



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

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Re: Traffic Stop Leads to Seizure of Firearms, Illegal Narcotics, and Cash

Date: July 21, 2020

On 07-20-20 just after 10:30 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies conducted a Traffic Stop on the driver of a Gold Honda Civic near the intersection of Elgin Boulevard and Barclay Avenue in Spring Hill.

A query of the tag, just prior to the stop, revealed the registered owner to have a suspended driver's license.

Deputies made contact with the driver to advise him the reason for the stop. At this time, the driver, who was in fact the registered owner, handed his driver's license to the deputy. The driver, identified as Dave Eric Hensley, told the deputy he was unaware of the suspension.

As deputies attempted to obtain identification from the two passengers in the vehicle, they asked Hensley if there were any firearms in the vehicle. Hensley stated that he did have a firearm in his pocket and that he did have a concealed weapons permit. Deputies requested Hensley to exit the vehicle, to which he willingly complied.

Deputies requested permission to remove the firearm from Hensley's pocket for the duration of the Traffic Stop. Hensley granted permission. The firearm, a Ruger .380, was removed from Hensley's pocket and placed inside a patrol car. Hensley produced a concealed weapons permit from the state of Virginia.

As deputies conducted wants and warrants checks on Hensley and the two passengers, a possible warrant was located on the male front seat passenger. At this time, he too was asked to exit the vehicle.

While the front seat passenger was exiting the vehicle, deputies observed another firearm, in plain view, inside the pocket of the driver's door. Deputies asked Hensley if there were

any additional firearms in the vehicle, to which he replied yes, under the clutter in the back seat. Hensley told deputies they were not permitted to retrieve the firearm from the back seat, he would get it out if they needed him to.

Deputy Jason Jernigan and K-9 Maxx were called to the scene while the wants and warrants checks were being completed. Upon arrival, K-9 Maxx conducted a drug sniff on the vehicle and quickly alerted to the presence of illegal narcotics.

Deputies then conducted a search of the vehicle. The search revealed the following:

- **Camouflage Zippered Bag (directly behind the driver's seat)**
 - o Located inside the bag:
 - Firearm
 - Three clear plastic bags containing a crystal-like substance
 - One clear plastic bag containing a large amount of green pills
 - Numerous empty plastic bags
- **Sawed Off Shotgun w/a Pistol Grip (15 inch barrel)**
- **Black Bag (trunk)**
 - o Located inside the bag:
 - Numerous digital scales
 - One clear plastic bag containing a crystal-like substance
- **Black Zippered Bag (trunk)**
 - o Located inside the bag:
 - \$11,966 in US currency.

Deputies identified the green pills as Alprazolam, a schedule 4 controlled substance. There were a total of 137 Alprazolam pills in the bag.

The crystal-like substances from each of the bags tested positive for the presence of methamphetamine. The total combined weight of the crystal-like substance located was 60 grams.

In total, five firearms were recovered from the vehicle, one of which was concealed in Hensley's pocket.

Hensley did not wish to speak with deputies regarding the items that were located inside his vehicle.

The two passengers told deputies they had no knowledge of any of the items that were located in the vehicle.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, "This certainly shows that my deputies are dedicated to getting illegal drugs and illegal weapons off the streets. This type of good police work is one of the many reasons crime has been going down in the state of Florida and in Hernando County, over the last several years."

Dave Eric Hensley DOB/09-04-1969, was placed under arrest, and charged as follows:

- Trafficking in Methamphetamine
- Possession of a Controlled Substance w/Intent to Sell

- Carrying a Concealed Firearm
- Possession of Short Barrel Shotgun
- Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
- Bond - \$56,000 (per the bond schedule).

One of the passengers, **Vincent Gaona DOB/08-15-1966**, was found to have an active (Hernando County) warrant for his arrest for Violation of Probation. Gaona was arrested and charged accordingly.

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.