over \$1,000)
- **Javari Williams DOB/08-03-2005**
 - Burglary of a Structure
 - Criminal Mischief (Over \$1,000)
- **Jayden Williams DOB/09-28-2008**
 - Burglary of a Structure
 - Criminal Mischief (Over \$1,000)
- **Vantrell Henley DOB/12-19-2006**
 - Burglary of a Structure
 - Criminal Mischief (Over \$1,000).

Per the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the juveniles were to be released back to their parents/guardians.

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.