



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

**Re:** Man Charged with Aggravated Battery After Machete Attack

**Date:** June 17, 2020

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On 06-15-20 just after 2:30 p.m., Hernando County deputies responded to a residence on Tarrytown Drive in Spring Hill regarding a Battery that had previously occurred.

Upon arrival, deputies met with the victim, an adult male.

The victim told deputies he is currently residing at the residence on Tarrytown Drive and at about 10 p.m. on the evening of 06-13-20, he returned to the residence to take a shower. When the victim entered the residence there were several people there, "having a gathering."

One of the individuals at the gathering, Justin Couch, began arguing with the victim "for no reason" as soon as the victim went inside. The victim asked Couch to step outside to discuss the matter, as the victim did not wish to continue the argument in front of everyone in the house.

As soon as the two males walked outside of the residence, Couch produced a machete and approached the victim in an aggressive manner. Before the victim said anything, Couch told the victim he needed to leave the residence/property. The victim agreed to leave and said he just wanted to go inside to retrieve his wallet and cell phone. Couch told the victim no and said, "There's nothing here for you, leave."

The victim insisted on getting his wallet and cell phone from inside the residence. At this point, Couch began striking the victim in the arm and leg with what the victim believed was the flat side of the machete's blade.

Couch then swung the machete at the victim's face. In order to block the strike, the victim quickly placed his left arm in front of his face. The victim's left forearm was struck with the blade of the machete. The victim felt severe pain and then passed out.

The victim told deputies he made his way to 494 Stillwater Avenue in Spring Hill because he knew Couch would be at that location. When the victim and Couch met up at this location, Couch transported the victim to an unknown friend's house.

The "unknown friend" then transported the victim to Bayfront Health Spring Hill, where he was treated for the injury.

Deputies spoke with two individuals who live at the Tarrytown Drive address regarding the incident. One individual did witness the altercation and provided a sworn statement. The other individual advised he did not see or hear anything, but he did pick up the victim from the Stillwater Drive address and take him to the hospital.

The victim is currently unable to use or move his left hand due to the severity of the injury he sustained.

On 06-16-20 just after 4 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies responded to 464 Stillwater Avenue to attempt to locate Couch. Couch was located and placed under arrest.

**Justin Arthur Allen Couch W/M DOB/05-01-1995** was charged as follows:

- Aggravated Battery
- Bond - \$10,000 (per the bond schedule).

**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 remains accountable to them.