



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Man Charged with Battering and Robbing Uber Driver

Date: April 28, 2020

On 04-25-20 just before 4:30 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the intersection of County Line Road and Waterfall Drive in Spring Hill regarding a Robbery.

Upon arrival at the intersection, deputies met with the victim, a certified Uber driver. The Uber driver told deputies he was providing transportation for an (unknown) white male from Lakeland Regional Health in Lakeland to a residence in Spring Hill. While enroute to the male's residence, the male asked the driver to stop at a gas station in Pasco County. He did so. When the male returned to the vehicle, he got in the rear driver's side, directly behind the driver. The male was originally seated on the rear passenger side of the vehicle.

As the driver approached the intersection of Waterfall Drive and Gulfport Lane, the male suspect wrapped the seatbelt around the driver's neck. The suspect began choking the driver with the seatbelt and hitting him in the face.

The driver pulled to the side of the road and attempted to defend himself but was unable to do so. The driver began honking the horn repeatedly, in hopes of summoning help.

While the driver was honking the horn, the suspect grabbed the driver's wallet and cell phone and fled from the scene.

The driver left the area and called for help.

The driver described the suspect as a white male in his 30's, light colored skin, unshaven, wearing a dark colored shirt and camouflage shorts.

Hernando County Fire Rescue was called to the scene to check on the Uber driver. While the driver did have red abrasions on his face, he did not require transportation to the hospital.

Investigation revealed the identity of the suspect to be Preston Wyatt Jr.

Deputies responded to Wyatt's residence at 3410 Memory Lane in Spring Hill and detained Wyatt. Deputies transported the Uber driver to Memory Lane, where the driver was able to positively identify Wyatt as the person who beat and robbed him. The driver told deputies that Wyatt was still wearing the exact same clothes he picked him up in.

Wyatt was placed under arrest.

Deputies returned to the area of Waterfall Drive and Gulfport Lane to conduct a neighborhood canvass. During the canvass, one neighbor was able to locate and provide video surveillance of the incident.

Deputies recovered the driver's wallet and cell phone at Wyatt's residence.

Preston Clark Wyatt Jr DOB/06-28-1994 was charged as follows:

- Strong-Arm Robbery
- Battery on a Person 65YOA or Older
- Bond - \$12,000.

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.