



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Deputies Bust Dog Fighting Operation

Date: October 13, 2016

On 10-09-16, Hernando County deputies were dispatched to 810 Leonard Street in Brooksville regarding a severely injured dog, in a cage, at this residence.

Upon arrival, deputies and an animal enforcement officer discovered a brown male pit bull in a cage under the house. The dog was in distress, as he was severely injured and emaciated. Additionally, there was no food or water in his cage.

Deputy Steven George made contact with the homeowner, James Harris. Harris advised he had been caring for the dog since 10-07-16 when a friend, "John," dropped the dog off. Harris was unable to provide any additional information on John. Harris told the deputy that he was aware of the medical condition of the dog; however, he did not seek treatment from a vet nor did he contact law enforcement. Harris stated he fed the dog scraps but was unable to provide proof of any food or water being given to the dog.

Upon close examination by the animal enforcement officer, the dog was in very poor condition. Upon removing him from the cage, the distinct smell of decaying flesh was present. The dog had injuries to his face and right eye (a white discharge oozing from right eye) and a large open gash was present on his front leg above the knee joint (with bone, muscles and tendons visible – wound was also oozing). There were many punctures to his other front leg with infection present.

It was evident that this dog had been used in dog fighting, as a "bait" dog.

Animal Enforcement Officer Many Rowe immediately transported the dog to the Animal Emergency of Hernando so he could be treated by a veterinarian. The veterinarian stated that the dog was most likely a "bait" dog and had been fought within the last few days.

Further investigation revealed that a dog breeding and a dog fighting training facility could be located at 852 Twigg Street in Brooksville. Upon arrival deputies were greeted by a male wearing a t-shirt imprinted with “No Luv Kennels.” The male gave deputies permission to look around, where they observed 22 adult sized pit bulls and six small puppies. The male who allowed the deputies onto the property advised he did not live there or work there, he was just “there” and had the shirt on because he previously bought a dog from there.

The person who deputies were trying to locate was not there. It was determined that a search warrant would be obtained for the property.

Deputy Steven George then went back to 810 Leonard Street and placed **James Harris B/M DOB/12-31-1954** under arrest for Animal Cruelty, as he knew about the condition of the dog in his care and failed to provide care.

On 10-12-16 deputies and animal enforcement officers served a search warrant at the 852 Twigg Street address.

Upon arrival, 19 adult dogs and two puppies were located. Several dogs were chained to very heavy chains, others were caged in makeshift dog cages on the property. No food was observed and what water was present had algae in it. The conditions on the property were deplorable.

The chart below shows the weight of the dogs found in the yard, and the weight of the chains they were chained to.

Dog	Dog Weight	Chain Weight
Dog - A	27 pounds	6.8 pounds
Dog - B	28 pounds	7.6 pounds
Dog - C	28 pounds	6.2 pounds
Dog - D	29 pounds	6.2 pounds
Dog - E	23 pounds	14.4 pounds
Dog - F	29 pounds	5.8 pounds
Dog - G	23 pounds	15.4 pounds (doubled)
Dog - H	23.4 pounds	7 pounds
Dog - I	22 pounds	11.4 pounds

Additionally, deputies and animal enforcement officers located numerous items on the property indicative of a dog fighting training facility, such as:

- Pull ropes (with spring attached) hanging from trees – used to train dogs to jump, grab, and hang on.
- Antibiotics (injectable) – Used when dogs are injured in a fight.
- Needles and syringes (new and used) – Used to inject drugs into animals.
- Cattle wormer – Used on dogs, although it is dangerous.
- Hip and joint tablets.
- Electrolyte solutions.
- Red cell builder.
- Muscle up – Used to build muscle in dogs.
- Pulling harnesses – Used to make dogs pull heavy items.
- Break sticks – Used when dogs latch on to one another and then must be broken up.

- Several gallons of milk – Used to coat dogs before a dog fight to neutralize dangerous chemicals placed on dogs that could cause harm when bitten by a dog.
- Super fuel – A body builder for dogs.
- Saline solution – Used to clean out wounds on dogs.
- Bait cage – Used to put small animals in to agitate fighting dogs.
- Puppy shots – Distemper, Parvo (indicating a breeding facility).
- Underwood horse medicine – Veterinary use only.
- Wound care medication.

All dogs were removed from the scene and taken to Hernando County Animal Services where they were immediately evaluated by Dr. Rosenberger. Once evaluated and treated for any injuries, all dogs were treated for fleas, vaccinated, and fed.

All dog fighting equipment was seized from the property.

Deputies arrested **Darryl Smith B/M DOB/01-04-1963**, charging him with Animal Cruelty and Bait Animals, both felonies. His bond was set at \$4,000.

The case remains under investigation. Additional charges are pending.

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, and remains accountable to them.