



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

### Media Release

**From:** Sergeant Donna Black  
Public Information Officer, 352-754-6830

**Re:** Zachary Daniels- 35 Charges-Fraud Warnings

**Date:** May 25, 2011

**Defendant: Zachary Jon Daniels, DOB 10/7/1978, 8403 Dunnellon Rd, Weeki Wachee, FL**

**Charges:**

- 2011-12489                      Organized Fraud (one count)  
F.S.S. 817.034, \$10,000.00 bail  
Forgery (one count)  
F.S.S. 831.01, \$2,000.00 bail  
Uttering a forged instrument (one count)  
F.S.S. 831.02, \$2,000.00 bail
  
- 2011-15569                      ID Theft (three counts)  
F.S.S. 817.568, \$6,000.00 bail  
Forgery (three counts)  
F.S.S. 831.01, \$6,000.00 bail  
Uttering a forged instrument (two counts)  
F.S.S. 831.02, \$4,000.00 bail
  
- 2011-15570                      Impersonating a law enforcement officer (nine counts)  
F.S.S. 843.08, \$18,000.00 bail  
Caller ID Spoofing (nine counts)  
F.S.S. 817.487, \$18,000.00 bail
  
- 2011-16331                      ID Theft (one count)  
F.S.S. 817.568, \$2,000.00 bail  
Forgery (one count)  
F.S.S. 831.01, \$2,000.00 bail  
Uttering a forged instrument (one count)  
F.S.S. 831.02, \$2,000.00 bail

2011-16332

ID Theft (one count)  
F.S.S. 817.568, \$2,000.00 bail  
Forgery (one count)  
F.S.S. 831.01, \$2,000.00 bail  
Uttering a forged instrument (one count)  
F.S.S. 831.02, \$2,000.00 bail

Zachary Daniels has been arrested for thirty-five counts of various types of fraud related crimes. Hernando County Detectives have been unraveling schemes, ID thefts, caller ID spoofing and frauds involving multiple victims all allegedly perpetrated by one man.

On April 15, 2011 the Hernando County Sheriff's Office began the investigation after an online report filed with the Internet Crime Complaint Center ([www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov)) was received. A victim in Georgia had bought a car from Daniels through an on line service. Daniels was supposed to deliver the car and kept making up excuses. When the new buyer became suspicious, Daniels went to the extent to obtain a factious title for 2007 Honda Civic like he had listed for sale, made it appear like Daniels owned the car and sent the altered title to the victim. The victim paid Daniels \$9,500 but never received the car.

Daniels did have a 2007 Honda Civic but still had an outstanding loan on the vehicle for over \$10,000. He had not been making the payments. The car was being sought by the financier for repossession. During the same approximate time frame, Daniels had the same exact car listed on another on line sale. He sold the same car to another man from Seffner, Florida for \$9,700 in cash. He told the Seffner man he owed \$400. on the car and once the car was paid for he would pay the \$400, get the title, and provide it to the buyer. The man paid Daniels for the car, Daniels gave him the car, minus the title of course. This case is being investigated by Pasco Sheriff's Office. The car was repossessed by the original financier from the Seffner man's home.

In May 2011 (case 2011-15569), Daniels created a Florida Corporation using the name of a man from St. Petersburg. Daniels used the same person's ID to obtain an employer's identification number from the IRS for the fraudulent corporation. Daniels submitted a fraudulent merchant services application to be able to accept credit cards. Daniels was employed with a merchant services company at the time of this crime. Daniels completed the application as if he were an employee of the company, but used his cell phone number as the contact for the St. Petersburg man. The company discovered the fraud and fired Daniels and the company contacted the victim to warn him of the fraudulent use of his identification. The bank account linked to the merchant services is an account that Daniels created at Bank of America and controlled. The St. Petersburg man confirmed he did not have any knowledge of this activity. The St. Petersburg man further advised he met Daniels in approximately 2005 when Daniels was employed for a different merchant services company and Daniels obtained his identification at that time. The St. Petersburg man cancelled the service because he stated Daniels had lied and misled him during the contact in 2005. He had no further contact with Daniels since that contact. Daniels was investigated at that time, and sent to prison for similar crimes by the Hernando County S.O. (reference Case# 2006-19187). Daniels had apparently maintained this man's personal information. Daniels was released from prison in July 2010 and eventually used the information he had saved.

Daniel's own mother was not safe. Daniel's was found in possession of an IRS letter indicating a tax return filed in his mothers' name was under investigation. It was later confirmed Daniels had filed a false income tax return in his mother's name. Daniels used his home address and e-mail address for the fraudulent return. His mother is currently in custody at Lowell Correctional Institute and has been incarcerated since her 2010 Hernando County arrest. She was contacted by Florida State Prison officials and confirmed she did not authorize this

and wished to prosecute.

Daniels had separated from his wife and became jealous of a man she became friends with. Daniels utilized caller ID spoofing software (specifically Caller ID Faker) which displayed the caller ID of the Hernando County Sheriff's Office and the FBI. He made nine (9) phone calls using caller ID spoofing software to harass his wife. He had identified himself as both a Deputy and FBI Agent, advising that her friend was under investigation. He advised that both of them had been under investigation and/or surveillance for 2 ½ years and she was wanted for questioning. She was advised that a car would be responding to her residence to pick her up for questioning. When the car never arrived, she contacted both the FBI and HCSO, but nobody could confirm an investigation into either person. Daniels admitted to having caller ID spoofing software on his phone at the time of arrest. A search warrant and subpoena obtained evidence of sixty-nine (69) calls made using the software including the nine (9) calls that were made using the caller ID of the HCSO and the FBI. The software also accommodated the disguising of Daniels voice.

There is still an active investigation into the activities of Daniels. There is evidence that Daniels has used Turbo Tax to electronically file and/or attempt to file fraudulent income tax returns in addition to the one he is charged with. The IRS has been notified.

Daniels remains in custody with no bail for violating probation as this investigation continues.

This is just one man who, from the comfort of his home and cell phone, was able to affect many people's lives which will take them years to set right. This is just the tip of the iceberg. He is not the only one out there committing these types of crimes. Sheriff Al Nienhuis says, "Today's technology allows these types of criminals to prey on victims from anywhere in the World. Citizens will have to be more vigilant than ever as today's thieves become scarier."

Here are some tips from our Fraud Detectives:

- We must be involved checking our credit report activity and history.
- It is imperative we constantly check for suspicious or illegal activity on our credit accounts and credit reports.
- Be guarded how you purchase items over the internet.
- Safe guard personal information. The way Daniels was able to give the factitious title to the man in Georgia was to find the same exact car on an on line car site, contact the seller, asked the seller to send a copy of the title. Daniel digitally manipulated the copy enough to fool the new buyer into believing the title was in his name.
- Thoroughly check out who you do business with and give your information to.
- Do not believe caller ID display name/numbers. Spoofing program display legitimate numbers. It could be a scammer you are really talking to. Go online or use directory assistance to obtain a legitimate phone number and call the subject back, if he/she is legitimate you will be able to reach them. Be suspicious of all incoming calls you cannot verify.
- Do not give out personal information over the phone to a person who you did not initiate the call to.
- Do not respond to email from banks, credit card companies, or purported governmental institutes asking for personal information if you did not initiate the contact.