



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Traffic Stop Leads to Trafficking in Methamphetamine Charge

Date: June 26, 2020

On 06-24-20 at approximately 8 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's Deputy K. Keiper was conducting proactive patrols in the area of Cortez Boulevard and Spruce Street when he observed the driver of a white Nissan Frontier fail to stop at the stop sign.

Deputy Keiper followed as the driver of the Nissan continued eastbound on Cortez Boulevard. When the driver of the Nissan turned south onto Deltona Boulevard from Cortez Boulevard, Deputy Keiper noted the driver did not stop at the red light at the intersection.

Deputy Keiper conducted a Traffic Stop on the white Nissan Frontier, on Deltona Boulevard just south of Cortez Boulevard.

Deputy Keiper made contact with the driver, who identified himself as Stephen Lewis, via his Florida driver's license, and a female front seat passenger.

While conducting wants and warrants checks on the driver and passenger and checking the status of the driver's license, Deputy G. Locke arrived on scene with his K-9 partner, Argo. Deputy Locke utilized K-9 Argo to conduct a drug sniff on the exterior of the vehicle in an effort to detect the odor of illegal narcotics. K-9 Argo quickly alerted to the odor of illegal narcotics, at which time a search of the interior of the vehicle was conducted.

While searching the interior of the vehicle, deputies located a black camera bag on the back seat. Inside the camera bag was a camera and two vacuum sealed bags that contained a green leafy substance, consistent with marijuana. Deputies also located a black zippered pouch on the driver's side floorboard. The pouch was closed and locked with a small padlock.

Lewis signed a waiver of search for the pouch.

Inside the pouch, deputies located two more vacuum sealed bags, both of which contained a green leafy substance, consistent with marijuana. The pouch also held two baggies, both of which contained a clear, crystal-like substance, consistent with methamphetamine.

Deputies also located one additional vacuum sealed bag (which was open), inside the vehicle. This bag contained a green leafy substance, consistent with marijuana.

Field tests were conducted on both substances.

The crystal-like substance tested positive for the presence of methamphetamine. The green leafy substance tested positive for the presence of THC.

Stephen Edward Lewis DOB/09-26-1969 was placed under arrest and transported to the Hernando County Detention Center. He was charged as follows:

- Trafficking in Methamphetamine
- Possession of Marijuana
- Bond - \$30,000.

The total weights of the illegal substances were as follows:

- Crystal-like substance – 15.2 grams
- Green leafy Substance – 26.4 grams.

The female passenger was negative for wants and warrants and was released on scene. The Nissan Frontier was towed.

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.