



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Jessica Burns
Community Relations Coordinator, 352-797-3660

Re: Fugitive Wanted in 1989 Child Sexual Battery Investigation Arrested After 35
Years – 1989-16051

Date: April 16, 2026

In October 1989, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office investigated a sexual battery involving a 15-year-old victim. There were multiple alleged violations that occurred while the victim was between the ages of 10 and 12 years old.

As a result of the investigation, an arrest warrant for the suspect **Joseph Vincent Michaels, DOB/02-06-1958**, was issued. The arrest warrant was for 2 counts of **Capitol Sexual Battery** and 1 count of **Sexual Activity with a Child**. Before the arrest warrant could be served, the suspect fled the state and has been living under a number of assumed identities until March of 2026 when he was captured and taken into custody.

Some of his aliases are Pete Puma, Alan Schmidt, Peter Kiesel.

Joseph Vincent Michaels is currently being held in the Hernando Detention Center on a 1.6-million-dollar bond.

Anyone with any information regarding this case and Joseph Vincent Michaels, please contact Detective George Loydgren at the Hernando County Sheriff's Office, 352-797-3714



Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips

If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!

Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or **TIPS from a cell phone.

You may also submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> .

You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000 cash!