



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Two Arrested Following Traffic Stop – 2024-243332

Date: September 10, 2024

While conducting traffic enforcement in the area of Cortez Boulevard and McKethan Road on 09-09-24 at approximately 9:30 p.m., Deputy D. Castoria observed a 2001 blue GMC Jimmy traveling westbound on Cortez Boulevard. Castoria noted the absence of a functioning tag light and conducted a traffic stop.

Castoria made contact with the driver, who identified himself as James Lewis, and the passenger, Valerie Rix.

Castoria explained the reason for the stop and requested Lewis' driver's license, to which Lewis replied that he did not have it with him. Using the name and date of birth provided by the driver, Castoria conducted a driver's license query. The query revealed a photo of a male who did not look like the driver of the vehicle.

Observing signs of nervousness and suspicious behavior, from both the driver and the passenger, along with suspecting criminal behavior, due to the driver providing a false name, Castoria requested permission to search the vehicle. The driver granted permission for the search.

While searching the vehicle, Castoria located a small marijuana "roach" in the center console and a smoking pipe, which appeared to have been used to smoke narcotics, in a backpack belonging to Rix. Rix was then detained.

Upon being detained, Rix told Castoria that she had additional narcotics, hidden in a body cavity, which the driver told her to hide. Rix then produced a plastic baggie which contained a crystal-like substance. The substance later tested positive for the presence of

methamphetamine and weighed 2.2 grams. Rix went on to advise there was crack in her backpack, which, again, the driver told her to hide.

Further examination of the backpack revealed a small plastic baggie which contained a rock-like substance. The substance later tested positive for cocaine and weighed 3.5 grams.

After being detained, the driver admitted to providing false information and provided his real name and date of birth, stating he originally gave false information, as his driver's license is not valid.

Using the driver's real name, David Lewis, Castoria queried his license. The query revealed Lewis' driver's license as being revoked since June, 2006.

Both individuals were placed under arrest and charged as follows:

- **David Lewis DOB/08-06-1965**
 - o Knowingly Drive While License Suspended or Revoked
 - o Providing a False Name to LEO
 - o Bond - \$1,000.

- **Valerie Rix DOB/02-14-1987**
 - o Tampering w/Physical Evidence
 - o Possession of a Controlled Substance (2 counts)
 - o Possession of Paraphernalia
 - o Bond - \$8,500.

Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips

If you have information on this case – or any crime, 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!