



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: UPDATE – Search Warrant Executed
Detectives Investigating Robbery at Gaming Establishment

Date: November 19, 2021

Update

As maintaining a gaming establishment is a violation of Florida State Statute 849.01, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office Vice and Narcotics Unit immediately launched an investigation.

During the investigation, detectives confirmed the activities occurring within the establishment were, in fact, illegal.

On 10-18-2021, detectives executed a search warrant at "Fish Games Skill Games," located at 3484 Commercial Way in Spring Hill.

Upon execution of the search warrant, detectives observed two employees and eight patrons inside the establishment.

James Joseph Salmons-White DOB/08-06-1994, the employee running the establishment, was arrested and charged as follows:

- Operating a Gambling Establishment
- Lottery Operating/Operating Games of Chance
- Possession of Slot Machine
- Conducting/Operating Lottery
- Bond - \$13,000.

The second employee, a security guard, was not charged with any crime(s).

Detectives seized over \$26,000 in cash (used for illegal gambling) and various gambling equipment from the business.

Two patrons were issued Misdemeanor Citations for the charges listed below.

- **Michelle Marie Botsch DOB/02-12-1993**
 - o Possession of Marijuana
 - o Possession of Paraphernalia

- **Thomas Robert Cannariato DOB/07-27-1982**
 - o Possession of Paraphernalia.

Detectives also located a small amount of methamphetamine. An arrest warrant is forthcoming.

The remaining six patrons were released with no charges. All were warned regarding the activity being illegal and advised they would likely be charged if located in an illegal gambling establishment in the future.

The investigation continues.

Original Information

On 11-07-2021 just after 1:30 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to "Fish Games Skill Games" located at 3484 Commercial Way in Spring Hill in regards to a Commercial Robbery.

A customer in the establishment called 9-1-1 to report the incident after observing another customer become irate and demand money from an employee. While demanding money, the suspect struck the employee.

Upon arrival, deputies met with the (victim) employee. The victim told deputies that one of his regular customers, who he knows only by first name, was playing on one of the gaming systems for approximately 90 minutes. The (suspect) customer began complaining about "losing money."

As the victim waited on another customer at the counter, the suspect approached the counter and stated he was "owed \$240." The victim verified that no money was due to be paid to the suspect and told the suspect he was not owed any money. The suspect then demanded \$240 in cash, which was the amount of money he lost playing the gaming system this day. The suspect told the victim if he (the victim) didn't give him the money, he was going to hurt him.

The suspect then walked behind the customer service counter and grabbed a bank bag. As the suspect attempted to leave he grabbed the victim's shirt and began pulling and pushing the victim.

The victim retrieved the bank bag after providing the suspect with the \$240 he demanded. The suspect then left the establishment.

Deputies spoke with witnesses on scene and reviewed surveillance video from the establishment. Both the witness statements and video matched the victim's account of the incident.

The case has been turned over to Major Case detectives for investigation. In addition to processing physical evidence retrieved from the scene, detectives will attempt to identify and locate the suspect.

There is no additional information available at this time.

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 was re-elected in 2020. Sheriff Nienhuis remains accountable to the people of Hernando County.