



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Suspect Captured After Committing Occupied Residential Burglary

Date: April 7, 2020

On 04-07-20 just after 7 a.m., the suspect, who has been identified as Michael Cornell, entered a residence on North Avenue in Brooksville, through a side window.

As the resident (victim) was making coffee in the kitchen, he heard the commotion and went to check on it.

When the victim realized someone had entered his residence, he armed himself with an aluminum baseball bat. The victim, armed with the bat, confronted the suspect. The suspect fled out the front door of the residence.

The victim, still armed with the bat, gave chase to the suspect.

As the victim confronted the suspect a second time, in the back yard, the suspect picked up a large oak log and struck the victim in the face with it. The victim fell to the ground.

The suspect then made his way back inside the victim's residence, locking himself in the victim's bedroom where he began ransacking the bedroom.

As the first deputy arrived on scene, the suspect fled from the residence for the second time. The deputy pursued the suspect on foot until losing sight of him a few blocks from the residence.

Numerous deputies were dispatched to the area to create a perimeter, and a K-9 team responded to assist in the search.

After an extensive search, deputies were unable to locate the suspect.

A few hours later, a vigilant citizen spotted a male matching the same description as the suspect, but wearing slightly different clothing, walking through back yards on Jewel Street in Brooksville. The citizen called 9-1-1 and provided the suspect's location and description.

A deputy arrived on scene in less than two minutes and spotted the suspect. The suspect immediately fled into a wooded area.

Again, numerous deputies responded to the scene and created a perimeter. The K-9 team responded back to the area.

Prior to the arrival of the K-9 team, patrol deputies located and captured the suspect.

Michael Cornell W/M DOB/02-13-1990 was placed under arrest and charged as follows:

- Occupied Residential Burglary
- Aggravated Battery w/Weapon
- Criminal Mischief
- Resisting Arrest w/o Violence
- Armed Residential Burglary (it was discovered Cornell committed another burglary in the area while hiding from deputies).

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.