



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
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**Re:** Man Charged with Kidnapping After Dispute With Former Domestic Partner –  
2022-06985

**Date:** March 10, 2022

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On 03-08-22 just before 8 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to a residence in Webster (Hernando County) in regards to a possible Kidnapping.

A person called 9-1-1 to report a female (the victim) had been kidnapped by a former domestic partner.

Upon arrival on scene, deputies met with witnesses who advised, the suspect, identified as Kenneth Lengel-Stage, was hiding underneath the victim's vehicle. When the victim got into the vehicle to move it, Lengel-Stage immediately entered via the front passenger door, became engaged in a physical altercation with the victim, then removed her from the driver's seat to the back seat. Lengel-Stage then fled in the vehicle, at a high rate of speed, with the victim still in the back seat.

Patrol deputies and K-9 teams saturated the area in an effort to locate the victim's vehicle. The HCSO Aviation Unit responded, as well, to provide support from the air.

A deputy on scene at the residence was able to make contact with the victim by phone. The victim told the deputy she did not know where she was and that Lengel-Stage was refusing to stop and let her out. The deputy could hear Lengel-Stage in the background yelling at the victim and telling her if law enforcement approached them he would flee.

After a considerable period of time, the victim was able to convince Lengel-Stage to let her out of the vehicle; however, the victim still did not know where she was. She told the deputy she could hear the sirens "off in the distance" but they were not close.

At about the same time, the HCSO Aviation Unit, piloted by Deputy Pilot Roy McLaughlin and Tactical Flight Officer (TFO) B.J. Hart, spotted the victim's vehicle in the area of Bertram Road and Lovebird Lane in Brooksville. It should be noted, Lengel-Stage was driving without lights on, in an effort to evade capture. TFO Hart observed the victim get out of the vehicle and the driver drive away. TFO Hart directed ground units to the victim and to the suspect, who was still nearby, as he appeared to be having difficulty finding his way out of the area.

Fortunately, the victim was not physically injured during this incident.

Deputies arrested **Kenneth Lengel-Stage DOB/08-03-1998** and charged him as follows:

- False Imprisonment
- Domestic Battery – **No Bond**
- Grand Theft Auto
- Carjacking
- Knowingly Drive While License Suspended or Revoked (DWLSR)
- Bond - \$36,000.

Investigation revealed that Lengel-Stage is currently on felony probation. Incidentally, he is on felony probation for charges very similar to the charges listed above. The previous incident occurred approximately one year ago. He will be held on a **No Bond** status as a result of this violation of probation.

If you, or someone you know, are the victim of domestic violence, please contact law enforcement. Help is available.

#### *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.*