



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

**Re:** Man Napping in Vehicle Arrested on Felony Drug Charges

**Date:** May 15, 2020

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On 05-15-20 just after 2:30 a.m., Sergeant Shawn Galarza was conducting Security Checks on local businesses and plazas when he observed a single vehicle parked behind the Beacon Theater, located at 12961 Cortez Boulevard in Brooksville.

The vehicle, a silver Nissan Versa, was occupied by at least one individual. An additional unit was dispatched to the scene to assist the sergeant with the Suspicious Vehicle/Suspicious Person.

Sergeant Galarza approached the vehicle to find the driver, later identified as Mateo Serrano, sleeping inside the vehicle. As the sergeant attempted to make contact with Serrano, he detected a strong odor of fresh marijuana coming from the vehicle. Serrano woke up and immediately became nervous, continually reaching for his pockets.

Deputy Dakota Hadsell arrived on scene to find Sergeant Galarza speaking with Serrano, who by this time was standing outside of his vehicle. Deputy Hadsell also detected a strong smell of fresh marijuana when he was standing next to Serrano's vehicle.

Deputy Hadsell placed Serrano in hand/wrist restraints and conducted a search of his person. During the search, Deputy Hadsell located a clear glass storage jar in Serrano's front pocket. Inside the jar was a yellow wax-like substance. The substance later tested positive for the presence of THC.

A search was then conducted of Serrano's vehicle.

During a search of the vehicle, deputies located bronze brass knuckles in the driver's door, a clear glass smoking bong on the front passenger floor board (the residue in the bong later tested positive for the presence of marijuana), and a Nike backpack on the passenger floor board. Inside the back pack were five clear sandwich size bags and a black plastic sealable

bag, along with a digital scale. Each of the bags contained a green leafy substance. The green leafy substance from each of the bags later tested positive for the presence of marijuana. Each bag had varying amounts of marijuana inside.

Serrano told the deputies the Nike backpack was his, but he didn't know the marijuana was in there.

The illegal substances/items seized were as follows:

- Hash Oil – 35.5 grams
- Marijuana – 116.9 grams
- Brass Knuckles
- Drug Paraphernalia – Various items.

**Mateo Moises Serrano DOB/08-04-2000** was placed under arrest and charged as follows:

- Possession of Marijuana w/Intent to Sell (Felony)
- Possession of Hashish (Felony)
- Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
- Bond - \$8,000.

**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.