



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Man Arrested for Impersonating a Law Enforcement Officer

Date: February 26, 2013

Between the approximate dates of 08-01-12 and 01-09-13, Christopher Sharp was in a relationship with a female, Randi Merrill. The two lived together during this time. The entire time they were together, Christopher told Randi he was a Pasco County Sheriff's deputy. It was later determined that he was not.

Sharp would come home "from work" wearing his Pasco County Sheriff's Office uniform, telling stories to Randi, her family, and friends about what had occurred during his "shift." He even went so far as to provide legal advice to people regarding child custody matters, avoiding a DUI arrest, and traffic citations. These people assumed the information was legitimate as Sharp said he was a Deputy Sheriff and was often seen wearing an official uniform shirt. On several occasions, Sharp responded to the bar where Randi worked, in civilian clothes, but identified himself as a Deputy Sheriff, and offered legal advice to the patrons.

On 01-01-13, Randi was at a New Years Eve Party at a friend's house in Hernando Beach. Sharp arrived wearing a Pasco County Deputy Sheriff uniform. He proceeded to tell the guests stories about DUI enforcement that he had been conducting earlier that night.

Investigation revealed that Sharp worked at a local Pizza Hut. He stole the Deputy Sheriff uniform from his sister's boyfriend, who is a real Pasco County Deputy Sheriff. He would stop on his way home from Pizza Hut and change into the deputy shirt and badge along with a pair of Army class A pants (same color as the shirt).

When detectives interviewed Sharp, a Hernando county resident, he advised he did this to impress his girlfriend. He advised that he tried to get hired by Hillsborough County but was

not selected to be sponsored. Sharp further advised he knew this activity was wrong and illegal.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, “My command staff and I constantly stress to prospective law enforcement candidates that their decision making before getting into the profession will determine their success in the background process, as well as any promotional process they may encounter. Here is a shining example of someone who makes extremely poor decisions and will, consequently, not make it through any future law enforcement background investigation. The public can rest assured that we do everything reasonable to ensure that our people are good decision makers.”

Sharp told detectives that he never pretended to be a Deputy Sheriff outside the realm of family friends – he never attempted to pull anyone over or make any citizen contacts (other than what was mentioned above). While one witness claims to have seen a gun, Sharp denies ever having one.

Christopher Sharp W/M DOB/07-03-1975 was charged with Impersonating a Law Enforcement Officer. His BOND was set at \$2,000.