



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Kasey Johnson  
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**Re:** Brooksville Man Arrested on Two Counts of Animal Cruelty – 2024-292787

**Date:** November 20, 2024

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On 11-19-2024, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office received a complaint of animal cruelty, involving two dogs, which was captured on video.

Deputy N. Barrett and Deputy N. Bryant along with Animal Enforcement Officer M. Rowe (AEO) responded to an address in eastern Brooksville and made contact with a witness, who advised two dogs, a male and female Cane Corso, had been beaten by their owner on multiple occasions. The witness provided a video which documented some of the animal abuse.

The deputies and AEO watched the 45-minute video which depicted the dog owner, later identified as **Joseph Lee Lamontagne, DOB/10-21-1967**, repeatedly punching, kicking, and striking both dogs with what appeared to be metal objects consistent with both a metal pole and metal pan. The dogs whimpered in pain and tried to escape the abuse, however Lamontagne would drag the dogs back and begin beating them over and over again. One dog, a black male Cane Corso, was tethered to a post where it could not escape the beatings.

Contact was made with Hernando County Animal Services where it was confirmed that Lamontagne had adopted a black male Cane Corso named "Alger" and requested to foster a brindle female Cane Corso named "Hailie" on 11-05-2024. Thankfully, Lamontagne only had possession of the dogs for 14 days.

Deputies and AEO then made contact with Lamontagne at his residence where they observed both dogs in the back yard with no provisions of food, water, or shelter. The AEO then took custody of both dogs, with Lamontagne signing documents to surrender the

recently adopted dog, Alger. While placing the dogs into the transport vehicle, it was noticed the male dog walked with a severe limp to his right front leg. A veterinarian will be assessing both dogs for injury.

With video evidence of animal cruelty, Lamontagne was arrested at the scene. Lamontagne agreed to speak about what had occurred, admitting to hitting the dogs with a leash due to their "previous actions," but denied ever kicking, punching, or striking the dogs with a metal object which was depicted on the video evidence collected.

Lamontagne was charged with **Two Counts of Felony Animal Cruelty** and transported to the Hernando County Detention Center where he is being held on a \$5,000 bond.

The County Attorney's Office is being consulted regarding a petition to determine fitness, which may result in Lamontagne's ability to own animals in the future.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis states, "Felony animal cruelty is not just a crime against an individual animal—it's a crime against our community's values. The severity of these offenses cannot be overstated. Inflicting pain and suffering on innocent creatures is a clear indication of a deep disregard for life itself. As sheriff, I am committed to holding perpetrators accountable to the fullest extent of the law, because such cruelty has no place in a just society. We must take a firm stand against those who harm animals, ensuring that the punishment fits the gravity of their actions."

