

**TELEVISION STATION WRDQ
LICENSED TO WFTV, LLC, ORLANDO, FLORIDA
QUARTERLY LISTING OF LOCAL PROGRAMS REFLECTING CONCERNS AND/OR
NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY
JANUARY-MARCH 2024**

AND SYNDICATED PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS THESE
ISSUES.

(Mini-Series Documentaries are produced by WRDQ's News Department and appear within the newscasts as a public service to the community. The Eyewitness News "mini-series" are aired one to four times daily Monday -Friday from 4:30am-7am; 7-9am; 12-1:00pm; 1-2pm; 4-630pm; 10-11pm; 11-11:35pm; 12-12:30am. On Saturdays, Eyewitness News is aired from 5-9am; 12-12:30pm; 6-6:30pm; 10-11pm and 11-11:35pm. Sundays: 5am-9am; 12-12:30pm; 6-6:30pm; 10-11pm and 11-11:35pm. Segments are generally 1:00-6:00 minutes in length. The following, in date order, are the reports broadcast during the FIRST quarter 2024, which summarizes a representative sample of programming that provided the most significant treatment of community issues during the past quarter. Programming frequently deals with more than one issue.)

QUARTERLY ISSUES/PROGRAMS LIST

- CRIMES AND FIRES
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION
- "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS
 - SCHOOL STORIES
- LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS
-

JANUARY

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 1/19

10:00PM Duration: 1:15

Demie Johnson

WE'RE LEARNING MORE...ABOUT A DEADLY SHOOTING -- IN DELAND. POLICE SAY THIS MAN -- TRAVIS MCBRIDE -- KILLED CLINTON DORSEY -- THEN -- PUT HIM IN THE TRUNK OF HIS CAR! MCBRIDE WAS ARRESTED yesterday -- NEAR FRANKFORT AND NEW YORK AVENUE. THAT'S OUTSIDE OF HIS OFFICE -- WHERE HE WORKED AS A MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST. VOLUSIA COUNTY REPORTER DEMIE JOHNSON HAS MORE FROM NEIGHBORS -- WHO SAY -- MCBRIDE WAS ACTING ERRATICALLY -- LEADING UP TO THE CRIME.

THIS IS THE MOMENT DELAND THERAPIST TRAVIS MCBRIDE WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AFTER POLICE SAY THEY FOUND A BODY IN HIS TRUCK EARLY THURSDAY.

MCBRIDE STOOD IN FRONT OF A JUDGE FRIDAY AND IS NOW FACING FIRST-DEGREE PREMEDIATED MURDER CHARGES.

CHIEF JASON UMBERGER:

"WE BELIEVE IT HAPPENED IN THE OVERNIGHT HOURS BUT WE WEREN'T ALERTED TO IT UNTIL EARLY IN THE MORNING."

POLICE DON'T BELIEVE THE VICTIM – 51-YEAR-OLD CLINTON DORSEY WAS MCBRIDE'S PATIENT. INVESTIGATORS ALSO DIDN'T PROVIDE MUCH INSIGHT INTO WHY THE PAIR HAD BEEN FIGHTING. NEIGHBORS WHO DIDN'T WANT TO BE IDENTIFIED TELL EYEWITNESS NEWS MCBRIDE HAD BEEN ACTING ERATIC IN RECENT WEEKS...AND SAY HE EVEN MADE THREATS TO HOMELESS PEOPLE OVER A MEGAPHONE.

"IT'S KIND OF CRAZY THINKING THAT HE WAS A MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER BUT WE'RE ALL HUMAN. BUT STILL. THIS WHOLE SITUATION IS PRETTY DAMN CRAZY."

ANOTHER NEIGHBOR SHOWED US BULLET HOLES IN HIS HOME ... THAT HE SAYS WAS HIT DURING THE SHOOTING. DETECTIVES FOUND BLOOD AND SHELL CASINGS IN THE STREET AND MCBRIDE STANDING NEAR THE SCENE ... BUT HAVEN'T SAID WHAT LED THEM TO LOOK IN HIS TRUNK.

CAPT PRURINCE DICE: "ALTHOUGH WE'VE MADE AN ARREST WE STILL HAVE SOME LEADS THAT WE NEED TO FOLLOW UP ON. SOME REAL GOOD LEADS. SO I WON'T GO INTO ALL OF THAT."

TRAVIS MCBRIDE IS IN THE VOLUSIA COUNTY JAIL WITH NO BOND.

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 1/22 10:00PM Duration: 1:27 Geovany Dias

A MAN ACCUSED OF SHOOTING... FIVE PEOPLE IN BREVARD COUNTY -- KILLING THREE OF THEM -- WAS DENIED BOND TODAY. INVESTIGATORS SAY TA'SHAWN TAYLOR OPENED FIRE INSIDE AN APARTMENT OVER THE WEEKEND -- NEAR SOUTH BABCOCK AND PALM BAY ROAD. TODAY -- OUR GEOVANY DIAS LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE VICTIMS.

IN HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN COURT MONDAY, 26-YEAR-OLD TA'SHAWN TAYLOR PLEADED NOT GUILTY TO A SLEW OF CHARGES, INCLUDING THREE COUNTS OF FIRST PREMEDITATED DEGREE MURDER. THE JUDGE SAYING IN COURT TAYLOR *CANNOT* CONTACT ANYONE RELATED TO THE VICTIMS, TO WHICH HE RESPONDED...

"I DON'T HAVE ANYBODY TO CALL... MY BROTHER, THAT'S IT..."

WITNESS SAY TA'SHAWN ARRIVED AT THE FAMILY HOME WITH A HANDGUN AND LASER. DETECTIVES SAY HE THEN WENT INTO A BEDROOM, KILLING A 60-YEAR-OLD ANGELA SUGLAM, AND A 31-YEAR-OLD LISA SUGLAM. FROM THERE, INVESTIGATORS SAY HE SHOT A 59-YEAR-OLD MAN, ALTHOUGH THAT MAN IS EXPECTED TO BE OK.

79-YEAR-OLD STEPHEN SUGLAM WAS ALSO IN THE HOME. POLICE SAY HE CAME OUT TO SEE WHAT WAS HAPPENING, BEFORE BEING SHOT DEAD. WITNESS SAY A 10-YEAR-OLD-GIRL AND A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY WERE IN THE APARTMENT.

THE GIRL WAS ABLE TO HIDE AND THEN RUN AWAY. THE TEEN WAS SHOT IN THE HEAD AND IS NOW IN CRITICAL CONDITION. IT ALL HAPPENED INSIDE THE WOODLAKE APARTMENTS, IN PALM BAY.

AFTER THE SHOOTING, DETECTIVES SAY TA'SHAWN RAN AWAY BUT WAS CAUGHT A SHORT TIME LATER. FOR NEIGHBORS, THE SHOOTING HAS LEFT THEM SHAKEN

PARK LAMERTON, NEIGHBOR - "WHAT GOES TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THAT THREE PEOPLE WERE KILLED INSIDE THIS PLACE THAT'S SO CLOSE TO YOUR HOME? IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE. I LIVE A COUPLE HUNDRED OF FEET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE, IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT I WOULD EXPECT."

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 1/27

10:00PM Duration: 1:17

Chantelle Navarro

A FLAGLER COUNTY MAN IS IN JAIL TONIGHT AFTER DEPUTIES SAY HE STABBED SOMEONE AND THEN TOOK OFF. IT HAPPENED THURSDAY IN PALM COAST. CHANNEL 9'S CHANTELE NAVARRO JOINS US LIVE IN STUDIO WITH THE STORY. CHANTELE, INVESTIGATORS BELIEVE THE ATTACK WAS COMPLETELY RANDOM? BOTH THE WOMAN AND THE ATTACKER ADMIT THEY DIDN'T KNOW EACHOTHER -- AND THAT IT ALL STARTED AFTER HE DROVE BY HER. WHILE HE SAID SOMEONE ELSE ATTACKED HIM FIRST, THIS NEARBY SURVEILLANCE VIDEO PROVED OTHERWISE.

"I'M A GOOD GUY AND I WORK EVERY DAY MAN."

THIS IS BODYCAM VIDEO FROM MOMENTS AFTER FLAGLER DEPUTIES SAY THIS MAN - - ERIC GALDABINI -- RANDOMLY ATTACKED SOMEONE. AT FIRST HE TRIED TELLING DEPUTIES IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

"I WALK UP THE GUY AND SUDDENLY HE STARTS SWINGING ON ME."

BUT HERE IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEILLANCE VIDEO, YOU CAN SEE THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED. RIGHT AT THE TOP OF YOUR SCREEN -- YOU CAN SEE GALDABINI RUN UP TO THE COUPLE WITH HIS FISTS UP, THEN THE TWO BEGIN FIGHTING.

HERE IN HIS MUGSHOT, YOU CAN SEE AFTERMATH OF THAT FIGHT. DEPUTIES SAY IT ALL STARTED AS GALDABINI WAS DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD, AND PASSED BY THEM. THEY SAY HE ASKED THE WOMAN TO GET INTO HIS VEHICLE, CIRCLING THE AREA WHERE SHE WAS WALKING.

"I WAS WALKING BY I TELL THIS GIRL HEY NEED A RIDE AND SHE SAID SOMETHING STUPID."

AFTER SHE REFUSED MULTIPLE TIMES, THE COUPLE SAYS THEY TOLD GALDABINI TO LEAVE THEM ALONE...SO HE PARKED HIS JEEP AND FOUGHT WITH THE MAN. DEPUTIES SAY GALDABINI ALSO PULLED OUT A KNIFE AND SLASHED HIM MULTIPLE TIMES...BEFORE GETTING INTO BACK INTO HIS CAR AND DRIVING AWAY. INVESTIGATORS CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AFTER RECOGNIZING THE VEHICLE THAT THE COUPLE REPORTED.

"YOU DON'T KNOW THIS GIRL. NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE? NO, I'VE NEVER SEEN IT. SO WHY DID YOU OFFER HER A RIDE? I DO THAT. I WAS GOING TO THE STORE."

HE'S NOW FACING CHARGES FOR AGGRAVATED BATTERY.

"IF I COULD TALK TO HER HIM I CAN SQUASH IT RIGHT NOW BECAUSE I'M COOL WITH EVERYBODY. I'M 60 YEARS OLD"

INVESTIGATORS SAY GALDABINI IS NOT 60, HE'S 56...AND THAT WAS JUST ANOTHER CONFLICTING STATEMENT DEPUTIES SAY HE GAVE THEM DURING HIS ARREST. HE WAS ALSO PREVIOUSLY CONVICTED OF BATTERY IN VOLUSIA COUNTY BACK IN 2010.

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 1/30

10:00PM Duration: 1:20

Raphael Pires

IT WAS ANOTHER VIOLENT DAY AT AN ORLANDO APARTMENT COMPLEX. GOOD EVENING, I'M GREG WARMOTH. AND I'M MARTHA SUGALSKI. THE JERNIGAN GARDENS APARTMENTS HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY VIOLENT CRIME OVER THE YEARS. TODAY -- THREE MORE PEOPLE WERE SHOT... AND AT LEAST ONE OF THEM HAS DIED.

THE COMPLEX IS LOCATED ON MERCY DRIVE -- NEAR WEST COLONIAL. IT'S WHERE OUR RAPHAEL PIRES WAS EARLIER TODAY -- AND RAPHAEL.. YOU SPOKE TO A COUNTY COMMISSIONER.. WHO SAYS THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE.

COMMISSIONER MICHAEL SCOTT...SAYS THE VIOLENCE NEEDS TO STOP...

"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH."

ITS UNFORTUNATELY BECOME A COMMON SIGHT...AT THE JERNIGAN GARDENS APARTMENT COMPLEX IN ORLANDO...POLICE LIGHTS FLASHING...AND CRIME TAPE STRUNG UP...AS OFFICERS INVESTIGATE YET ANOTHER SHOOTING.

"I DONT KNOW ALL THE DETAILS, BUT I KNOW ONE THING THAT WE GOTTA FIGURE OUT A WAY TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE."

ORANGE COUNTY COMMISSIONER MICHAEL SCOTT...STOPPED BY THE NEIGHBORHOOD TUESDAY AFTERNOON... WHERE ORLANDO POLICE TELL US JUST AFTER ONE OCLOCK... 3 PEOPLE WERE SHOT. AT LEAST ONE OF THEM HAS DIED.

WE SPOKE TO SEVERAL PEOPLE OUT HERE TODAY, NONE OF WHO WANTED TO GO ON CAMERA- FEARING FOR THEIR OWN SAFTETY, BUT ALL OF THEM TELLING US THEY ARE TIRED OF THE SAME SORT OF THING HAPPENEING OVER AND OVER AGAIN. THROUGHOUT THE DAY WE WATCHED AS CHILDREN WERE DROPPED OFF FROM SCHOOL...ONLY TO FIND AN ACTIVE INVESTIGATION AT THE PLACE THEY CALL HOME. SOMETHING MANY OF THEM HAVE HAD TO SEE WAY TOO OFTEN... WITH MORE THAN A DOZEN SHOOTINGS TAKING PLACE AT THE COMPLEX IN THE LAST 5 YEARS.

"ITS FRUSTRATING, WHILE YOU HAVE GOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT, IT ALSO TAKES GOOD PROGRAMS TO STOP THIS."

PROGRAMS, COMMISSIONER SCOTT SAYS, THAT FOCUS ON HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN COPING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO PEACEFULLY RESOLVE CONFLICT...

"ALOT OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL LIKE ANY LITTLE ALTERCATION, I HAVE TO SHOOT YOU. I DONT WANT TO TALK TO YOU, I DONT WANT TO YOU, I DONT WANT TO FIGHT, I WANT TO SHOOT YOU."

AS FOR THIS LATEST INCIDENT...HE SAYS HIS HEART GOES OUT TO THE FAMILY OF THE VICTIMS.

"I DONT KNOW ALL THE DETAILS, BUT I KNOW ONE THING THAT WE GOTTA FIGURE OUT A WAY TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE."

COMMISSIONER SCOTT SAYS THERE IS GOOD WORK BEING DONE IN THE AREA TO HELP ADDRESS THE VIOLENCE...BUT SAYS EVEN MORE CAN BE DONE. AS FOR THE 2 OTHER PEOPLE WHO WERE SHOT...WE'RE TOLD ONE IS EXPECTED TO BE OKAY...BUT POLICE HAVENT GIVEN INFO ON HOW THE OTHER IS DOING.. THEY ALSO HAVENT GIVEN US ANY INFORMATION ON A POSSIBLE SUSPECT.. ANY NEW INFO...WELL BRING THAT TO YOU. IN ORLANDO RP WFTV TN.

FEBRUARY

Category: **CRIMES AND FIRES:**

Date: 2/14

10:00PM Duration: 1:44

Raphael Pires

NEW TONIGHT... WE'RE LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE MOMENT A FATHER AND DAUGHTER SAY SOMEONE PULLED A GUN ON THEM WHILE ON THE ROAD.IT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT IN DELTONA NEAR THE PUBLIX ON DOYLE ROAD. CHANNEL NINE'S RAPHAEL PIRES SPOKE TO THAT FATHER TODAY -- WHO SAYS -- HE WAS TEACHING HIS DAUGHTER HOW TO DRIVE.

YEAH THEY DIDNT WANT TO TALK ON CAMERA...BUT THAT FATHER TOLD ME THIS WAS ACTUALLY HIS DAUGHTER'S FIRST TIME DRIVING OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD...THEY WERE COMING HERE TO THE PUBLIX...BUT WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A QUICK DRIVING LESSON...TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE. A DRIVING LESSON IN DELTONA...TOOK A TERRIFYING TURN...WHEN A STUDENT DRIVER AND HER FATHER...SAY THEY HAD A GUN PULLED ON THEM.

AHMED ALICIA

"I HOPE SHES OKAY."

WE SPOKE TO PEOPLE WHO LIVE NEARBY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED...WHO WERE SUPRISED TO HEAR HOW QUICKLY THINGS ESCALATED.

AHMED ALICIA

"ITS BETTER TO TALK WITH PEOPLE AND HAVE A CONVERSATION."

THE FATHER TOLD ME HIS DAUGHTER WAS ON BRADDOCK ROAD AND MADE A LEFT TURN ONTO DOYLE ROAD. BUT SHE ACCIDENTALLY WENT INTO THE WRONG LANE...AND AS THEY WERE TRYING TO CORRECT THE ISSUE....THEY CUT OFF ANOTHER DRIVER. THE FATHER SAYS THAT OTHER DRIVER GOT EXTREMELY ANGRY,

THEY HAD A HEATED EXCHANGE AND EVENTUALLY HE SAYS THAT OTHER DRIVER PULLED OUT A GUN."

GARY SECHEVERELL

"THATS UNCALLED FOR. IT REALLY IS. SHES TRYING TO LEARN."

GARY SECHEVERELL IS A VETERAN...AND SAYS GUN OWNERS HAVE TO BE RESPONSIBLE WHEN HANDLING A FIREARM.

GARY SECHEVERELL

"YOU PULL IT OUT TO SHOOT SOMEBODY, NOT TO INTIMIDATE SOMEBODY."

VOLUSIA COUNTY DEPUTIES IDENTIFIED THE SUSPECT AS MARK VIERRA. ACCORDING TO THE ARREST REPORT...A WITNESS TOLD DEPUTIES HE HEARD THE FATHER TRY TO EXPLAIN HIS DAUGHTER HAD A LEARNERS PERMIT...AND THEN HEARD VIERRA

"HE WOULD SHOOT THE OCCUPANTS OF THE BLACK SEDAN."

SAY HE WOULD SHOOT THEM BEFORE VIERRA DROVE OFF.

GARY SECHEVERELL

"I BET YOU SHE WILL HAVE A HARD TIME GETTING BEHIND THE WHEEL NOW."

THE FATHER SAYS HE AND HIS DAUGHTER ARE BOTH IN SHOCK...BUT HE'S HOPING THEY'LL GET BACK TO THE DRIVING LESSONS SOON. IN DELTONA RP WFTV TN

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 2/17

10:00PM Duration: 1:55

Chantelle Navarro

MARION COUNTY DEPUTIES SAY A SUSPECT WAS KILLED-- AND A K-9, INJURED IN A SHOOTING THIS MORNING. IT HAPPENED AROUND 9 O'CLOCK ON NORTHEAST 144TH COURT IN SILVER SPRINGS ... NOT FAR FROM EAST MARION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. CHANNEL 9'S CHANTELE NAVARRO BREAKS DOWN WHAT WE KNOW, FROM THE SCENE.

IT HAS BEEN A LONG DAY FOR INVESTIGATORS— WE HAVE SEEN MULTIPLE AGENCIES ON SCENE HERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. MARION COUNTY OF COURSE, ALSO JOINED BY SUMTER DEPUTIES BEHIND THIS CRIME SCENE TAPE... AND IF YOU TAKE A LOOK DOWN THE STREET BY THAT DEPUTY'S CAR LIGHYW — THAT'S THE HOME WHERE THE SHOOTING HAPPENED.

A DREARY SATURDAY IN MARION COUNTY AFTER THIS OTHERWISE CALM NEIGHBORHOOD WAS CLOSED OFF TO THE PUBLIC, AS FDLE STEPPED IN TO INVESTIGATE CENTRAL FLORIDA'S SECOND LAW ENFORCEMENT-INVOLVED SHOOTING IN TWO DAYS.

THIS TIME, IT ALL STARTED AFTER 9am AFTER DEPUTIES RECEIVED A CALL ABOUT A SUSPECT ACCUSED OF ATTACKING AND STRANGLING SOMEONE.

WHEN DEPUTIES PULLED UP TO THE HOME AT NE 144th Court in Silver Springs... THEY FOUND THE SUSPECT IN QUESTION IM THE BACKYARD — WHERE THEY SAY HE STARTED SHOOTING AT THEM FIRST. DEPUTIES SAY THE MAN SHOT THEIR K-9, LEO –

IN THAT EXCHANGE...SO DEPUTIES SHOT BACK....ULTIMATELY ARRESTING HIM AND SENDING HIM TO THE HOSPITAL WHERE HE DIED.

WE'RE STILL WORKING TO FIGURE OUT THAT SUSPECT'S NAME SO WE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT HIS BACKGROUND THIS EVENING AND HOW HES CONNECTED TO THE HOME HERE IN SILVER SPRINGS.

THE SHERIFFS OFFICE SAYS THEY'RE STILL TRYING TO TRACK DOWN AND LET HIS FAMILY KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM FIRST, BEFORE THEY RELEASE THOSE DETAILS OUT TO US.

IN THE MEANTIME – MARION DEPUTIES ARE ASKING FOR THE PUBLIC TO CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR LEO. THE DOG WAS RUSHED OVER TO GAINESVILLE WHERE HE'S BEING TREATED TONIGHT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA VETERINARY HOSPITAL.

THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS VETS MANAGED TO GET HIM UP TO STABLE CONDITION FOR NOW — BUT HE'S STILL RECOVERING. AS FOR THE DEPUTIES INVOLVED - THEY'RE ON PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE AS IS POLICY WITH ALL OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS. FDLE IS STEPPING IN NOW TO INVESTIGATE AND MAKE SURE EVERYTHING WAS JUSTIFIED. AS SOON AS WE FIND OUT THOSE DETAILS WE'LL LET YOU KNOW. IN MARION COUNTY CN CH9 EYEWITNESS NEWS

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 2/26

10:00PM Duration: 1:23

Jeff Levkulich

TONIGHT -- INVESTIGATORS SAY A DEADLY DRIVE-BY SHOOTING *MAY* HAVE STEMMED FROM AN ONLINE FEUD BETWEEN TWO RAPPERS. SEMINOLE COUNTY DEPUTIES HAVE BEEN WORKING THIS CASE SINCE JANUARY OF LAST YEAR. NOW, MORE THAN A YEAR LATER -- THESE 13 PEOPLE ARE BEHIND BARS -- AND INVESTIGATORS ARE *STILL* LOOKING FOR ONE MORE SUSPECT. THE SHOOTING KILLED THIS WOMAN, PRINCESS TOLLIVER AFTER SHE LEFT A CONCERT AT THE BARN IN SANFORD. SHE WAS RIDING IN A PARTY VAN WITH FIVE OTHERS WHO WERE HURT. CHANNEL 9'S SEMINOLE COUNTY REPORTER JEFF LEVKULICH EXPLAINS THOSE VICTIMS WERE NOT THE INTENDED TARGETS.

OVER THE COURSE OF 13 MONTHS...THE SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF SAYS DEPUTIES HAVE LINKED THESE 13 INDIVIDUALS TO THE DRIVE-BY SHOOTING THAT TOOK PLACE ON JANUARY 16TH, 2023 AT THE INTERSECTION OF RHINEHART ROAD AND 46-A...

A PARTY VAN WITH 13 CONCERTGOERS WHO JUST LEFT THE JACKBOY CONCERT AT THE BARN IN SANFORD WAS HIT BY GUNFIRE.

“UPON ARRIVAL AT THE HOSPITAL, IT WAS DETERMINED THAT SIX FEMALE OCCUPANTS THAT WERE TRAVELING IN THAT VAN WERE SHOT AND WOUNDED.”

31-YEAR-OLD PRINCESS TOLLIVER OF TALLAHASSEE DIED FROM HER INJURIES. ...BUT TOLLIVER AND HER FRIENDS WERE NOT THE INTENDED TARGET.

INVESTIGATORS SAY A PUBLIC FEUD BETWEEN RAPPERS, JACKBOY AND KODAK BLACK, WHICH PLAYED OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND IN THE COURT SYSTEM MAY HAVE BEEN THE MOTIVE.

“OUR INVESTIGATION FOUND THAT THE SHOOTERS THOUGHT THAT JACK BOY WAS A PASSENGER IN THE VAN AND WAS LIKELY THE INTENDED TARGET OF THE SHOOTING.”

THE SHERIFF SAYS THOSE ARRESTED IN THE INVESTIGATION ARE KNOWN MEMBERS OF THE STREET GANG KNOWN AS ON TOP FOREVER, OR O-T-F.

“THROUGH CONVENTIONAL INVESTIGATIVE TOOLS AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY, WE WERE ABLE TO PIECE TOGETHER THIS INVESTIGATION OBTAINING MORE THAN 120 SEARCH WARRANTS ALLOWING US TO PUT SOME DANGEROUS INDIVIDUALS BEHIND BARS FOR VERY SERIOUS CRIMES.”

THE CHARGES RANGE FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL...AND THERE IS STILL ONE PERSON WHO INVESTIGATORS ARE LOOKING FOR. IN SANFORD, JEFF LEVKULICBH, WFTV TONIGHT

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 2/29 10:00PM Duration:1:42 Raphael Pires

WE BEGIN WITH BREAKING DEVELOPMENTS... IN THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THAT 13-YEAR-OLD MADELINE SOTO. TONIGHT -- THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SAYS -- HER MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND HAS BEEN ARRESTED -- AND IS BEING CONSIDERED THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THIS CASE.

GOOD EVENING, I'M GREG WARMOTH. AND I'M MARTHA SUGALSKI. THIS IS A LOOK AT STEPHAN STERNS' PERP WALK. DETECTIVES ARRESTED HIM EARLIER THIS EVENING -- AFTER FINDING DISTURBING IMAGES ON HIS PHONE.... STERNS IS ALSO THE LAST CONFIRMED PERSON TO SEE MADELINE -- ON MONDAY -- NEAR HUNTER'S CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL. SINCE THEN -- MORE THAN 100 DEPUTIES, DETECTIVES AND OTHER PERSONEL HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR THE TEEN.

OUR RAPHAEL PIRES HAS BEEN FOLLOWING THIS STORY. HE JOINS US LIVE WITH MORE ON THIS ARREST. RAPHAEL -- THIS ARREST COMES HOURS AFTER ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF JOHN MINA LAID OUT A TIMELINE OF EVENTS SURROUNDING MADELINE'S DISPEARANCE. AND HE SAYS IT ALL STARTED HERE...AT THIS CHURCH...WHERE MADELINE WAS DROPPED OFF BY STEPHAN STERNS ON MONDAY MORNING...SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO WALK OVER TO SCHOOL-- HUNTER'S CREEK MIDDLEWHICH IS JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT OVERPASS...BUT WERE TOLD SHE NEVER MADE IT THERE.

STEPHAN STERNS...CUFFED AND BEING WALKED BY ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES LATE WEDNESDAY NIGHT... ARRESTED IN CONNECTION TO THE DISSAPEARANCE OF 13 YEAR OLD MADELINE SOTO. STERNS IS THE BOYFRIEND OF THE TEENS MOTHER. JUST DAYS AGO...HE SPOKE WITH EYEWITNESS NEWS ABOUT THE CASE...WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES...

"I DROPPED HER OFF. EVERYTHING LOOKED FINE WHEN I DROVE AWAY."

BUT TONIGHT HE'S BEING DRIVEN AWAY IN A DEPUTY CRUISER...AND AS THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THIS CASE.

"THIS IS EVERY PARENTS WORST NIGHTMARE."

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF JOHN MINA... GAVE US NEW INSIGHT IN THE SEARCH FOR 13-YEAR-OLD MADELINE SOTO.

"I DO WANT TO ASSURE THE COMM THAT WE HAVE WELL OVER 100 DEP, DETS, INT ANALYSTS AND SPECIALISED PERSONNEL WHO ARE INVESTIGATING THIS CASE AND SEARCHING FOR MADELINE RIGHT NOW."

THE SHERIFF LAID OUT THIS TIMELINE OF WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR... SURROUNDING MADELINE'S DISSAPERANCE. ON MONDAY, FEB 26TH AROUND 8:30 IN THE MORNING...MADELINE WAS DROPPED OFF AT A CHURCH NEAR HUNTER'S CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL BY HER MOM'S BOYFRIEND. THAT AFTERNOON AT 4:30 -- HER MOM WENT TO PICK HER UP AT SCHOOL...BUT FOUND OUT MADELINE NEVER SHOWED UP. SHE REPORTED HER MISSING...AND BY 8 THAT NIGHT --- SHE WAS MEETING WITH DEPUTIES.

SOON AFTER THERE WAS AN EXTENSIVE SEARCH USING BLOODBOUNDS. BUT THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING. THEN ON TUESDAY -- DETECTVIES WERE ABLE TO GAIN ACCESS TO MADELINE'S PHONE...AND FOUND MESSAGES SAYING SHE WANTED TO LIVE IN THE WOODS WHEN SHE TURNED 13. HER 13-TH BIRTHDAY WAS JUST LAST WEEK. AND ON WEDNESDAY -- THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE EXECUTED WARRANTS ON THE FAMILY'S HOME IN KISSIMMEE.

"I FEEL LIKE I CANT BREATHE. ALL I KEEP THINKING ABOUT IS WHRE IS SHE, IS SHE SAFE, IS SHE OKAY."

BEFORE THE SHERIFF LAID OUT THIS NEW TIMELINE -- SINCE THE DISSAPEARANCE MADELINES MOTHER HAS BEEN DESPERATE FOR ANSWERS.

"IN MY HEART I FEEL LIKE SOMEBODY TOOK HER. THIS ISNT LIKE HER TO JUST PICK UP AND RUN AWAY."

WITH FLYERS NOW PLASTED AROUND TOWN... THE SHERIFF SAYS HIS DEPUTIES WILL KEEP SEARCHING FOR MADELINE.

"WE WILL NOT STOP UNTIL WE FIND HER."

MARCH

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 3/10 10:00PM Duration:2:49 Ralph Pires

IT'S A CASE WE ARE FOLLOWING CLOSELY --AND TONIGHT ... THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF A 13-YEAR-OLD CENTRAL FLORIDA GIRL CONTINUES. MADELINE SOTO'S BODY WAS FOUND JUST OVER A WEEK AGO... AFTER A DAYS-LONG MULTI-COUNTY SEARCH EFFORT. AND WHILE NO ONE HAS BEEN CHARGED IN HER DEATH YET... THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THE CASE -- ACCORDING TO INVESTIGATORS -- IS A MAN WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THERE TO PROTECT HER. HER MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND - STEPHAN STERNS. IT'S A STORY THAT HAS IMPACTED PEOPLE ACROSS CENTRAL FLORIDA AND THE COUNTRY. TONIGHT, OUR RAPHAEL PIRES BREAKS DOWN WHERE THE INVESTIGATION IS AT RIGHT NOW...AND HOW THINGS UNFOLDED.

FROM A MISSING TEEN CASE...TO A MURDER INVESTIGATION...
THE STORY OF MADELINE SOTO...HAS IMPACTED PEOPLE ACCROSS THE
COUNTRY...AND LEFT MANY IN CENTRAL FLORIDA MOURNING THE TRAGIC
LOSS.

IT ALL STARTED MONDAY FEB 26...WHEN MADELINES MOTHER JENNIFER
SOTO..REPORTED TO POLICE THAT HER DAUGHTER HAD GONE MISSING.

JENNIFER-SOT-AND-STEPHEAN-STERNS-INTERVIEW:
"IN MY HEART I FEEL LIKE SOMEBODY TOOK HER."

THE NEXT DAY JENNIFFER TOLD OUR CREW HER BOYFRIEND STEPHAN
STERNS DROPPED HER DAUGHTER OFF AT A CHURCH NEAR HUNTERS CREEK
MIDDLE SCHOOL. HE TOLD INVESTIGATORS SHE WANTED TO WALK THE REST
OF THE WAY...BUT NEVER MADE IT.

JENNIFER-SOT-AND-STEPHEAN-STERNS-INTERVIEW)
**"I DROPPED HER OFF, EVERYTHING LOOKED FINE WHEN I DROVE AWAY AND
THAT WAS THE LAST TIME WE SAW HER."**

FROM THERE A LARGE SEARCH EFFORT GOT UNDERWAY.

FORTURNER-MINAPRESSERMADELINE:
**"WE HAVE WELL OVER 100 DEPUTIES, DETECTIVES, INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS
IN THIS CASE SERACHING FOR MADELINE RIGHT NOW."**

SEVERAL OTHER AGENCIES...JOINED IN...AND THEN ON WEDNESDAY...A
BOMBSHELL ARREST. LATE AT NIGHT THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF
ANNOUNCED THE ARREST OF THE MOTHERS BOYFREIND FOR SEXUAL
BATTERY AND POSSESSION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL....AND
NAMED HIM THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THE CASE. THEN THE SHERIFF SAID HE
BELEIVES STERNS NEVER DROPPED OFF MADELINE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AND TOLD US HE WAS CAPTURED ON CAMERA THROWING HER BACKPACK
AND SCHOOL LAPTOP INTO A DUMPSTER MONDAY MORNING.

DEPUTIES SAY MADDIE'S BODY WAS SEEN IN STERNS' CAR BEFORE HE
DROVE AWAY....

FORTURNERMINAPRESSER:
**"WE BELIEVE SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD AT THE TIME AND THAT STEPHAN
STERNS MOVED HER BODY IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF THAT DAY."**

TWO DAYS LATER...A MAJOR...BUT TRAGIC DISCOVERY. MADDY'S BODY WAS
FOUND IN A RURAL AREA...IN ST CLOUD. SEVERAL MILES AWAY FROM THE
FAMILY'S HOME IN KISSIMMEE.

SINCE THEN HER COMMUNITY HAS BEEN MOURNING THE LOSS.

INVESTIGATORS NOW ALSO LOOKING AT DISCREPENCIES..IN THE MOTHERS
STATEMENTS...AFTER LEARNING THERE WERE INCONSISTENCIES ABOUT THE
LAST TIME SHE SAYS SHE SAW MADELINE. AND KISSIMEE POLICE SAY

INVESTIGATORS ARE CONTINUING DIG THROUGH EVIDENCE AGAINST STERNS.

FORTURNERMINAPRESSER:

"AS MORE EVIDENCE COMES UP THERE MORE BE MORE CHARGES IN THE FUTURE."

KISSIMMEE POLICE IS NOW LEADING THIS INVESTIGATION. THEY SAID THERE IS NO NEW INFORMATION TO SHARE AS OF RIGHT NOW...BUT SOURCES TELL US WE COULD GET SOMETHING NEW IN THE INVESTIGATION AS EARLY AS THIS WEEK. RP CHANNL 9 EYEWITNESS NEWS

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 3/6 10:00PM Duration:1:48 Chantelle Navarro

DELAND POLICE ARE LOOKING THIS MAN -- THEY SAY IS A SUSPECT IN A DEADLY SHOOTING. THE VICTIM WAS FOUND DEAD THIS MORNING NEAR THE INTERSECTION OF BERESFORD AVENUE AND PARSONS AVENUE. THE SUSPECT WAS LAST SPOTTED JUST HALF A MILE FROM THERE -- AT THE SHA-DE-LAND MOBILE HOME PARK.

OFFICERS WERE BACK OUT THERE THIS EVENING. NEIGHBORS TOLD OUR CHANTELE NAVARRO -- VIOLENCE IN THE AREA ISN'T NEW, BUT THEY'RE STILL ON EDGE. NEIGHBORS HERE AT THE MOBILE HOME PARK SAY HEARING GUNSHOTS ISNT EXACTLY OUT OF THE ORDINARY BUT IT'S STILL SCARY. OFFICERS RETURNED HERE THIS EVENING SHOWING THIS PICTURE TO PEOPLE AND ASKING IF THEY RECOGNIZED THE SUSPECT. THIS IS JUST BLOCKS AWAY FROM WHERE THEY FOUND SOMEONE SHOT DEAD OVERNIGHT.

DEBORAH SANTORIELO, NEIGHBOR

"IT'S NOT SAFE. IT'S NOT"

DEBORAH SANTORIELO HAS LIVED HERE AT SHA-DE-LAND MOBILE HOME PARK FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES. AND FOR THE MOST PART, SHE'S ENJOYED IT.

DEBORAH SANTORIELO, NEIGHBOR

"I KEEP TO MYSELF IN MY ROOM, I GOT MY ANIMALS THAT I LOVE."

BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT HASN'T COME WITHOUT DRAWBACKS... SPECIFICALLY, WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY.

DEBORAH SANTORIELO, NEIGHBOR

"I HEAR GUNSHOTS A LOT IN ALL AROUND. THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF MURDERS IN THIS TOWN A LOT."

EARLY SATURDAY MORNING WAS ONE OF THOSE TIMES -- DELAND POLICE SAY SOMEONE WAS SHOT AND LEFT FOR DEAD ABOUT HALF A MILE AWAY FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AT THE INTERSECTION OF WEST BERESFORD AND SOUTH PARSONS AVENUE, JUST BEFORE 4AM.

JAYDAN DIAZ, NEIGHBOR

"IT'S JUST SCARY WALKING AROUND HERE NOW."

INVESTIGATORS SAY THE MAN THEY BELIEVE PULLED THE TRIGGER -- WAS LAST SPOTTED ENTERING THE MOBILE HOME PARK. THEY THINK HE'S HISPANIC, LIKELY BETWEEN 25 AND 35 YEARS OLD, YOU CAN SEE HE HAD ON BLACK SHOES, PANTS AND A WHITE SHIRT....CARRYING A BLACK BACKPACK.

DEBORAH SANTORIELO, NEIGHBOR

"I JUST FELT LIKE IT WAS ANOTHER DAY. BECAUSE LIKE I SAID, I'VE BEEN HERE FOR 18 YEARS. AND IT'S NOTHING NEW. BUT I DO WANT TO MOVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD I WANT TO MOVE."

WE SHOWED SANTORIELO THE PICTURES, AND SHE SAID SHE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HIM. OFFICERS ALSO RETURNED TO THE AREA AROUND SIX SATURDAY EVENING, GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR, ASKING NEIGHBORS IF THEY SAW ANYTHING. IT'S UNCLEAR IF THEY GOT ANY LEADS. BUT WE NOTICED THEY CONTINUED PATROLING THE AREA AFTERWARDS. SOMETHING RESIDENTS BELIEVE SHOULD BE DONE MORE OFTEN.

DEBORAH SANTORIELO, NEIGHBOR

"WE NEED MORE COPS AROUND. ON EVERY CORNER. WE NEED MORE PROTECTION."

IN DELAND CN CH9 EYEWITNESS NEWS

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 3/14 10:00PM Duration:1:18 Daryl Matthews

A TRIAL DATE HAS NOW BEEN SET...STEPHAN STERNS WILL BE ARRAIGNED APRIL 2ND -- HAVE HIS PRE-TRIAL ON THE 24TH -- AND JURY TRIAL MAY 13TH. RIGHT NOW -- HE'S NOT FACING CHARGES FOR MADDIE'S DEATH. HOWEVER -- COULD FACE LIFE IN PRISON -- FOR DOZENS OF CHILD SEX ABUSE CHARGES. MADDIE WAS FIRST REPORTED MISSING LAST MONTH. ON MARCH 1ST -- SHE WAS FOUND DEAD -- IN A WOODED AREA IN SAINT CLOUD. EARLIER TODAY -- DARYL MATTHEWS SPOKE WITH FORMER CHIEF JUDGE BELVIN PERRY -- WHO PRESIDED OVER THE CASEY ANTHONY TRIAL -- ABOUT WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF STERNS IS CHARGED WITH HER MURDER.

HE'S SITTING IN A JAIL CELL RIGHT NOW. AND IF CONVICTED OF THE CHILD SEX CRIMES HE ACCUSED OF, STEPHAN STERNS COULD SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE IN PRISON. REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS IN THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF 13-YEAR-OLD MADELINE SOTO.

BELVIN PERRY //FORMER CHIEF JUDGE:

"I DON'T THINK THIS CASE IS GOING TO GO, AND IF THE MURDER CHARGES ARE ADDED YOU'RE GOING TO BE A YEAR AND A HALF-TWO YEARS BEFORE COMES TO TRIAL."

STEPHAN STERNS, THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MADALINE SOTO IS THE BOYFRIEND OF SOTO'S MOTHER--- HE WAS THE LAST PERSON SEEN WITH THE 13-YEAR-OLD.

IN MAY HE'LL STAND TRIAL NOT FOR HER DISAPPEARANCE, BUT RATHER DOZENS OF SEX CRIMES.

BELVIN PERRY //FORMER CHIEF JUDGE:

“IF THE DEFENSE IS NOT READY FOR TRIAL WHICH I DON'T THINK THEY WILL BE AT THAT TRIAL DATE THEIR GOING TO MOVE TO CONTINUE TO GIVE THEM MORE TIME TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE.”

SO FAR, INVESTIGATORS HAVE EXAMINED ENOUGH FOR THE STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO CHARGE STERNS WITH 60 COUNTS OF SEXUAL BATTERY ON A CHILD UNDER 12

STERNS HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED IN MADDIE'S DEATH--- AS LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTINUES ITS INVESTIGATION AND HAS YET TO CHARGE ANYONE

BELVIN PERRY //FORMER CHIEF JUDGE:

“THEY ARE WAITING FOR ALL OF THE EVIDENCE TO COME IN SO THEY CAN CAREFULLY LOOK AT IT, ANALYZE IT, AND MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION ON AS TO THE MURDER CHARGE.”

Category: CRIMES AND FIRES:

Date: 3/18 10:00PM Duration: 1:18 Phylicia Ashley

WE'RE LEARNING NEW DETAILS... ABOUT A FIGHT -- TURNED SHOOTING -- IN DOWNTOWN ORLANDO. POLICE SAY -- A SECURITY GUARD SHOT A FORMER ORLANDO ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF -- NEAR THE POPULAR CIGAR LOUNGE ON SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE -- FRIDAY NIGHT. PHYLICIA ASHLEY EXPLAINS THE MAJOR SCANDAL THAT SHOOTING VICTIM WAS ALSO A PART OF -- WITHIN THE ORLANDO FIRE DEPARTMENT.

DURING THE HEIGHT OF SOCIAL HOUR FRIDAY NIGHT.

A FIGHT BETWEEN 26-YEAR-OLD SECURITY GUARD RAMON FERNANDEZ JUNIOR AND 62-YEAR-OLD RUDOLPH JOHNSON LED TO A SHOOTING.

JASMYNE

“KIND OF CRAZY EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT IT”

JASMYNE CASE AND FRANCO RAMA BOTH WORK DOWNTOWN. OCCASIONALLY DURING THE START OF THE WEEKEN DOWNTOWN SOCIAL SCENE.

FRANCO

“IT'S PRETTY SCARY ESPECIALLY SINCE ITS SO CLOSE BY. IT COULD LITERALLY HAPPEN TO ANYBODY IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME IT JUST SO HAPPENS I WASN'T IN THAT SITUATION.”

CHANNEL 9 LOOKED INTO BOTH OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED. WE HAVE REPORTED ON THE MAN SHOT. RUDOLPH WAS INVOLVED IN A MAJOR SCANDAL WITH THE ORLANDO FIRE DEPARTMENT. FIREFIGHTERS INCLUDING RUDOLPH CHEATED ON THEIR EXAMS FOR PROMOTIONS. IT WAS REVEALED IT HAPPENED MULTIPLE TIMES AND LED TO AN INVESTIGATION BY THE STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE. HE TOLD CHANNEL 9 THEN THAT HIS MANAGERS TOLD HIM TO DO IT AND HE WAS TOLD TO LIE. NOW RUDOLPH IS PART OF A SHOOTING INVESTIGATION.

FRANCO:

“WHEN WE LOOK AT PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY AND IN POWER YOU WANT TO LOOK AT THEM AS AN EXAMPLE ITS UNFORTUNATE THERE WAS SUCH A BIG ALTERCATION AND IT LED TO THE WAY IT ENDED.”

RUDOLPH WAS IN CRITICAL CONDITION AFTER HE WAS SHOT. FERNANDEZ HAD INJURIES THAT WERE NOT LIFE THREATENING.

JANUARY

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 1/15

10:00PM

Duration: 1:10

Phylicia Ashley

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PASSED A RULE TODAY PROHIBITING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THE STATE HAS CRACKED DOWN ON D-E-I ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES. BUT THIS IS ON A LARGER SCALE. OUR PHYLICIA ASHLEY FOUND OUT HOW THIS WILL IMPACT *28* STATE COLLEGE CAMPUSES.

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION WAS CREATED FOR GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO MAY FEEL ISOLATED IN EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SPACES.

CHRIS HERNANDEZ:40 I HAVE FELT THAT MY WHOLE LIFE ESPECIALLY IN SCHOOL.

TODAY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PASSED A RULE PERMANENTLY PROHIBITING DEI IN THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM.

THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION MANNY DIAZ SAID “THESE ACTIONS TODAY ENSURE THAT WE WILL NOT SPEND TAXPAYER’S MONEY SUPPORTING DEI AND RADICAL INDOCTRINATION THAT PROMOTES DIVISION IN OUR SOCIETY.”

CHRIS HERNANDEZ

“I FEEL BAD FOR WHOEVER IS STIL LIN SCHOOL. IM NOT THANKFULLY.”

CHRIS HERNANDEZ IS 21 AND SAYS HE’S GONE THROUGH SPACES WHERE HE WAS THE MINORITY FOR A PLETHRA OF REASON.

CHRIS HERNANDEZ:

“KIND OF JUST AGAINST THE WALL YOU DON’T KNOW HOW TO FEEL WHAT TO THINK.”

HE SAYS D.E.I. PROGRAMS WOULD HAVE SUPPORTED HIM. BUT IN A STATEMENT COMMISSIONER DIAZ SAID “HIGHER EDUCATION MUST RETURN TO ITS ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE INSTEAD OF BEING CORRUPTED BY DESTRUCTIVE IDEOLOGIES.

SOME STUDENTS SAY THIS IS AN ADDITIONAL WEIGHT STUDENTS WILL HAVE TO PICK UP.

FRESHMAN ELIJAH STINGLEY:

“I CAN SEE HOW IT CAN BE A BURDEN ON OTHER STUDENTS WHO NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO.”

LAST MAY, GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS SIGNED A D-E-I BILL INTO LAW. THE LAW PROHIBITS INSTITUTIONS FROM SPENDING FEDERAL OR STATE DOLLARS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS. AT THE TIME -- THE GOVERNOR SAID THE LAW KEEPS THE UNIVERSITIES ACCOUNTABLE TO THE VOTERS.... NOT A PRIVATE INSTITUTION.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 1/17

10:00PM

Duration: 1:23

Sabrina Maggiore

RIGHT NOW... DUMPING A BODY IN FLORIDA IS A MISDEMEANOR. BUT -- THAT COULD SOON CHANGE -- THANKS TO THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE. IT'S WORKING WITH A LAKE COUNTY MOTHER AND LAWMAKERS TO CHANGE THE CURRENT LAW. SABRINA MAGGIORE EXPLAINS HOW IT LIMITS WHAT LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN DO TO SOLVE CRIMES.

THIS MEMORIAL STANDS AT THE SITE WHERE INVESTIGATORS FOUND 28-YEAR-OLD KAITLYN KARLOWITZ AFTER SHE OVERDOSED IN 2020... INVESTIGATORS SAY HER BODY WAS THROWN FROM A MOVING VEHICLE ONTO THIS ORANGE COUNTY ROAD.

PAULA KHOENLE - KAITLYN KARLOWICZ'S MOTHER

“THEY DUMP THESE BODIES LIKE THEIR GARBAGE AND THE FACT THAT IT'S A MISDEMEANOR IS RIDICULOUS.”

KAITLYN'S MOM --NOW ONE OF MANY ADVOCATING TO INCREASE THE PUNISHMENT

DAWN TAPLIN - FORMER PALM BAY DETECTIVE

“THEY COULD HAVE MADE CHANGES EVEN BACK THEN”

IN HER 14-YEAR CAREER, FORMER PALM BAY DETECTIVE DAWN TAPLIN INVESTIGATED SEVERAL CASES WHERE BODIES WERE MOVED... AND DUMPED ELSEWHERE... IN THE PROCESS, CRITICAL EVIDENCE WAS DESTROYED, BUT SHE SAYS SHE NEVER SAW ANYONE CHARGED WITH THAT CRIME...

DAWN TAPLIN - FORMER PALM BAY DETECTIVE

“BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE STATUTES WRITTEN, YOU KNOW, YOU REALLY DO GET TO THE POINT AS AN INVESTIGATOR SOMETIME THAT YOUR HANDS ARE TIED”

A CASE SHE WORKED IN 2002 LEAD HER TO WRITE THIS LETTER ASKING TO MAKE THE CRIME A FELONY... NOW THAT WORK IS GAINING GROUND AS A BILL UNANIMOUSLY MOVED FORWARD IN TALLAHASSEE TO CHANGE THE PENALTY.. AND THEREFORE HELP LAW ENFOCMENT IN ITS INVESTIGATION

CAPTAIN ANTORRIO WRIGHT - ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

“THE ISSUE IS THAT ITS A MISDEMEANOR. ITS NOT ONE OF THOSE MISDEMEANOR EXCEPTIONS. WE CANT GET A WARRANT FOR IT.”

STATE SENATOR LINNDA STEWART SAYS THE ISSUE IS CUT AND DRY.

LINDA STEWART - BILL SPONSOR

“LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS TO BE ABLE TO INVESTIGATE THESE CRIMES AND THESE DEAD BODIES THAT ARE LAYING AROUND, THEY JUST HAVE TO BE ABLE TO GO FURTHER THAN WHAT THEY’RE ABLE TO DO NOW. SO THERE’S NO QUESTIONS THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE A CHANGE.”

THE BILL IS NOW MOVING ONTO ITS SECOND COMMITTEE... AND A COMPANION BILL IS ALSO ADVANCING IN THE HOUSE. IF IT BECOMES LAW -- DUMPING A BODY WOULD BE A THIRD DEGREE FELONY PUNISHABLE BY UP TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON AND A FIVE-THOUSAND DOLLAR FINE.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 1/19 10:00PM Duration:1:50 Alexa Lorenzo

THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF IS CHANGING HOW HE GOES AFTER PEOPLE RACING ON OUR ROADS. WE’VE REPORTED ON THE ISSUE FOR YEARS NOW.

TRAFFIC ANCHOR ALEXA LORENZO SAT DOWN WITH SHERIFF JOHN MINA TO DISCUSS HIS NEW STRATEGY. THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE IS CRACKING DOWN HARD ON STREET RACING

SHERIFF JOHN MINA/ORANGE COUNTY
“THAT’S AN ISSUE THAT WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF.”

DATA SHOWS IN 2023 DEPUTIES ISSUED MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND CITATIONS, ARRESTED MORE THAN 150 PEOPLE AND SEIZED DOZENS OF VEHICLES INCLUDING THESE TWO MOTORCYCLES FOR STREET RACING. IT’S A COMMUNITY ISSUE CHANNEL 9 HAS COVERED FOR YEARS

ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF JOHN MINA SAYS RECENTLY DEPUTIES TOOK ON A NEW TACTIC

SHERIFF JOHN MINA/ORANGE COUNTY:
“THEY’RE OUT THERE AND THEY SEE THESE YOUNG DRIVERS, AND THEY’RE LIKE, WAIT A MINUTE, WHOSE CAR IS THIS? AND THEY SEE THE REGISTRATION, LIKE, OH, THIS IS YOUR MOM’S CAR. THIS IS YOUR DAD’S CAR. DO THEY KNOW YOU’RE OUT HERE? ILLEGALLY STREET RACING? AND OBVIOUSLY, THE ANSWER IS NO.”

THE AGENCY IS NOW CONTACTING ISURANCE COMPANIES WHICH GETS THE ATTENTION OF THESE PARENTS BECAUSE NO ONE WANTS THEIR INSURANCE REVOKED AND HE SAYS THE INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY. AND NOW HE’S GOING A STEP FURTHER

SHERIFF JOHN MINA/ORANGE COUNTY:
“ILLEGAL STREET RACING HAS INCREASED NATIONWIDE. IT’S NOT ONLY IN ORANGE COUNTY ISSUE, AND THAT’S WHY I WANT TO PASS THIS LEGISLATION THAT WOULD INCREASE THE PENALTIES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE STREET RACING.”

THIS SCENE DID NOT SIT WELL WITH SHERIFF MINA.....A CAR CIRCLING A FIRE TRUCK TRYING TO RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY CALL:

SHERIFF JOHN MINA/ORANGE COUNTY:
“MY FIRST REACTION WAS, YOU KNOW, WE NEED TO ARREST THIS PERSON, WHICH WE DID.”
AND A FOLLOWING REACTION WAS THIS LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL.

SHERIFF JOHN MINA/ORANGE COUNTY:

"WHAT WE HAVE DONE IS WE'VE MADE THE SECOND OFFENSE, A FELONY, WHICH OBVIOUSLY CARRIES MORE PENALTIES. WE'VE INCREASED THE FINES BY ALMOST DOUBLE. AND WE'VE ALSO MADE IT A FELONY IF STREET RACERS ARE IMPEDING AN EMERGENCY VEHICLE."

MINA IS WORKING WITH LAWMAKERS FROM MIAMI TO JACKSONVILLE TO CHANGE THE LAW AND IN THE MEANTIME HIS DEPUTIES WILL BE OUT CONTINUING THEIR EFFORTS TO CURB ILLEGAL STREET RACING

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 1/26

10:00PM

Duration 1:29

Nick Papantonis

FRESH DOUBT IS BEING THROWN INTO THE DEBATE OVER WHETHER FLORIDA SHOULD BAN KIDS FROM BEING ON SOCIAL MEDIA. GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS SAYS HE'S CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFORT -- WHICH IS CURRENTLY THE TOP PRIORITY OF LAWMAKERS IN TALLAHASSEE ... AND PASSED IN THE HOUSE JUST A FEW DAYS AGO. NICK PAPANTONIS IS LIVE IN THE NEWSROOM WITH THE LATEST ON THIS FIGHT. AND NICK --YOU HAD A CALL WITH THE FOLKS OVER AT FACEBOOK WHO ALSO BELIEVE FLORIDA IS HEADING DOWN THE WRONG PATH. THAT'S OBVIOUSLY NOT A SURPRISE TO ANYONE. THERE ARE SO MANY CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES WITH THIS BILL IT'S UNLIKELY TO EVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY EVEN IF DESANTIS WINDS UP BACKING IT. BUT HE ALLUDED TO THOSE PROBLEMS. AND FACEBOOK STAFF TOLD ME THEY WOULD SUPPORT A DIFFERENT IDEA.

DESANTIS:

"I WANT A PATHWAY FOR THIS TO ACTUALLY STICK."

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS --CASTING DOUBT ON A BILL BANNING TEENS YOUNGER THAN 16 FROM HAVING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS. SUGGESTING THE BILL WOULD NOT SURVIVE A COURT CHALLENGE.

PARENT:

"EVERYBODY HAS A CHOICE THAT THEY THINK WORKS FOR THEIR KIDS. SO I DON'T THINK THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DECIDE THAT."

THE BILL --A PRIORITY OF HOUSE SPEAKER AND PALM COAST REPRESENTATIVE PAUL RENNER --HAS BEEN FAST-TRACKED THROUGH THE FLORIDA HOUSE WITH BIPARTISAN SUPPORT. BUT LEGISLATIVE ANALYSTS HAVE RAISED RED FLAGS -- OUTLINED IN SEVERAL PAGES OF CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS WITH THE BILL --THAT SPAN FROM THE FIRST AMENDMENT, TO CONTRACTS, TO REGULATORY POWER. OTHERS, INCLUDING THE GOVERNOR, HAVE SUGGESTED IT MAY BE AN OVER-REACH -- THOUGH HE DID SAY THERE'S TIME TO FIX IT.

DESANTIS:

"I WANT TO GIVE PARENTS TOOLS TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS. AND SO I JUST THINK YOU GOT TO BE SMART ABOUT HOW YOU DO IT."

WHILE THE BAN'S SUPPORTERS SAY ITS NARROWLY TAILORED- SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES ARE PAYING ATTENTION. ONE OF THEM -- META -- OWNER OF FACEBOOK -- INSTAGRAM AND THREADS. IN A CALL THIS WEEK WITH W-F-T-V -- THE COMPANY CAST DOUBT ON BOTH THE BILL'S CONSTITUTIONALITY AND FEASIBILITY.

SINCE THE BILL DOESN'T SAY HOW PLATFORMS WOULD ACTUALLY VERIFY AGE. COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES SAY A FEDERAL LAW REQUIRING PARENTAL NOTIFICATION WHEN THEIR TEEN DOWNLOADS A NEW APP WOULD SERVE MANY OF THE SAME GOALS WHILE RESPECTING PARENTAL RIGHTS.

PARENT:

"I DO FEEL LIKE THAT'S MORE OF A PARENTAL ROLE OF ACCESS THAT YOU GIVE YOUR KIDS VERSUS THE GOVERNMENT DETERMINING IF THAT SHOULD BE A LAW."

THE COMPANY ALSO WALKED US THROUGH MANY OF THEIR TOOLS THEY'VE DESIGNED TO KEEP TEENS SAFE ON THEIR PLATFORM. THEY RANGE FROM BLOCKING CERTAIN WORDS AND CONTENT THAT ADULT ACCOUNTS CAN SEE -- LIKE MOST POSTS ABOUT EATING DISORDERS -- TO AN ALGORITHM THAT IDENTIFIES SUSPICIOUS ADULTS AND PREVENTS THOSE ACCOUNTS FROM BEING ABLE TO SEE OR INTERACT WITH TEENAGERS. LIVE IN THE STUDIO -- NP -- W-F-T-V TONIGHT.

FEBRUARY

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 2/20

10:00PM

Duration: 1:38

Nick

Papantonis

ORANGE COUNTY IS STILL STRUGGLING TO ANSWER 9-1-1 CALLS ON TIME. BUT -- DATA SHOWS THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE *MAY* HAVE FINALLY FOUND A SOLUTION.

WE FIRST BROKE THIS STORY OVER THE SUMMER -- WHEN PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE OF MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OR SHOOTINGS CALLED -- AND THE PHONE KEPT RINGING. OUR NICK PAPANTONIS SHOWS US... WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE.

ON JANUARY 10 -- ONLOOKERS WERE ASTOUNDED WHEN TWO PEOPLE WALKED AWAY FROM THIS HIGH-SPEED CRASH ON ORANGE BLOSSOM TRAIL THAT SPLIT A CAR IN HALF.

"WITNESS QUICK BITE THIS TEXT IS JUST FILLER FOR TIMING PURPOSES."

BUT THERE WAS A SECOND ROUND OF DISBELIEF. A WITNESS -- WRITING TO US -- SAYING SHE AND HER FRIENDS CALLED 9-1-1 TO REPORT THE CRASH AND NO ONE ANSWERED

HER CONCERN WASN'T ISOLATED CRASH WITNESSES -- PEOPLE NEEDING AMBULANCES -- EVEN SHOOTING VICTIMS CALLED 9-1-1 AND FOUND A SYSTEM THAT HADN'T MET STATE STANDARDS SINCE 2021.

"IT KEPT RINGING, RINGING RINGING AND THEN I JUST HAD TO HANG UP AND THEN WE PRETTY MUCH DROVE OURSELVES TO THE HOSPITAL."

MARK CANTY / ORANGE COUNTY UNDERSHERIFF:

"ANYTIME THAT WE'RE WE FALL SHORT OF OUR GOALS. IT'S A CONCERN."

IN AUGUST -- THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE BLAMED STAFFING SHORTAGES AND TECHNOLOGY FOR ACCIDENTAL 9-1-1 CALLS.

THEY MADE ADJUSTMENTS -- WITH THE OFFICE SAYING THINGS WOULD IMPROVE. HOWEVER, BY DECEMBER AS MANY AS ONE IN FOUR CALLS WERE NOT ANSWERED IN THE MANDATORY 10 SECONDS. BUT SOMETHING SHIFTED IN JANUARY.

JOHN MINA / ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF:

"WE RECENTLY JUST IMPLEMENTED WAS A NEW PHONE TREE CALLING SYSTEM."

SHERIFF JOHN MINA SAYS AROUND THAT TIME -- THE OFFICE CREATED A SYSTEM TO AUTOMATICALLY SEND NON-EMERGENCY CALLS TO THE RIGHT DEPARTMENT INSTEAD OF THE 9-1-1 CENTER.

THAT FREED UP STAFF TO ANSWER MORE EMERGENCY CALLS.

MINA:

"WE DID A SURVEY OF THOSE, LIKE A 24 TO 48 HOUR PERIOD. AND ALL THE 911 CALLS WERE ANSWERED IN LESS THAN 10 SECONDS."

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 2/22

10:00PM

Duration: 1:24

Nick Papantonis

TONIGHT -- FLORIDA IS ONE STEP CLOSER TO BANNING CHILDREN FROM SOCIAL MEDIA -- BUT THAT'S ALSO CREATING *ANOTHER* ISSUE -- ON A MUCH LARGER SCALE. GOOD EVENING, I'M GREG WARMOTH. AND I'M MARTHA SUGALSKI.

EARLIER THIS EVENING -- STATE LAWMAKERS PASSED THEIR BILL BANNING TEENAGERS UNDER 16-YEARS-OLD FROM BEING ON SOCIAL MEDIA. OPPONENTS AND THE GOVERNOR SAY IT'S ANTI-PARENTAL RIGHTS. THERE ARE ALSO MANY CONSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS. NICK PAPANTONIS IS LIVE FOR US TONIGHT. NICK -- WE DON'T KNOW IF THE GOVERNOR WILL SIGN THIS BILL OR VETO IT.

HE HOPED LAWMAKERS WOULD ADJUST IT BEFORE PASSING IT. IT PASSED WITH ENOUGH SUPPORT TO OVERRIDE A VETO. BUT IF IT DOES BECOME LAW -- IT MAY NEVER TAKE EFFECT

"IT IS THE GOAL TO PROTECT CHILDREN."

AND WITH THAT GOAL --

"108 YAYS 7 NAYS THE BILL PASSES APPLAUSE"

FLORIDA LAWMAKERS VOTED TO BAN TEENAGERS UNDER 16 FROM SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DESIGNED TO BE ADDICTING --DELETE EXISTING ACCOUNTS OF MINORS AND REQUIRE AGE VERIFICATION FOR ALL NEW SIGN-UPS.

"AN ALGORITHM IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A CONSCIENCE AND A COMPUTER PROGRAMMER IS NO REPLACEMENT FOR A PARENT."

BUT THE BILL'S FUTURE IS UNCLEAR. IT'S PRODUCED A RARE DIVISION BETWEEN GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS AND MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY. DESANTIS -- AGAIN WORRYING ABOUT PARENTAL RIGHTS IN COMMENTS MADE DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE THURSDAY -- AND SAYING HE HOPED LAWMAKERS WOULD AMEND THE BILL BEFORE VOTING ON IT.

DESANTIS:

"WE CAN'T SAY 100% OF THE USES ARE BAD BECAUSE IT'S NOT AND I'M A CRITIC OF SOCIAL MEDIA, BUT I HAVE TO LOOK AT THIS FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE."

RENNER:

"DO YOU THINK HE MIGHT VETO THIS BILL? I DON'T. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE GOVERNOR IS THINKING."

BECAUSE THE LEGISLATURE IS STILL IN SESSION -- DESANTIS WILL HAVE SEVEN DAYS TO DECIDE TO SIGN OR VETO THE BILL ONCE IT OFFICIALLY HITS HIS DESK. IF HE VETOES IT -- LAWMAKERS COULD VOTE TO OVERRIDE HIM -- ALL BUT GUARANTEEING THE STATE WILL FACE ANOTHER LAWSUIT.

"THEIR MENTAL HEALTH IS AT STAKE. AND TO DO NOTHING IS NOT REASONABLE."

VOTER:

"THIS BILL MEETS CONSTITUTIONAL MUSTER. IF YOU ACCEPT THAT THESE PLATFORMS ARE HARMFUL, THERE CAN BE NO PARENTAL CONSENT."

I TEXTED THE GOVERNOR'S SPOKESMAN ABOUT A POTENTIAL VETO -- NO RESPONSE AS OF RIGHT NOW. IF PASSED -- THE BILL IS EXPECTED TO BE CHALLENGED ON FIRST AMENDMENT GROUNDS AS IT HAS BEEN IN OTHER STATES THAT HAVE PASSED LAWS LIKE THIS.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 2/28 10:00PM Duration: 1:21 Jeff Levkulich

A COUPLE IN SEMINOLE COUNTY SAYS THEY DECIDED TO CLEAN UP GARBAGE AT THIS HOMELESS CAMP -- IN LONGWOOD -- ONLY TO FIND OUT THE COUNTY WAS GOING TO CHARGE THEM TO GET RID OF IT! SEMINOLE COUNTY REPORTER JEFF LEVKULICH EXPLAINS HOW MUCH THEY WERE QUOTED -- AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THEY CONTACTED CHANNEL 9 FOR HELP!

ROGER DAVIS TOOK THESE PICTURES OF THE GARBAGE THAT PILED UP IN THE FOREST ALONG 17-92 IN LONGWOOD.

"THEY HAD PILES AND PILES, BUT IT WAS JUST STUFF EVERYWHERE."

DAVIS SAYS HE AND HIS WIFE HAVE A FRIEND WHO LIVE HERE...AT THIS HOMELESS CAMP.

"AND THESE PEOPLE ARE JUST TRYING TO SURVIVE. AND THEY JUST HAD NO MEANS TO GET RID OF IT, YOU CAN SEE THEY TRIED TO BACK IT UP. AND BUT THEN ANIMALS GET INTO IT, JUST RIP IT APART. AND YOU KNOW, AT THAT POINT, IT'S THEY JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO."

SO HE AND HIS WIFE ENLISTED THOSE WHO LIVE HERE LIKE MANDY TO BAG IT ALL UP.

"I THINK IT'S AMAZING. I'VE NEVER SEEN ROGER OUT HERE BEFORE. I DON'T BELIEVE HE'S HOMELESS. BUT HE DOES CARE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND HE CARES ABOUT THE TRAILS, THE HOMELESS PEOPLE."

AND LOAD IT UP AND HAUL IT AWAY TO THE COUNTY DUMP.

"IT'S GREAT GETTING ALL THIS TRASH OUT OF HERE, WE REALLY NEED THE HELP."

BUT AFTER THE FIRST COUPLE OF LOADS OF GARBAGE, THE COUNTY BEGAN CHARGING... IT'S ANYWHERE FROM 30 TO \$50. AND I MEAN DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH IT IS WHAT IT IS DAVIS SAYS THAT'S MONEY HE DOESN'T HAVE. SO WE CONTACTED SEMINOLE COUNTY WHO TOLD US, THIS WAS JUST A MIS-UNDERSTANDING. THE SOLID WASTE DIVISION GENERALLY ACCOMMODATES CLEANUPS IF IT'S REQUESTED AHEAD OF TIME, SO THAT STAFF AT THE GATE CAN VERIFY THE REQUEST IS GENUINE. THE SOLID WASTE DIVISION MANAGER TOLD ME THEY ARE WORKING ON ISSUING A REFUND TO DAVIS FOR ALL THE MONEY HE SPENT.

"SO WE WERE SO RELIEVED THAT THEY'RE ACTUALLY LETTING GOING TO HELP OUT LET US DO IT AND THEY'RE ON BOARD."

THE COUNTY TOLD JEFF -- THEY REMOVE TRASH AND CLEAN UP THE TRAILHEADS TWICE WEEKLY. HOWEVER -- THE CAMP IN QUESTION -- IS LOCATED IN THE PARTS OF THE LARGER SPRING HAMMOCK PRESERVE -- THAT ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE TO USERS. THE GREENWAYS AND NATURAL LANDS DIVISION IS SETTING UP A MEETING WITH THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND LOCAL HOMELESS ORGANIZATIONS -- ON HOW TO ADDRESS HOMELESS CAMPS.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date 2/29 10:00PM

Duration: 1:27 Sabrina Maggiore

WE'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT GLITCHES -- HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE SAY THEY'RE HAVING -- WITH A NEW PORTAL TO APPLY FOR SNAP AND MEDICAID. STILL -- WHEN PRESSED FOR ANSWERS -- THE STATE SAYS IT BELIEVES THE PROBLEMS ARE THE RESULT OF "USER ERROR"...

CHANNEL NINE'S SABRINA MAGGIORE HAS BEEN UPDATING THIS STORY -- FOR WEEKS. TONIGHT -- SHE EXPLAINS THE ROADBLOCKS PEOPLE WITHOUT PHONES ARE FACING -- BEFORE THEY EVEN APPLY!

"I NEED A PHONE THAT CAN GET TEXT MESSAGES TO SET YOU UP TO EMAIL."

HOLLY NORRIS SAYS THIS IS A CONVERSATION SHE'S HAD OVER AND OVER WITH THE HOMELESS CLIENTS AT MATTHEWS HOPE.

"ONCE WE GET THE EMAIL SET UP I CAN GO TO THE DCF FOOD STAMPS WEBSITE SET YOU UP AND WE CAN DO YOUR APPLICATION, BUT NOT UNTIL YOU GET A GMAIL."

THIS HOMELESS CLIENT IS TRYING TO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS... BUT HOLLY NORRIS SAID SHE HAD TO SEND HIM AWAY HUNGRY AND WITH HOMEWORK...

"I COULDN'T MAKE THAT WORK FOR HIM BECAUSE HE'S HOMELESS. HE THINKS HE HAS A GMAIL BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW THE PASSWORD. BUTTED."

"WHEN HE LEAVES HERE HES NOT THINKING ABOUT THE EMAIL HES THINKING THAT HES HUNGRY."

NORRIS EXPLAINED BEFORE THE NEW APPLICATION SYSTEM LAUNCHED JUST A USERNAME AND PASSWORD WERE REQUIRED...

SINCE DECEMBER 5TH, JUST TO MAKE AN ACCOUNT, HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE BEING BLOCKED AT THE FIRST STEP...SETTING UP AN EMAIL...

IT'S BECAUSE TWO FACTOR VERIFICATION IS REQUIRED TO MAKE EMAILS, BUT YOU NEED A CELLPHONE TO GET A VERIFICATION TEXT.

"IF ANYONE HAS A BACK DOOR INTO THE STATE SYSTEM SOMEWHERE OR KNOWS SOMEONE THAT CAN GET THESE PEOPLE FED. PLEASE IM ALL EARS AT THIS POINT."

WE'VE SHOWN YOU THESE ONLINE GLITCHES, AND HOW INFORMATION PHONE LINES HAVE LARGE WAIT TIMES OR DISCONNECT ON CALLERS... IT'S IMPACTED BOTH THE HOMELESS AND WORKING FAMILIES...

THIS WEEK D-C-F SENT US THIS STATEMENT SAYING IT BELIEVES SOME COMPLAINTS ARE UNIQUE TO MATTHEWS HOPE... AND QUOTE "SOME ISSUES MAY OCCUR VIA USER ERROR, BUT D-C-F IS ADEQUATELY STAFFED TO RECEIVE CALLS AND PROCESS APPLICATIONS."

MARCH

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date 3/13 10:00PM

Duration 1:48

Shannon Butler

THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY INCORRECT PAYMENTS, SHORT STAFFING AND LONG WAIT TIMES... BUT -- THOSE ISSUES COULD SOON BE A THING OF THE PAST! THE NEW HEAD OF THE AGENCY IS PROMISING CHANGE WITHIN THE YEAR! IT COMES AFTER 9 INVESTIGATES EXPOSED HOW THE AGENCY HAS BEEN OVERPAYING PEOPLE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS... THEN -- DEMANDING THE MONEY BACK.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER SHANNON BUTLER LOOKED INTO THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS THE AGENCY IS LOOKING TO FIX. THE NEW COMMISSIONER SAYS THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION DOESN'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION TO TRY AND FIX CUSTOMER SERVICE PROBLEMS. *BUT -- IT IS UP TO CONGRESS TO FUND THE AGENCY. AND ADVOCATES SAY IT NEEDS MORE MONEY TO KEEP UP WITH THE DEMAND.

IF YOU'VE EVER HAD TO CALL THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION...YOU LIKELY KNOW IT CAN TAKE TIME.

MELISSA EVANS/SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENT

"WHEN YOU CALL THEM, YOU'RE ON HOLD FOR HOURS AND I DON'T HAVE HOURS TO JUST STAY ON HOLD."

MELISSA EVANS HAD TROUBLE GETTING HELP AFTER SHE WAS TOLD SHE OWED MORE THAN 36 HUNDRED DOLLARS BECAUSE THE AGENCY MISTAKENLY OVERPAID HER. AND SHE'S NOT ALONE. FOR MONTHS -- WE'VE BROUGHT YOU SIMILAR STORIES FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY...

IN OUR COMPANY-WIDE INVESTIGATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KFF HEALTH NEWS THAT EXPOSED *BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN OVERPAYMENTS. AND PEOPLE WHO GET THOSE SHOCKING OVERPAYMENT NOTICES -- OFTEN RELY ON THE HOTLINE FOR ANSWERS.

I SPOKE WITH BILL SWEENEY -- SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS FOR AARP... BECAUSE SO MANY OLDER PEOPLE RELY ON THESE BENEFITS. HOW BAD IS IT WHEN SOMEONE TRIES TO CALL AND GET HELP?

BILL SWEENEY/AARP, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
"IT'S REALLY BAD. THE AVERAGE WAIT TIME IS ABOUT 35 MINUTES."

NOW WE'RE LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOW THE AGENCY PLANS TO FIX THESE PROBLEMS. KFF HEALTH NEWS SPOKE WITH THE NEW S-S-A COMMISSIONER MARTIN O'MALLEY.

HE SAYS FIXING THE HOTLINE IS A TOP PRIORITY. AND HE WANTS TO LIMIT HOW MANY YEARS BACK THE AGENCY CAN TRY TO RECOUP OVERPAYMENTS

-- SIMPLIFY WORDING IN ITS NOTICES, SHIFT THE BURDEN OF PROOF FROM THE BENEFICIARY TO THE AGENCY, AND DEFAULT TO REDUCING CHECKS INSTEAD OF STOPPING THEM WHEN SOMEONE WAS OVERPAID

SWEENEY CAUTIONS CONGRESS ALSO NEEDS TO TAKE ACTION -- BY MAKING SURE THE AGENCY HAS ENOUGH FUNDING.

BILL SWEENEY/AARP, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
"THEY HAVE THE LOWEST STAFFING LEVELS NOW SINCE 1972."

"THEIR BUDGET HAS GONE DOWN ABOUT 17 PERCENT WHILE THE NUMBER OF THEIR CUSTOMERS HAS GONE UP BY 22 PERCENT."

COMMISSIONER O'MALLEY DID NOT GIVE US SPECIFICS ON A TIMELINE FOR THESE CHANGES. BUT HE DOES SAY HE EXPECTS IT TO HAPPEN THIS YEAR. COMMISSIONER O'MALLEY DID NOT GIVE US SPECIFICS ON A TIMELINE FOR THESE CHANGES. BUT -- HE DOES SAY -- HE EXPECTS IT TO HAPPEN THIS YEAR.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 3/18

10:00PM

Duration:1:52

Raphael
Pires

TONIGHT -- AN ORLANDO CITY COMMISSIONER IS UNDER INVESTIGATION -- ACCUSED of FINANCIALLY EXPLOITING AN ELDERLY WOMAN. GOOD EVENING, I'M GREG WARMOTH. COURT DOCUMENTS STATE COMMISSIONER REGINA HILL SPENT CLOSE TO 100-THOUSAND DOLLARS -- OF A CONSTITUENTS MONEY -- ON THINGS LIKE A FACELIFT, HOTEL STAY AND CLOTHING. OUR RAPHAEL PIRES HAS BEEN DIGGING THROUGH THE DOCUMENTS TONIGHT. RAPHAEL.

THERE ARE A LOT OF SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS MADE IN THIS AFFIDAVIT.... AND WE NOW KNOW THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS BEEN INVESTIGATING COMMISSIONER HILL FOR MORE THAN A YEAR...FOR THE ALLEGED MISCONDUCT.

COMMISSIONER REGINA HILL NOW THE FOCUS OF AN FDLE INVESTIGATION...CLAIMING THE ELECTED OFFICIAL EXPLOITED A 96 YEAR OLD WOMAN. ACCORDING TO DOCUMENTS OBTAINED BY EYEWITNESS NEWS...THE ELDERLY WOMAN- WHO WE'LL REFER TO AS "M" HAD MORE THAN 164-THOUSAND DOLLARS IN THE BANK...BUT HILL ALLEGEDLY SPENT MORE THAN 100,000 DOLLARS OF IT. AND CHARGED NEARLY 10-THOUSAND MORE DOLLARS ON M'S CREDIT CARD.

THE LIST OF PURCHASES INCLUDE A FACELIFT, PERFUME, A HOTEL STAY IN MIAMI, CAR INSURANCE AND DENTAL SURGERY. M TOLD INVESTIGATORS THAT SHE DID NOT GIVE HILL PERMISSION TO USE THE MONEY. ON TOP THAT...THE DOCUMENTS ALLEGE HILL OF FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING POWER OF ATTORNEY...AND THEN USING THAT TO PURCHASE THIS HOME ON 170 DOMINO DRIVE IN ORAGNE COUNTY...WITH THE ELDERLY WOMEN AS A CO-PURCHASER.

AGAIN...M SAYS SHE NEVER GAVE HILL PERMISSION TO DO THAT. WHEN OUR CREW STOPPED BY NO ONE SEEMED TO LIVE THERE...THOUGH THIS IS THE ADDRESS COMMISSIONER HILL CURRENTLY HAS REGISTERED AS HER VOTING ADDRESS. WE ALSO WENT TO 3408 LEWIS COURT -- ANOTHER HOME OWNED BY M.

NEIGHBORS SAY HILL LIVED IN THIS HOUSE FROM AUGUST UNTIL LAST WEEK -- WHEN AUTHORITIES SHOWED UP AT THE DOOR TO TELL HER TO LEAVE. THE NEIGHBORS TOLD US THEY THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE THIS HOUSE WASN'T IN HILL'S DISTRICT --BUT IT HAPPENED A FEW DAYS AFTER A JUDGE GRANTED AN INJUNCTION AGAINST HILL. WE ALSO WENT TO A PREVIOUS ADDRESS LISTED FOR HILL THIS EVENING...A MAN OPENED THE DOOR AND SAID HILL NO LONGER LIVED...BUT SAYS A FEW MONTHS AGO SHE STOPPED BY AND ASKED HIM IF SHE COULD CONTINUE TO PICK UP HER MAIL FROM HIS ADDRESS. THE MAN SAYS HE REFUSED.

WHEN WE CALLED HILL ABOUT THE ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST HER...SHE TOLD US THEY WERE FALSE AND SHE RETAINED AN ATTORNEY TO FIGHT THEM. SHE REFUSED TO COMMENT ANY FURTHER -- OR TELL US WHO THAT ATTORNEY WAS.

WEVE REACHED OUT TO ALL THE CITY OF ORLANDO COMMISSIONERS AND THE MAYOR FOR COMMENT. WE HAVE NOT HEARD BACK YET. ITS IMPORTATNT TO NOTE-- COMMISSIONER HILL HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED WITH A CRIME. IF SHE IS CHARGED...SHE COULD BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 3/19 10:00PM Duration: 2:14 Nick Papantonis

TURNING NOW TO THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION INTO ORLANDO CITY COMMISSIONER REGINA HILL. SHE'S ACCUSED STEALING MORE THAN 100-THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM AN ELDERLY CONSTITUENT -- AND SPENDING IT ON ITEMS LIKE PERFUME AND A FACE LIFT! WE FIRST BROKE THIS STORY YESTERDAY -- ON EYEWITNESS NEWS AT 6 -- WHEN WE SHOWED YOU THESE LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND AFFIDAVITS.

THEY ALSO CLAIM HILL TOOK OUT MORTGAGES IN A 96-YEAR-OLD WOMEN'S NAME -- WITHOUT HER CONSENT. NOW -- A DOCUMENT THAT GAVE THE COMMISSIONER SOME OF HER ALLEGED POWER OVER THAT WOMAN IS BEING QUESTIONED. ONLY CHANNEL 9'S NICK PAPANTONIS SPOKE TO THE NOTARY WHOSE OFFICIAL STAMP AND SIGNATURE APPEAR ON THE DOCUMENT.

WE HAVE BEEN HIDING HER IDENTITY AND NOT TRYING TO CONTACT HER BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO FURTHER EXPLOIT HER. HER ATTORNEYS ARE IN FACT ASKING FOR PRIVACY. THE NOTARY ON THIS DOCUMENT SAYS SHE'S A VICTIM TOO. THAT'S HER SIGNATURE AND STAMP. BUT SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW IT GOT THERE.

“JACKIE DIDN'T NOTARIZE A DOCUMENT IN FRONT OF ME. AND THE NAME HERE. DID NOT SIGN THEIR NAME IN FRONT OF ME.”

SANDRA LEWIS IS TALKING ABOUT THE TWO WITNESSES ON THIS POWER OF ATTORNEY DOCUMENT THAT GAVE REGINA HILL THE AUTHORITY TO TAKE OUT A LOAN. JACQUELINE COCKERHAM AND OMARI NEMBARD. COCKERHAM IS THE FORMER AIDE OF COMMISSIONER HILL WHOSE ACCUSATIONS ARE NOW AT THE CENTER OF A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION TARGETING HER OLD BOSS. NEMBARD THE SON OF HILL. HIS NAME IS MISPELLED ON ONE OF THE TWO LINES -- SOMETHING LEWIS SAID SHE WOULD'VE CAUGHT. BUT -- SHE SAID SHE'S NEVER SEEN THIS DOCUMENT BEFORE.

“I DO NOT RECOGNIZE PAGE ONE. THIS IS A TWO PAGE DOCUMENT, PAGE TWO DISCREPANCIES ALL OVER THE PAGE. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, YOU HAVE MY SIGNATURE AND MY STAMP. BUT YOU DO NOT HAVE MY STEP THAT I USE TO AUTHENTICATE DOCUMENTS.”

“HAVE YOU HAD ANY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COMMISSIONER, SINCE YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT STEPPING DOWN?”

“I HAVE NOT.”

ORLANDO MAYOR BUDDY DYER IS ONE OF MANY AREA LEADERS TAKING STOCK OF THE BOMBSHELL REPORTS -- WHICH ACCUSED HILL OF LIVING ON THE 96-YEAR-OLD VICTIM'S PROPERTIES WITHOUT HER CONSENT -- AND SPENDING MORE THAN 100 THOUSAND DOLLARS OF HER MONEY ON PERFUME -- IV TREATMENTS AND A FACELIFT. WHILE HILL HAS SO FAR *NOT* STEPPED DOWN --OUR SOURCES SAY SEVERAL POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS HAVE ALREADY BEEN PUTTING OUT FEELERS.

NICK:

“ANY KIND OF CONVERSATIONS BEHIND THE SCENES ABOUT PREPARING FOR A POSSIBLE SPECIAL ELECTION?”

MAYOR DYER:

“WELL, WE KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IF THEY FIND A COMMISSIONERS' CAPACITATED OR OTHERWISE.”

OUR EFFORTS TO INTERVIEW COCKERHAM AND HILL'S SON WEREN'T SUCCESSFUL. HILL HAS DENIED THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HER. SHE NOW HAS AN ATTORNEY. WE CALLED HIM. WE ARE WAITING TO HEAR BACK.

Category: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & CORRUPTION:

Date: 3/20 10:00PM Duration: 1:13 Demie Johnson

W-F-T-V TONIGHT HAS OBTAINED DOCUMENTS -- ACCUSING THE HOLLY-HILL POLICE CHIEF OF HARRASSMENT -- MORE THAN A DECADE AGO. IN 2012 -- A FEMALE EMPLOYEE CLAIMED SHE WAS PASSED-UP FOR A PROMOTION -- BECAUSE SHE WOULDN'T PERFORM SEXUAL ACTS. HOWEVER -- THOSE ALLEGATIONS WERE ULTIMATELY UNFOUNDED.

JUST LAST WEEK -- WE TOLD YOU ABOUT A DIFFERENT INVESTIGATION INTO INAPPROPRIATE INCIDENTS -- INVOLVING THE CHIEF, A CAPTAIN AND A SERGEANT. THE CHIEF RESIGNED -- AND THE CAPTAIN AND SARGAENT WERE BOTH SUSPENDED. HOWEVER -- AS VOLUSIA COUNTY REPORTER DEMIE JOHNSON -- EXPLAINS THAT INVESTIGATION HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC YET.

AN INTERNAL AFFAIRS INVESTIGATION FROM 2012 REVEALS CLAIMS OF HARRASSMENT BY A FEMALE EMPLOYEE AGAINST FORMER HOLLY HILL POILCE CHIEF JEFF MILLER. THE REPORT SAYS THE FEMALE AND MILLER BOTH ADMITTED TO HAVING A CONSENSUAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE PAST.

SHE CLAIMED MILLER TOLD HER SHE WAS NEVER PROMOTED BECAUSE SHE WOULDN'T PERFORM SEXUAL ACTS. THE REPORT LISTS CAPTAIN CHRIS YATES AS A WITNESS ... BUT GOES ON TO SAY BOTH YATES AND MILLER STATED IN THEIR INTERVIEWS THAT THAT CONVERSATION NEVER HAPPENED.

MILLER AND YATES ARE BOTH CURRENTLY BEING INVESTIGATED FOR INAPPROPRIATE INCIDENTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

MILLER RESIGNED LAST WEEK JUST BEFORE THE ALLEGATIONS WERE MADE PUBLIC... AND YATES WAS PLACED ON PAID LEAVE ALONG WITH SERGEANT SHANNON FOUNTAIN. FOUNTAIN'S FILE SHOWS A 40-HOUR UNPAID SUSPENSION IN 2012 FOR NOT SHARING CORRECT INFORMATION AFTER HE WITNESSED A DISCIPLINARY ISSUE.

RECORDS SHOW FOUNTAIN RESIGNED A YEAR LATER AFTER VIOLATING THE DEPARTMENT'S PURSUIT POLICIES DURING A TRAFFIC STOP BUT HE WAS EVENTUALLY REHIRED. WE ALSO FOUND LETTERS OF COMMENDATION FOR MILLER, YATES AND FOUNTAIN IN THEIR FILES FROM THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL OFFICIALS FOR THE WORK EACH DID WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE COMMUNITY.

WE ALSO FOUND REPORTS OF A SUSPENSION AND MANDATORY ANGER MANAGEMENT COURSES FOR CHIEF MILLER AFTER AN INCIDENT AT CITY HALL. WE ARE STILL WORKING TO LEARN WHAT THE FORMER CHIEF, CAPTAIN AND SERGEANT ARE BEING INVESTIGATED FOR RIGHT NOW.

JANUARY

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 1/16

10:00PM Duration: 2:14

Shannon Butler

KEYS ARE BECOMING A THING OF THE PAST FOR MANY NEW CARS. MORE DRIVERS ARE NOW DEPENDING ON "FOBS". BUT -- IF FOBS ARE LOST OR STOP WORKING -- DRIVERS MAY BE OUT OF LUCK FOR A WHILE. AND -- AS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER SHANNON BUTLER DISCOVERED... A SHORTAGE IS MAKING THINGS EVEN WORSE.

"I LOST MY KEY FOB TO MY 2013 ACURA ILEX, IT'S A HYBRID AND I HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD TURN INTO THE NIGHTMARE THAT IT'S BECOME."

ERIC BISHTON MISPLACED HIS KEYS ONE DAY AT THE GYM. ANNOYED, HE FIGURED HE'D JUST GET A NEW ONE, GO HOME AND GET ON WITH HIS LIFE. HE HIRED A LOCKSMITH TO REPROGRAM HIS KEY...BUT NO LUCK THEN HIRED ANOTHER, THEN

ANOTHER....EVEN THE DEALERSHIP COULDN'T HELP. SO HE HAD TO ORDER A NEW FOB. THAT WAS 3 MONTHS AGO.

WITH NO WAY TO START HIS CAR, ERIC HAS BEEN BIKING 16 MILES BACK AND FORTH TO WORK 5 DAYS A WEEK SINCE OCTOBER. AND RIGHT NOW THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END IN SIGHT.

"THERE HAS BEEN A BACKORDER SINCE 2022. AND THEY JUST DON'T SET IT'S NOT AVAILABLE THAT I WAS WHEN I HAD CONTACTED ACURA CORPORATION I GOT A CASE MANAGER SHE HAD SAID THAT I WAS 300 SOMETHING ON THE LIST WAITING FOR A KEY FOB."

A POST PANDEMIC CHIP SHORTAGE MAY BE TO BLAME, WITH CAR MANUFACTURES FROM HONDA TO TOYOTA FEELING THE PINCH. THREAD AFTER THREAD SHOWS PEOPLE STILL WAITING FOR A SECOND KEY FOB FOR NEW CARS IN 2024. SOME BEING TOLD THOSE KEYS ARE STILL MONTHS AWAY

BUT TOYOTA TOLD US THINGS ARE LOOKING BETTER, WRITING...

"OUR KEY FOBS ARE BACK TO FULL PRODUCTION.THERE MAY BE SOME VEHICLES ON LOTS WITHOUT A SECOND KEY FOB.... IF THAT'S THE CASE THEY SHOULD RECEIVE THE SECOND KEY RELATIVELY QUICKLY."

WE CHECKED WITH OTHER DEALERS TOO. KIA'S SAID IT IS NOT FACING A SHORTAGE ACURA, WHICH IS OWNED BY HONDA IS STILL LOOKING INTO THE ISSUE. BUT IT'S CLEAR FROM BISHTON'S CASE THAT SOMETHING IS GOING ON .

AND RIGHT HERE ON THIS TALLAHASSEE ACURA DEALERS WEBSITE...THERE IS A WARNING.

"DUE TO THE ONGOING MICROCHIP SHORTAGE AND SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS, KEY REPLACEMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY BASED ON MODEL AND TRIM."

SO NOW ERIC WAITS HOPING SOMEDAY SOON HIS NUMBER IS CALLED.

"I'VE SINCE FOUND OUT THAT I'VE MOVED FROM 300 SOMETHING ON THE LIST TO 220TH SOMETHING ON THE LIST. SO IT'S A VAGUE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL, HOPEFULLY, BUT THAT COULD STILL BE MANY MONTHS AND VEHICLES CAN'T JUST SIT UNUSED GAS TURNS, YOU KNOW, IT'S IT. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'LL START WHEN THIS FOB EVENTUALLY COMES IN."

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date 1/17 10:00PM Duration: 2:19 Karla Ray

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER KARLA RAY FIRST EXPOSED THE SCHEME THAT'S UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE. SHE FOUND OUT THE WOMAN ACCUSED IN BOTH CASES TRIED TO TAKE OVER *FULL CONTROL OF THIS SECOND PROPERTY. IN THE HISTORIC WINWOOD AREA OF ALTAMONTE SPRINGS- THIS HOME MAY LOOK A LITTLE WORSE FOR THE WEAR-

TARA DUMAS:

"I WAS GOING TO GET THE HOUSE FIXED UP AND MOVE IN THERE UNTIL THIS HAPPENED"

BUT TO TARA DUMAS... THIS HOME REPRESENTS THE HARD WORK OF HER GRANDPARENTS... AND HER ENTIRE CHILDHOOD.

TARA DUMAS:

"MY GRANDMAMA USED TO TAKE CARE OF US, COOK FOR US. WE HAVE THANKSGIVING DINNER HERE. EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING REVOLVED AROUND THIS PROPERTY AND MY GRANDMAMMA."

KARLA RAY:

"SO IT HOLDS A SPECIAL PLACE IN YOUR HEART."

TARA DUMAS:

"IT'S A PROPERTY. IT'S NOT JUST PROPERTY. IT IS NOT JUST PROPERTY. IT IS SOMETHING SACRED TO ME."

THE HOME HAS BEEN BOARDED UP- AND NO TRESPASSING SIGNS CLEARLY WARN TO STAY AWAY- AFTER DUMAS AND HER RELATIVES LEARNED A *STRANGER HAD TAKEN OVER A SHARE OF THE OWNERSHIP... THROUGH WHAT THEY SAY IS A FRAUDULENT DEED.

TARA DUMAS:

"THIS GIRL IS GOING AROUND ATTACHING HERSELF WITH A QUICK CLAIM DEED, A QUICK CLAIM HE COULD ATTACH YOU TO SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROPERTY. REALLY?"

PROPERTY RECORDS SHOW 'THE HOME FUND'- MANAGED BY A WOMAN NAMED KAREN BOBB- WHOSE PHOTO WE FOUND ON FACEBOOK AND CONFIRMED WITH HER NEIGHBORS- FILED A DEED IN DECEMBER OF 2021... TRANSFERRING TARA'S COUSIN *GARY CHESTNUT'S PORTION OF THE PROPERTY- INTO HER NAME.

FILE SOT GARY CHESTNUT:

"I NEVER SIGNED ANYTHING. MY SIGNATURE IS NOT ON ANYTHING."

9 INVESTIGATES SPOKE TO GARY *LAST YEAR- WHEN HE DISCOVERED KAREN BOBB AND THE HOME FUND DID THE *SAME THING* TO HIS PROPERTY ON LEONARD STREET.

THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AGREED THE SIGNATURE ON *THAT DEED DOES *NOT MATCH THE ONE ON GARY'S LICENSE- AND TAKE A LOOK- IT'S IDENTICAL TO THE FILING ON THE MERRITT COURT PROPERTY RECORD, TOO.

SHARISSE WALTON:

"THE MOST FRUSTRATING THING IS THE LACK OF ASSISTANCE."

REAL ESTATE AGENT SHARISSE WALTON HAS BEEN TRYING TO HELP THE FAMILIES GET THE PROPERTY OUT OF THE CONTROL OF THE HOME FUND... IT'S A PROCESS THAT COMES AT A COST- IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.

SHARISSE WALTON:

"IS JUST SO IS VERY UNFORTUNATE THAT PEOPLE HAVE TO TAKE THEIR TIME, THEIR MONEY, THEIR RESOURCES, AND JUST THEIR OVERALL ENERGY STRESS TO FIGHT SOMETHING THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED."

WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET KAREN BOBB'S SIDE OF THE STORY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. AT HER HOME IN ORLANDO- NO ANSWER AGAIN.

TARA DUMAS:

“YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE HAS DONE TO US BECAUSE THIS IS OUR PROPERTY. IN *BOTH CASES -- THERE IS A SHERIFF'S OFFICE INVESTIGATION THAT'S STILL ONGOING.”

AS FOR CLERKS, THEY ARE NOT INVESTIGATORS. THEY TAKE WHAT'S PRESENTED TO THEM AND THEY ENTER IT ONTO THE RECORD. AND ON SOME OF THE DOCUMENTS - THE WOMAN ACCUSED IN THESE CASES IS ALSO THE NOTARY...

Category: “9 INVESTIGATES” SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 1/28

10:00PM Duration: 2:01 Karla Ray

A SEMINOLE COUNTY DEPUTY CONTINUED TO GET PAID FOR *MONTHS- AND ULTIMATELY KEPT HIS JOB- AFTER GETTING PULLED OVER WHILE DRIVING DRUNK, AFTER A NEW YEARS EVE NIGHT OUT. IT HAPPENED A *YEAR AGO. AND HE ONLY RECENTLY HAD ANY CONSEQUENCES. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER KARLA RAY ASKED HOW HE WAS ABLE TO CONTINUE TO BE PAID WHILE FACING THESE CHARGES- AFTER HE BLEW MORE THAN TWICE THE LEGAL LIMIT!

IN THE BODY CAMERA VIDEO YOU CAN SEE HIM STUMBLING, AND IN THIS REPORT IT SHOWS A BREATH TEST CAME BACK MORE THAN *TWICE THE LEGAL LIMIT. EVENTUALLY THE CHARGES WERE REDUCED TO RECKLESS DRIVING AND HE PLEADED NO CONTEST. BUT HE WAS ABLE TO CONTINUE GETTING PAID FOR *MONTHS- COLLECTING NEARLY 58-THOUSAND DOLLARS WHILE THE CASE PLAYED OUT.

THIS VIDEO WAS TAKEN JUST OVER A YEAR AGO- AFTER A 9-1-1 CALL ALERTED LAKE COUNTY DEPUTIES ABOUT THIS RED PICKUP TRUCK SWERVING ALL OVER STATE ROAD 46.

“I HAD ONE AND SHE HAD SOME.”

IT WAS BARELY NEW YEARS DAY- AFTER A NIGHT OUT IN DOWNTOWN MOUNT DORA- WHEN SEMINOLE COUNTY DEPUTY FRED HILAIRE WAS PULLED OVER FOR SLOW SPEED AND REPEATED BRAKING.

“JUST SO YOU KNOW I WORK FOR THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN SEMINOLE COUNTY”

LAKE COUNTY INVESTIGATORS IMMEDIATELY SMELLED ALCOHOL... AND HILAIRE STRUGGLED THROUGH FIELD SOBRIETY TESTS.

“YOU GUYS GOING TO ARREST ME?”

EVENTUALLY- HE *WAS PUT UNDER ARREST...

“WE'RE LIKE TWO MINUTES AWAY FROM HOME GUYS YOU ARE, BUT YOU'RE ALSO DRINKING AND DRIVING.”

AND AFTER BEING TAKEN TO JAIL-- RECORDS SHOW A BREATHALYZER TEST CAME BACK AT MORE THAN *TWICE THE LEGAL LIMIT!

JEFF LOTTER:

“ANYTIME YOU SEE A POLICE OFFICER GET ARRESTED FOR DUI, IT'S A LITTLE BIT CONCERNING.”

D-U-I ATTORNEY JEFF LOTTER IS A FORMER F-H-P TROOPER. HE SAYS- IN SOME CASES- THIS WOULD BE A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S LAST DAY WEARING A BADGE- BUT NOT *ALWAYS.

JEFF LOTTER:

“IF YOU HAVE A GOOD PERFORMING DEPUTY, THE COST OF PUTTING SOMETHING THROUGH THE ACADEMY, THE COST OF THE RETRAINING AND JUST GOING DOWN A MAN, IT MIGHT NOT DO THE PUBLIC VERY MUCH GOOD TO TERMINATE SOMEONE FOR A FIRST TIME OFFENSE. IF IT'S AN ISOLATED INCIDENT.”

HILLAIRE CONTINUED GETTING PAID THROUGH THE ENTIRE CRIMINAL PROCESS- WHICH TOOK 10 *MONTHS... AND KEPT HIS JOB... RECEIVING A 172-HOUR SUSPENSION AND BEING REASSIGNED FROM PATROL TO THE COURTHOUSE.

WE WANTED TO SPEAK TO THE SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF ABOUT THIS CASE- SINCE HE WROTE IN THIS NOTICE OF DISCIPLINE THAT THE CONDUCT WAS NOT WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION'S VALUES AND WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED. THE OFFICE DECLINED TO COMMENT OR PROVIDE A STATEMENT INSTEAD SAYING THE DOCUMENTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.
KARLA RAY CHANNEL 9 EYEWITNESS NEWS.

Category: “9 INVESTIGATES” SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date 1/31

10:00PM

Duration: 1:56 Shannon Butler

A NEW PLAN OUT OF TALLAHASSEE COULD BE DEVASTATING TO ONE TYPE OF SMALL BUSINESS. HEMP IS USED BY PEOPLE WITH EVERYTHING FROM CHRONIC PAIN, TO P-T-S-D. BUT A BILL -- WORKING ITS WAY THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE-- MAY NIP IT IN THE BUD.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER SHANNON BUTLER FOUND OUT WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THOSE WHO RELY ON HEMP -- AND WHY THEY FEEL THEY ARE... BEING LEFT OUT. MARINE VET KEN BEAHL SERVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE WAS INJURED AND HAS P-T-S-D. HIS RELIEF COMES FROM HEMP.

KENNETH BEAHL III

“IT HELPS ME OUT WITH MY CALM, IT HELPS ME WITH MY ANXIETY. IT HELPS ME OUT WITH MY PAIN LEVEL. MOST OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL MEDICATION HAS TO MANY SIDE EFFECTS.”

STATE LAW ALREADY PROHIBITS HEMP BUSINESSES FROM SELLING TO ANYONE UNDER 21. BUT A NEW BILL WOULD BAN BUINSSES FROM TARGETING CHILDREN OR PACKAGING PRODUCTS THAT RESEMBLE CANDY. WHILE ALSO PLACING ADDITIONAL T-H-C RESTRICTIONS ON HEMP BUSINESSES AND COULD FORCE THE STORE WHERE KEN GOES TO CLOSE DOWN.

IN NOVEMBER, LAWMAKERS HEARD ABOUT HOW CHILDREN HAVE INGESTED SUCH PRODUCTS, DESPITE THE LAW NOT ALLOWING SALE TO ANYONE UNDER 21.

BUT STILL DOCTORS TOLD THE PANEL THAT EVERY YEAR HUNDREDS OF KIDS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO HIGHLY POTENT T-H-C PRODUCTS INCLUDING SOME UNDER THE AGE OF 5.

DR. ALEXANDRA FUNK - TAMPA GENERAL HOSPITAL.
"A LOT OF THE PRODUCTS THAT WE'RE SEEING CAN LOOK LIKE CANDY."

SOME ARGUED EXISTING LAWS WEREN'T TOUGH ENOUGH AND A LAWMAKERS SEEM DETERMINED TO PASS TOUGHER RESTRICTIONS THIS YEAR.

"I LOOK AROUND I DON'T SEE ANY DORITOS, I DON'T SEE ANY OREOS, I DON'T SEE ANY CAREBEARS, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING THAT IS REMOTELY ATTRACTIVE TO CHILDREN."

HEMP MANUFACTURER MATTHEW SCHWARMANN SAYS ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS WILL BE AN UNDUE BURDEN ON THE INDUSTRY AND THE PEOPLE IT HELPS

"IT'S AN ATTACK ON SMALL BUSINESS."

THERE IS NO BENEFIT TO THIS, NO FLORIDAN HAS DIED, NO CHILDREN HAVE DIED AND YET WE WANT TO ELIMINATE 10 BILLION DOLLARS IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

SAMUEL WARREN IS THE SHOP OWNER AND SAYS PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING ON HIS SELVES WOULD BE ILLEGAL UNDER THE NEW PROPOSED LAW. HE'S FIGHTING, BUT RIGHT NOW HE FEELS LIKE THEIR RUNNING OUT OF TIME AND BEING RUN OUR OF THE STATE.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU IF THIS BILL IS PASSED?

"WE WILL PROBABLY SELL OUT AND MOVE OUT TO A DIFFERENT STATE."

WE REACHED OUT TO SENATOR COLLEEN BURTON'S OFFICE ABOUT THE BILL, BUT THEY DECLINED TO COMMENT

FEBRUARY

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 2/19

10:00PM

Duration: 2:41 Karla Ray

TRACKING MILLIONS OF CARS AND COLLECTING MOUNTAINS OF DATA -- LICENSE PLATE READERS ARE SPREAD OUT ACROSS CENTRAL FLORIDA -- JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE YOU GO. BUT -- WHO IS LOOKING AT ALL THAT DATA? AND WHAT COULD IT BE USED FOR? INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER SHANNON BUTLER TALKED WITH POLICE AND THE COMPANY BEHIND THE CAMERAS TO SEE HOW MUCH OF YOUR DATA...REALLY IS STORED.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF CARS ARE ON THE ROADS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA EVERY DAY. AND JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE YOU GO, CAMERAS ARE WATCHING; RECORDING. INCLUDING THESE. LICENSE PLATE READERS, BECOMING MORE COMMON NOT ONLY ON THE ROADS, BUT ALSO WHERE YOU SHOP AND EVEN WHERE YOU LIVE. THE PURPOSE: TO HELP LAW ENFORCEMENT

MELBOURNE PD

"WHETHER THAT'S A DRIVE BY SHOOTING, WHETHER THAT'S, YOU KNOW, HOMICIDE, WHETHER THAT'S ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME, IT'S CERTAINLY A NICE TOOL THAT WE

HAVE. AND I THINK WE GO TO THAT, WELL. I'M JUST ABOUT EVERY CASE, WE GET, YOU KNOW, BECAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA GET."

BUT MANY WORRY WHAT ELSE THEY MIGHT BE USED FOR. FIRST LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT HOW MANY TIMES YOUR DATA IS COLLECTED. TO FIGURE THAT OUT, WE HAD THE ST JOHNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RUN THE LICENSE PLATE ONE OF OUR CARS. THE SYSTEM SHOWED 132 PHOTOGRAPHS FROM VARIOUS CAMERAS OVER A 30 DAY PERIOD, EACH ADDING US TO A DATABASE

MANY OF THE L-P-R'S BELONG TO A COMPANY CALLED "FLOCK". THE CAMERAS ARE USED IN 47 STATES INCLUDING FLORIDA.

SO TECHNOLOGY, A FUNDED BY BOTH THE CITY AND THE LAW ENFORCEMENT, BUT ALSO PRIVATE ENTITIES, IS PROVIDING THAT FORCE MULTIPLIER THAT MANY AGENCIES REALLY NEED. THE SECOND THING IS THERE'S A CALL FOR BETTER POLICING....AND TECHNOLOGY LIKE LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION, CAMERAS, GUNSHOT DETECTION SYSTEMS, THEY PROVIDE THAT OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE THAT ACTUALLY HAS AN ACTIONABLE LEAD THAT DETECTIVES CAN USE TO FOLLOW UP AND HOPEFULLY SOLVE A CASE

WE ASKED SEVERAL AGENCIES IN CENTRAL FLORIDA TO TELL US HOW MANY CRIMES WERE SOLVED BY THESE L-P-R'S. WE WERE TOLD THEY DON'T REALLY TRACK CRIME LIKE THAT. BUT FLOCK SAFETY SAYS ITS DATA SHOWS IT IS HELPING SOLVE 9-PERCENT OF CRIMES IN THE U-S.

AT THIS TIME, FLOCK'S SOFTWARE DOESN'T USE FACIAL RECOGNITION OR MEASURE SPEED...BUT IT DOES CREATE A "VEHICLE FINGERPRINT" - INCLUDING YOUR LICENSE PLATE, MAKE AND COLOR OF THE CAR, AND EVEN YOUR BUMPER STICKER - CAPTUING 1-BILLION VEHICLES A MONTH.

IN 2022, THE A-C-L-U WARNED THAT FLOCK IS BUILDING A MASS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM "UNLIKE ANY SEEN BEFORE IN AMERICAN LIFE." FLOCK TELLS US THAT'S NOT TRUE.

FLOCK:

"IT'S OWNED BY THE CUSTOMER, SO WE DON'T OWN IT, WE SIMPLY STORE IT. AND THEREFORE WE CAN NEVER SELL IT OR SHARE IT WITH ANY PRIVATE THIRD PARTIES. AND IT'S DELETED, AS I MENTIONED, BY DEFAULT EVERY 30 DAYS AUTOMATICALLY."

BUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT? ONCE LAW ENFORCEMENT COLLECTS THE DATA, IT'S UP TO THE AGENCY ON HOW LONG IT KEEPS THAT INFORMATION. RANDY NELSON IS A LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERT, HE TELLS US L-P-R'S SHOULD RAISE PRIVACY CONCERNS

RANDY NELSON:

"THAT IS A SLIPPERY SLOPE."

BUT LAW ENFORCEMENT MAINTAINS IT'S ONLY USING THE TECHNOLOGY TO STOP CRIME.

MELBOURNE DETECTIVE:

"I HAVE A NICE THREAD THAT CAN PULL ON...SAY FOR ABOUT 30 DAYS. SO THIS IS A GAME CHANGER. ABSOLUTELY. YEAH."

SOME STATES HAVE RULES ON HOW LONG LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN KEEP LICENSE PLATE DATA. FLORIDA IS NOT ONE OF THEM.

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 2/22

10:00PM Duration: 2:47

Karla Ray

MICRODOSING GOING MAINSTREAM? NEW DATA SHOWS POLICE SEIZURES OF MAGIC MUSHROOMS HAVE *TRIPLED OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS. THAT'S AS MORE YOUNG ADULTS ARE ADMITTING TO TAKING THE PSYCHEDELICS- AND MORE CITIES ARE DECRIMINALIZING THEIR USE. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER KARLA RAY LOOKED INTO THE TRENDS LOCALLY AND HOW EVEN RESEARCHERS SAY - THERE'S NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION TO CALL THE PRACTICE 'SAFE.'

PACKAGED IN GUMMIES- CAPSULES- EVEN CHOCOLATE- THESE AREN'T YOUR PARENTS MAGIC MUSHROOMS. DATA SHOWS THE PSYCHADELLIC PSILOCYBIN IS SURGING IN POPULARITY-- AND *NOT BECAUSE USERS ARE SEEKING A 'TRIP'.

NO NAME:

"I'VE BEEN ON THIS JOURNEY PROBABLY ABOUT THREE YEARS. AND IT HAS ADDED AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF VALUE TO MY LIFE."

WE'RE CONCEALING THE IDENTITY OF THIS ORLANDO MAN BECAUSE THE MUSHROOMS HE TAKES ON A REGULAR BASIS ARE STILL CONSIDERED A SCHEDULE ONE DRUG- ILLEGAL FEDERALLY AND HERE IN FLORIDA. HE IS ONE OF A GROWING NUMBER- RESEARCH SHOWS MORE THAN 11% OF AMERICANS OVER THE AGE OF 12 HAVE USED PSILOCYBIN-- MAKING IT THE MOST CONSUMED PLANT-BASED PSYCHADELIC IN THE COUNTRY. THIS MAN CREDITS MICRODOSING- COMBINED WITH MEDITATION AND EXERCISE- FOR TREATING A DEEP LEVEL OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY.

NO NAME:

"NOW COME OUT THE OTHER END FROM A VERY, VERY CHALLENGING PERIOD OF MY LIFE THAT I HONESTLY HAVEN'T TALKED WITH HARDLY ANYBODY ABOUT. RIGHT. AND IT I, I LARGELY CREDIT MUSHROOMS AND AS PART OF A MORE COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO GROW."

PSYCHOACTIVE MUSHROOMS HAVE BEEN USED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES FOR SPIRITUAL AND MEDICINAL PURPOSES- BUT WERE CLASSIFIED AS SCHEDULE ONE DRUGS IN 1970- SHUTTING DOWN ANY RESEARCH ON THEIR BENEFITS. IN 2018- THE F-D-A GAVE PSILOCYBIN A BREAKTHROUGH THERAPY DESIGNATION FOR TREATING DEPRESSION BASED ON CLINICAL RESEARCH PIONEERED AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY.

SANDEEP NAYAK:

"THERE IS A LONG PERIOD OF THIS KIND OF RESEARCH JUST NOT HAPPENING WHATSOEVER. FOR ALMOST FOUR DECADES, ACTUALLY. AND, SOME OF THE PSILOCYBIN WORK HERE IS REALLY WHAT SEEMED TO KICK OFF THIS NEW WAVE OF RESEARCH. AND WE'RE CURRENTLY, I BELIEVE, DOING MORE CLINICAL TRIALS THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD."

DR. SANDEEP NAYAK IS A MEDICAL DIRECTOR AT JOHNS HOPKINS AND INVESTIGATOR ON THE UNIVERSITY'S CLINICAL TRIALS OF PSILOCYBIN. HE SAYS WHILE THE WORK IS SHOWING PROMISING RESULTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

TREATMENT- *ALL OF THE RESEARCH HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON 'MACRO' DOSES. IN FACT- THE FEW STUDIES THAT EXIST ON MICRODOSING HAVE FOUND THE EFFECTS MIRROR A PLACEBO.

SANDEEP NAYAK:

"I THINK IT'S VERY TEMPTING TO EXTRAPOLATE THE REALLY IMPRESSIVE LARGE EFFECTS ACROSS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT DIFFERENT PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS, NOT JUST 1 OR 2, TO MICRO DOSES. BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT UNTIL THE DATA COMES IN, WE ACTUALLY CAN'T REALLY DO THAT."

THE PUSH FOR MORE RESEARCH COMES AS COLORADO AND OREGON HAVE ESTABLISHED REGULATED SYSTEMS FOR THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT AND DECRIMINALIZED SHROOMS- ALONG WITH SOME MAJOR CITIES INCLUDING SAN FRANCISCO- DETROIT- AND WASHINGTON D-C.

JOSEF THUNDIYIL:

"IN JUST ABOUT EVERY CASE WHERE STATES HAVE, DECRIMINALIZED DRUGS WILL SEE INCREASED USE BECAUSE THERE'S THIS PERCEPTION THAT IF IT'S DECRIMINALIZED, THAT IT MIGHT BE SAFER THAN IT ACTUALLY IS."

DR. JOSEF THUNDIYIL IS AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL PHYSICIAN AND TOXICOLOGIST AT ORLANDO HEALTH. HE SAYS A MAJOR RISK IS ACTUALLY GETTING A LARGER DOSE THAN INTENDED... WHICH IN EXTREME CASES CAN LEAD TO PSYCHOSIS.

JOSEF THUNDIYIL:

"IT IS SAFE TO SAY PEOPLE WHO HAVE A PREDISPOSITION TO CERTAIN, MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS ARE OFTEN MORE LIKELY TO GET THESE BAD TRIPS."

SPEAKER 1:

"AND THOSE ARE ALSO THE PEOPLE THAT MAY BE SEEKING TO USE THIS TYPE OF DRUG."

JOSEF THUNDIYIL:

"YEAH, THAT'S THE CONUNDRUM."

FOR THIS MAN- THE BENEFITS OUTWEIGH THE RISKS. AND HE DOESN'T THINK USERS WILL HAVE TO HIDE FOREVER.

KARLA RAY:

"DO YOU THINK THAT WE WILL ACTUALLY SEE, LEGAL MAGIC MUSHROOMS IN OUR LIFETIME?"

NO NAME :

"OH, ABSOLUTELY. AND SOONER THAN YOU'D THINK."

CALIFORNIA COULD BE THE NEXT STATE TO OFFER REGULATED THERAPY USING PSYCHADELIC MUSHROOMS. LAST YEAR -- THE GOVERNOR THERE VETOED LEGISLATION THAT WOULD HAVE DECRIMINALIZED THEIR USE STATE-WIDE... URGING LAWMAKERS TO INSTEAD COME UP WITH A PLAN FOR THIS TYPE OF THERAPY.

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 2/24 10:00PM Duration: 2:24 Shannon Butler

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SOME STATES HAVE VERY SPECIFIC RULES ON HOW LONG LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN KEEP THE DATA... MOST FOR JUST SEVERAL MONTHS. FLORIDA IS NOT ONE OF THEM.

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 2/28

10:00PM

Duration: 2:29

Karla Ray

FLORIDA PRISONERS -- ON COMMUNITY CONTROL OR PROBATION -- HAVEN'T BEEN PROPERLY MONITORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS. THAT'S ACCORDING TO A NEW AUDIT -- CALLING FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO CASE REVIEWS AND OFFENDER SUPERVISION. AND -- AS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER KARLA RAY LEARNED -- IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME THE D-O-C HAS BEEN PUT ON... NOTICE ABOUT THESE ISSUES.

FLORIDA'S PRISON SYSTEM IS THE THIRD LARGEST IN THE U-S --WITH MORE THAN 83-THOUSAND INMATES AND SOME 145-THOUSAND OFFENDERS ON SUPERVISED RELEASE AS OF DECEMBER 2022. THOSE ARE PEOPLE WHO COULD BE LIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD -- AND THIS AUDIT FOUND D-O-C HASN'T BEEN DOING ITS JOB TO PROPERLY KEEP TRACK OF THEM.

KARLA RAY:
"IS THIS AUDIT ESSENTIALLY SAYING, WITHOUT SAYING IN SO MANY WORDS THAT DOC LOST TRACK OF CERTAIN OFFENDERS?"

ANNA ESKAMANI:
"CORRECT. I MEAN, THE AUDIT BREAKS IT DOWN INTO SPECIFICS AND HIGHLIGHTS THAT THERE ARE OFFENDERS THAT DO NOT HAVE THEIR SCHEDULED MEETING, DO NOT HAVE THEIR SCHEDULED CHECK INS, DID NOT HAVE ANY TYPE OF ACCOUNTABILITY. SOME STAFF DID NOT KNOW WHERE THEY WERE. SO IT'S REALLY ALARMING"

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANNA ESKAMANI REVIEWED THE FINDINGS- WHICH SHOWED ISSUES WITH DEPARTMENT CONTROLS OVER THE INTAKE, ORIENTATION, AND CASE REVIEW OF OFFENDERS RELEASED ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION-

THE DEPARTMENT DIDN'T ALWAYS PERFORM RECORDS CHECKS ON OFFENDERS BEFORE RECOMMENDING THEM FOR EARLY TERMINATION OF PROBATION- AND THAT DEPARTMENT CONTROLS FOR OFFENDER SUPERVISION CONTINUE TO NEED IMPROVEMENT.

ANNA ESKAMANI:

“WE HAVE UNDERSTAFFING, WE HAVE STAFF WHO ARE NOT EXPERIENCED. WE'RE NOT DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC SAFETY, WHETHER IT'S TO THE COMMUNITY OR EVEN ENSURING THE SAFETY, WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE INCARCERATED AND WE'RE TRYING TO REHABILITATE. AND IT'S NOT THE ONLY AUDIT TO TELL US THIS.”

IT'S THE SECOND TIME IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS THAT D-O-C HAS BEEN PUT ON NOTICE ABOUT THESE ISSUES- AND THE OFFENDERS IN QUESTION AREN'T CONVICTED OF PETTY CRIMES.

IN A REVIEW OF 60 RELEASED ON COMMUNITY SUPERVISION- THE DEPARTMENT FAILED TO PROVIDE 5 SEXUAL PREDATORS, 2 CAREER OFFENDERS, TWO FELONY OFFENDERS AND 1 ABSCONDER AN EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER TO CHECK-IN WITH D-O-C- AND FAILED TO PROPERLY CHECK ON 47 OF THE GROUP OF 60 WITHIN THEIR FIRST 60 DAYS OF SUPERVISED RELEASE- INCLUDING 11 SEXUAL PREDATORS, 14 SEX OFFENDERS, AND 5 CAREER OFFENDERS.

ANNA ESKAMANI:

“THAT IS A HUGE RISK TO THE PUBLIC, AND IT'S GOING TO CREATE REPEAT OFFENDERS. AND THE ENTIRE POINT OF THE SYSTEM IS TO ENSURE THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN. BUT IF WE'RE NOT MEETING DEADLINES OR WE'RE UNDERSTAFFED OR NOT, ENSURING OVERSIGHT OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, THEN IT PUTS THE WHOLE PUBLIC AT RISK.”

IN ITS RESPONSE TO AUDITORS -- THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PROMISED ENHANCED EMPLOYEE TRAINING. THAT INCLUDES A NEW TRAINING SPECIFICALLY FOR HIGH-RISK SPECIALISTS -- THAT WILL BEGIN THIS SPRING. THE D-O-C ALSO PLANS TO START ITS OWN *AUDITS -- TO ENSURE BETTER COMPLIANCE WITH ITS RULES.

MARCH

Category: “9 INVESTIGATES” SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 3/6

10:00PM

Duration: 2:21 Karla Ray

FOR YEARS, LAWMAKERS HAVE DELAYED THE INEVITABLE.. REFUSING TO FUND AN UPGRADE TO THE STATE'S AGING PRISON SYSTEM. SO UNDERSTAFFED, STATE LEADERS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CALL IN THE NATIONAL GUARD, JUST TO KEEP PRISONS OPEN. AND NOW, AS INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER KARLA RAY DISCOVERS ...THE BILLION DOLLAR BILL IS COMING DUE.

THESE PHOTOS ILLUSTRATE THE CONDITIONS OF FLORIDA'S PRISONS- INCLUDED IN AN AUDIT PREPARED BY K-P-M-G AND PRESENTED TO FLORIDA LAWMAKERS LATE LAST YEAR-CALLING FOR \$2-BILLION IN IMMEDIATE

REPAIRS AND A CALL TO ACTION FOR A MAJOR OVERHAUL OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

JEFF BRANDES:

“I THINK THAT'S AN ASTRONOMICAL AMOUNT OF MONEY, BUT IT SPEAKS TO THE DEFERRED MAINTENANCE THAT'S OCCURRED FOR DECADES IN THE PRISON SYSTEM, NOT JUST IN PHYSICAL FACILITIES, BUT ALSO IN STAFFING.”

FORMER STATE SENATOR JEFF BRANDES' FLORIDA POLICY PROJECT HAS BEEN CALLING FOR UPGRADES TO THE STATE'S PRISON SYSTEM EVER SINCE HE LEFT OFFICE- AND AUDITORS AGREED THAT FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION'S CURRENT PATH IS UNSUSTAINABLE- NOTING THAT AS THE FORECASTED INMATE POPULATION GROWS- INFRASTRUCTURE AND STAFFING CONTINUE TO DECLINE- PUTTING BOTH EMPLOYEES *AND INMATES AT RISK.

JEFF BRANDES:

“THE REPORT REALLY HIGHLIGHTS THAT WE NEED TO BUILD NEW FACILITIES, NEW HOSPITALS. WE HAVE TO HIRE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS. BUT WHAT I THINK THE OVERALL STORY IS WE NEED A PLAN. WE NEED A STRATEGY FOR HOW WE'RE GOING TO ATTACK THIS ISSUE FOR YEARS, DECADES TO COME.”

AND RIGHT NOW- LAWMAKERS DISAGREE ON HOW TO PAY FOR IT. THE REPORT LAYS OUT THREE PATHS TO FIXING THE ISSUES- MODERNIZE- WHICH WOULD COST NEARLY 12-BILLION IN TOTAL- CALLS FOR BUILDING 3 NEW PRISONS AND TWO HOSPITALS WHILE CLOSING FOUR OLDER PRISONS..

MANAGE- COSTING LESS AT 9-BILLION- WOULD BUILD TWO NEW PRISONS AND TWO NEW HOSPITALS WHILE CLOSING THREE FACILITIES. AND THE LOWEST-COST PLAN- MITIGATE- COMES IN AT \$6.3-BILLION- ADDING TWO NEW HOSPITALS AND ONE NEW PRISON.

BRANDES POINTS OUT THE CURRENT PLAN BY SENATORS TO SPEND \$100-MILLION A YEAR FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS... ISN'T ADEQUATE.

JEFF BRANDES:

“WHICH WOULD BE ASTRONOMICALLY MORE THAN THEY'VE SPENT IN THE PAST ON FACILITIES, THEY WOULD STILL NOT MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR 20 YEARS, AND THE FACILITIES WOULD CONTINUE TO DEGRADE.”

Category: “9 INVESTIGATES” SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 3/12

10:00PM

Duration: 1:22 Shannon Butler

CHARGES HAVE BEEN DROPPED IN THE CASE AGAINST AN ORANGE COUNTY DEPUTY WHO SHOT A MAN DURING A TRAFFIC STOP IN 20-20. THAT'S AFTER -- PROSECUTORS SAY -- THE GRAND JURY DIDN'T GET THE WHOLE STORY. BUT -- EVEN WITH THE CRIMINAL CASE CLOSED -- IT'S NOT CLEAR WHY DEPUTY BRUCE STOLK FIRED HIS WEAPON. HE STILL FACES AN INTERNAL INVESTIGATION FOR THE SHOOTING. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER SHANNON BUTLER EXPLAINS THE REASON QUESTIONS WERE RAISED -- BY THE STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.... ABOUT THIS CASE. A

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE. THAT IS WHAT THESE DOCUMENTS SAY HAPPENED WHEN AN ORANGE COUNTY DEPUTY WAS INDICTED BY A GRAND JURY FOR SHOOTING AN UNARMED MAN. THIS MEMO FROM CHIEF DEPUTY RYAN WILLIAMS SAYS THAT BRUCE STOLK TOLD INVESTIGATORS HE SHOT EDENILSON URBINA IN SELF DEFENSE... BUT PROSECUTORS DIDN'T BELIEVE IT BECAUSE EVIDENCE SHOWED HE LIKELY FIRED HIS WEAPON ACCIDENTALLY INSTEAD.

DAVID BIGNEY:

IS THAT A POSSIBILITY? AND IF SO, WHY DIDN'T STOLK SAY HIS FIREARM DISCHARGED ACCIDENTALLY? WHY CLAIM SELF DEFENSE? BODY CAMERA VIDEO SHOWS STOLK'S GUN POINTED STRAIGHT, BUT URBINA WAS SHOT IN THE LEG"

INVESTIGATORS SAY THAT SHOWED THE FIRING WAS LIKELY UNINTENTIONAL. WILLIAMS WROTE THAT A FORMER PROSECUTOR WENT FORWARD WITH THE CHARGE RELYING ENTIRELY ON A STATEMENT THEY BELIEVED WAS LIKELY FALSE AND PRESENTED IT TO THE GRAND JURY AS IF IT WAS TRUE.

MUCH OF THE TESTIMONY HAS BEEN REDACTED, AS GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS ARE SEALED. BUT ACCORDING TO THE MEMO, THE STATE'S OWN INVESTIGATOR AND AN EXPERT WITNESS DIDN'T BELIEVE THE CHARGE OF AGGRAVATED BATTERY WAS WARRANTED OR COULD BE PROVED BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT, BUT WILLIAMS SAYS THE GRAND JURY DIDN'T HEAR ALL OF THAT.

WRITING IT WOULD BE "UNETHICAL" TO PROSECUTE FOR THE CRIME ACCUSING THE FORMER PROSECUTORS OF "SEEKING A SPECIFIC END INSTEAD OF BEING OBJECTIVE."

WILLIAMS BLAMED THE PROSECUTOR WHO PRESENTED THE CASE, BUT SAID HE BELIEVES THE DIRECTION CAME FROM THE STATE ATTORNEY HERSELF.

WE REACHED OUT... TO THAT FORMER PROSECUTOR... BUT -- HE HAS NOT RETURNED OUR REQUEST FOR COMMENT. WORRELL'S SPOKESPERSON -- MEANTIME -- SENT A LENGTHY STATEMENT. IT READS IN PART, QUOTE: "THE FACTS OF THIS CASE ARE SIMPLE: BRUCE STOLK SHOT AN UNARMED MAN AND STATED HE DID SO BECAUSE HE ALLEGED THE INDIVIDUAL HAD A GUN, BUT THERE WAS NEVER ANY EVIDENCE OF A GUN. RYAN WILLIAMS' SKEPTICISM ABOUT BRUCE STOLK'S HONESTY REGARDING THIS STATEMENT DOES NOT ALTER THE ESTABLISHED FACTS OF THE CASE. WE'VE POSTED THAT FULL STATEMENT ON OUR WEBSITE: W-F-T-V DOT COM.

Category: "9 INVESTIGATES" SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 3/15

10:00PM

Duration: 2:07 Shannon Butler

AFTER A DECADE AND A HALF OF FIGHTING TO GET BENEFITS -- A LOCAL WOMAN SAYS SHE WAS SUDDENLY TOLD TO PAY THE MONEY BACK. FOR MONTHS -- OUR TEAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN LOOKING INTO WHAT IS HAPPENING TO MILLIONS OF PEOPLE -- WHO DEPEND ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND DISABILITY TO SURVIVE.

TONIGHT -- 9 INVESTIGATES SHANNON BUTLER HAS A LOOK AT NEW FEDERAL LAWSUIT -- FILED BY THAT WOMAN -- AFTER THE S-S-A TOLD HER SHE NEEDED TO RETURN...MORE THAN 200-THOUSAND DOLLARS. IT WAS 2004, WHEN A SINGLE MOTHER OF TWO IN VOLUSIA COUNTY APPLIED FOR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY.

THE AGENCY SAID SHE WAS NOT ELIGIBLE BECAUSE SHE AND HER DAUGHTERS WERE BABYSITTING FOR EXTRA CASH WHILE THEY WAITED FOR S-S-A TO RESPOND. SHE APPEALED THE DECISION. AND THEN HIRED AN ATTORNEY WHO FILED THREE MORE APPEALS. THEN AFTER 15 YEARS, HER FIGHT WAS OVER...SO SHE THOUGHT.

“THE FEDERAL JUDGE FINALLY SAID ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. AND THEY ORDERED SOCIAL SECURITY TO PAY HER HER BENEFIT.”

THE AMOUNT 240 THOUSAND DOLLARS! SHE THOUGHT HER NIGHTMARE WAS OVER UNTIL ANOTHER LETTER FROM SSA SAYING SHE WAS OVER PAID.

SPEAKER 2:

“A COUPLE OF MONTHS LATER, SHE RECEIVES A NOTICE FROM SOCIAL SECURITY. YOU'VE BEEN OVERPAID APPROXIMATELY \$210,000. YOU HAVE 30 DAYS TO SEND US PAYMENT.”

SARAH JACOBS IS HER ATTORNEY AND JUST FILED ANOTHER FEDERAL LAWSUIT. JACOBS DISAGREED WITH THAT OVERPAYMENT AND NOW CONTINUES TO GET NOTICES WITH DIFFERENT AMOUNTS.

THE 210-THOUSAND DOLLARS HAS BEEN REDUCED AGAIN AND AGAIN AND NOW THE GOVERNMENT SAYS SHE OWES ABOUT 7-THOUSAND DOLLARS. BUT LAWYERS CONTEND SHE OWES NOTHING.

THIS IS JUST ONE OF THE MANY CASES WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING OVER THE LAST 5 MONTHS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HIT WITH OVERPAYMENT NOTICES AS THE S-S-A TRIES TO COLLECT MORE THAN 20-BILLION DOLLARS IN OVERPAYMENTS.

AND JUST LIKE EVERYONE WHO IS TRYING TO SOLVE THEIR ISSUE AT THE S-S-A, LAWYERS ARE FACING THE SAME THING: THEY CAN'T GET A HOLD OF ANYONE AT THE AGENCY TO DISCUSS IT.

“WE JUST CAN'T GET THROUGH TO ANYONE IN SOCIAL SECURITY TO DO WHAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO DO TO COMPLY WITH THE REGULATIONS AND WAIVE THIS. I MEAN, SHE DOESN'T OWE THIS MONEY TO THEM. THEY OWE HER 15 MONTHS OF BENEFITS RIGHT NOW THAT THEY IMPROPERLY TOOK FROM HER THAT'S BECAUSE AFTER THEY PAID HER BACK, THEY NEVER REINSTATED HER BENEFITS BACK TO THE WAY THEY WERE.”

Category: “9 INVESTIGATES” SPECIAL LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS:

Date: 3/18

10:00PM

Duration: 2:14 Jeff Deal

TONIGHT: 9 INVESTIGATES HAS LEARNED THE STATE OF FLORIDA IS MAKING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS -- BY SELLING YOUR D-M-V INFORMATION. THIS INCLUDES YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND DATE OF BIRTH. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER JEFF DEAL EXPLAINS WHY THIS IS ALLOWED -- AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO... PROTECT YOURSELF. YOUR CAR SAYS A LOT ABOUT YOU. NOT JUST THE BRAND, STYLE, OR COLOR -- BUT PERSONAL DETAILS -- MANY DRIVERS DON'T WANT TO SHARE.

ACTION NINE DISCOVERED THE STATE OF FLORIDA IS ACTUALLY SELLING YOUR PERSONAL DMV INFORMATION TO DOZENS OF PRIVATE COMPANIES WHO CAN

REQUEST IT -- OR PAY FOR UNLIMITED ELECTRONIC ACCESS. THIS INCLUDES YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, DATE OF BIRTH -- EVEN YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER.

"IT'S DEFINITELY UPSETTING BUT IT'S THE WAY EVERYTHING IS NOW ANYBODY CAN GET ANYTHING ON ANYBODY"

FROM 2021 TO 2023 --THE STATE HAS MADE MORE THAN 260 MILLION DOLLARS SELLING THIS INFORMATION.

THE BIGGEST BUYERS -- DATA BROKERS LIKE LEXISNEXIS, TESSERA DATA AND SAFETY HOLDING.

"IT'S A WAY FOR STATE GOVERNMENTS TO RAISE REVENUE WITHOUT HAVING TO RAISE TAXES"

JAMES LEE -- THE C-E-O OF THE I-D THEFT RESOURCE CENTER -- SAYS SELLING SOME OF YOUR DATA IS LEGAL UNDER A 1994 FEDERAL LAW KNOWN AS THE DRIVER'S PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT.

BUT THERE ARE MORE THAN A DOZEN EXCEPTIONS... EXCEPTIONS MANY COMPANIES USE

"THERE ARE WAYS YOU MAY TAKE THAT DATA THAT WOULD BE LEGITIMATE AND USE IN AN ILLEGITIMATE WAY AND GET YOU IN TROUBLE"

THAT'S BECAUSE ONCE YOUR INFORMATION HAS BEEN SOLD TO A THIRD PARTY, IT CAN BE SOLD AGAIN AND AGAIN.IN AN EMAIL --THE FLORIDA D-M-V SAYS IT FOLLOWS THE LAW -- SAYING IN PART --

"ENTITIES RECEIVING ELECTRONIC PUBLIC RECORD MUST SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING..."

"...THE MOU REQUIRES AN AUDIT BY AN INDEPENDENT PARTY TO ENSURE CONTROLS ARE IN PLACE TO ADEQUATELY PROTECT THE INFORMATION..."

THE STATE HAS TAKEN IN MORE THAN A QUARTER BILLION DOLLARS BY SELLING D-M-V INFO, DEPOSITING THE MONEY INTO A TRUST FUND FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES

AS FOR HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF -- ONE WAY IS TO CREATE A SEPARATE EMAIL ACCOUNT FOR YOUR LICENSE OR REGISTRATION PAPERWORK. IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE -- THE D-M-V DOES NOT PROVIDE DRIVER'S LICENSE PICTURES TO THESE DATA COMPANIES.JD, WFTV TONIGHT

JANUARY

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 1/19

10:00PM

Duration: :59

Phylicia Ashley

TURNING NOW... TO THE ARREST OF A TEACHER IN ORANGE COUNTY! POLICE SAY THIS MAN WAS HAVING AN INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIP WITH A 13-YEAR-OLD STUDENT -- AT BLANKNER SCHOOL! ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WOULD NOT DISCLOSE WHAT HIS ROLE WAS. HOWEVER -- THE PRINCIPAL AT BLANKNER DID SAY THE EMPLOYEE WOULD NOT BE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

PHYLICIA ASHLEY EXPLAINS HOW POLICE LEARNED ABOUT THE ALLEGED RELATIONSHIP. THE SCHOOL SENT OUT A CONNECT ORANGE CALL TO PARENTS LETTING THEM KNOW AN EMPLOYEE HAD BEEN ARRESTED., ALTHOUGHT THEY NEVER SAID HIS NAME. FOY WAS BOOKED IN THE JAIL BY TIME SCHOOL WAS LET OUT.

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS. THIS IS 32-YEAR-OLD TERRELL MYRON FOY. WE LEARNED FROM OPD THAT THEY RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS TIP THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN AN INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIP WITH A STUDENT.

THE SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT IS INVESTIGATING THIS CASE. POLICE CONFIRMED THE STUDENT HE WAS INVOLVED WITH WAS 13-YEARS-OLD. FOY IS NOW FACING CHARGES OF LEWD OR LASCIVIOUS CONDUCT AGAINST A STUDENT BY AN AUTHORITY FIGURE.

ACCORDING TO THE CONNECT ORANGE CALL, HE WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO THE SCHOOL. I REACHED OUT TO THE DISTRICT FOR FOY'S ROLE AT THE SCHOOL. THEY WOULD NOT SHARE THAT INFORMATION SO I HAVE SUBMITTED ALL NECESSARY PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS TO GET THAT FOR YOU. REPORTING IN ORLANDO PA WFTV TONIGHT

CATEGORY: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 1/20

10:00PM Duration: 1:24

Chantelle Navarro

MORE NOW ON THAT MARION COUNTY STUDENT -- ACCUSED OF THREATENING MULTIPLE HIGH SCHOOLS -- AND TEACHERS. DEPUTIES SAY 18-YEAR-OLD SHOMARI CLARKE ADMITTED TO POSTING THE THREAT -- ON SOCIAL MEDIA! TODAY -- HE FACED A JUDGE ON MORE THAN A DOZEN CHARGES. CHANNEL 9'S CHANTELE NAVARRO HAS MORE ON CLARKE'S FIRST APPEARANCE. WHILE CLARKE HAS NO PREVIOUS CRIMINAL HISTORY -- THESE ARE VERY SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS THAT HAVE MANY PEOPLE SHOCKED. HE WAS ARRESTED YESTERDAY --

THIS IS VIDEO OF THAT RIGHT HERE. DEPUTIES SAY -- SHOMARI CLARKE TOLD THEM --IT WAS INDEED HIM BEHIND THE POST. NOW -- SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS WANT HIM PUNISHED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW.

STANDING IN AN ORANGE AND WHITE JUMPSUIT --18-YEAR-OLD SHOMARI CLARKE WENT IN FRONT OF A JUDGE FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY. THE MARION COUNTY STUDENT IS FACING TWENTY-ONE CRIMINAL CHARGES.

"11 COUNTS OF SENDING A WRITTEN THREAT TO KILL OR DO BODY BODILY. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT? I CAN'T HEAR YOU."

IT ALL STARTED WITH THIS SNAPCHAT POST UPLOADED THURSDAY. THREATENING THAT FOREST, VANGUARD AND WESTPORT HIGH SCHOOLS WOULD ALL BLOW UP. CLARKE ALSO NAMED SEVERAL TEACHERS AS TARGETS.

JUDGE

"I FIND IT THERE'S REASON TO BELIEVE YOU MAY HAVE COMMITTED EACH."

STUDENT:

“A FEW OF US WERE ACTUALLY SHOCKED. ESPECIALLY THAT I HAD SOME OF THOSE TEACHERS TOO.”

ALTHOUGH, STUDENTS TOLD CHANNEL 9 THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE CLARKE WOULD ACTUALLY THROUGH WITH IT.
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS WANT HIM PUNISHED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW --

KEVIN CHRISTIAN / MARION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPOKESMAN

“WE AS A COMMUNITY CANNOT TOLERATE THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR, BECAUSE IT'S A COMPLETE DISRUPTION NOT JUST TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, BUT TO OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY.”

A JUDGE ASSIGNED HIM A PUBLIC DEFENDER TODAY, AND HE'S NOW BEING HELD AT MARION COUNTY JAIL ON A 200-THOUSAND DOLLAR BOND.
IF HE PAYS THAT..

“YOU'RE NOT HAVING ANY COMMUNICATION THROUGH ANY KIND OF ELECTRONIC MEANS. YOU'RE NOT TO HAVE ANY ACCESS TO THE INTERNET. YOU'RE NOT TO GO WITHIN 1000 FEET OF ANY MARION COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD PROPERTY”

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 1/22

10:00PM

Duration: 1:58 Phylicia Ashley

A 12-YEAR OLD WAS SENT TO AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL... AFTER *ANOTHER* STUDENT BROUGHT SOME DANGEROUS ITEMS ON TO CAMPUS. BUT -- IT'S HOW THE CASE WAS INVESTIGATED THAT HAS ONE LOCAL MOTHER CONCERNED.

ONLY CHANNEL 9'S PHYLICA ASHLEY LOOKED INTO THE SCHOOL'S POLICY AND THE RIGHTS PARENTS MAY NOT KNOW THEY HAVE... UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.

THE MOTHER SAYS SHE WASN'T THERE AND DID NOT GIVE PERMISSION FOR HER CHILD TO SIGN DOCUMENTS THAT SHE LEARNED WERE LATER USED AGAINST HIM.

BRIANNA WILLAIMS 12-YEAR-OLD IS NOW ORDERED TO GO TO AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL.

BRIANNA:

“HE DOES NOT DESERVE TO GO TO POSITIVE PATHWAYS. HE DESERVES TO CONTINUE HIS EDUCATION LIKE ANY OTHER CHILD.”

WITNESS STATEMENTS FROM O-C-P-S SAY THE ENTIRE INCIDENT STARTED AFTER TWO GIRLS CAME INTO HER SON'S CLASSROOM. THEY CHASED HIM, HIT HIM, AND TOOK HIS PHONE. HE GRABBED AT THE GIRL'S KEYCHAIN, NOT KNOWING IT WAS ATTACHED TO MACE AND A SMALL KNIFE

HE WAS CITED FOR A LEVEL FOUR OFFENSE FOR HAVING A DANGEROUS OBJECT, EVEN THOUGH HE'S NOT THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THE MACE AND KNIFE ON TO CAMPUS

UNDER THE O-C-P-S CODE OF CONDUCT, THE SCHOOL STANDS IN AS THE PARENT WHILE THE STUDENT IS AT SCHOOL

EMPLOYEES ARE AUTHORIZED TO INTERVIEW STUDENTS AND GET WITNESS STATEMENTS, EVEN WITHOUT A PARENT PRESENT.

BRIANNA:

“STATEMENTS ARE BEING USED AGAINST HIM THAT I FEEL LIKE HE WAS FORCED TO SIGN”

THE CODE SAYS A STUDENT CAN REFUSE BUT THAT WON'T STOP THE INVESTIGATION. HIS WITNESS STATEMENT AND CODE OF CONDUCT WERE ALL SIGNED BY HIM AND USED IN THE INVESTIGATION.

BRIANNA

“HOW CAN YOU HOLD THAT AGAINST HIM IF I WAS NEVER NEVER ABLE TO GO OVER THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT WITH HIM.”

BUT BRIANNA SAYS "SHE" NEVER SIGNED THE CODE OF CONDUCT

BRIANNA

“YOU TELL A KID THAT THEY'RE IN TROUBLE FOR HOLDING PEPPER SPRAY, AND YOU THEN TURN AROUND AND TELL HIM WRITE A STATEMENT THEY'RE GONNA WRITE THEY GOT IN TROUBLE FOR PEPPER SPRAY. BUT THEN YOU TURN AROUND AND SAY, THIS IS YOUR STATEMENT. AND THIS IS WHAT YOU WROTE. SO THIS IS WHY YOU HAVE TO GO TO AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL. THAT'S NOT RIGHT”

THE DISTRICT'S CODE ALSO SAYS PARENTS CAN REQUEST THAT THEIR STUDENT NOT PARTICIPATE IN DISCIPLINE INVESTIGATIONS WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION.

BUT THAT HAS TO BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING AHEAD OF TIME

BRIANNA

“YOU WILL WORK HARDER TO PUT A RECORD BEHIND HIS NAME, INSTEAD OF WORKING HARDER TO GIVE HIM A BETTER EDUCATION. THATS WHAT IM FRUSTRATED WITH.”

WILLIAMS IS CURRENTLY APPEALING THE DECISION. AND -- BECAUSE TWO OTHER MINORS WERE INVOLVED -- IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT PUNISHMENTS THE GIRLS RECEIVED.

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 1/31

10:00PM

Duration: 1:32 Demie Johnson

ONLY ON 9...THE TEACHER'S UNION IN VOLUSIA COUNTY IS AT RISK OF DISSOLVING -- DUE TO A NEW STATE LAW. IT SAYS TEACHERS UNIONS CAN LOSE THEIR CERTIFICATIONS IF MEMBERSHIP DROPS BELOW 60 PERCENT. UNION LEADERS SAY THIS PROCESS IS BETWEEN THEM AND THE STATE. BUT -- THEY CLAIM -- THE SCHOOL BOARD IS GETTING INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS -- THAT IT'S NOT PART OF.

VOLUSIA COUNTY REPORTER DEMIE JOHNSON SPOKE WITH THE UNION PRESIDENT - - WHO BELIEVES -- THE DISTRICT IS AFTER ITS RECERTIFICATION.

ELIZABETH ALBERT/PRESIDENT VUE:

“I AM SHOCKED, I AM DISAPPOINTED AND QUITE FRANKLY, I AM APPALED.”

VOLUSIA UNITED EDUCATORS PRESIDENT ELIZABETH ALBERT FEELS BLINDSIDED BY A RECENT MOVE BY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ... THAT COULD RESULT IN THE NEARLY 3-THOUSAND PERSON UNION, LOSING ITS CERTIFICATION.

ELIZABETH ALBERT:

"QUITE FRANKLY, THE BOARD HAS INSERTED THEMSELVES IN A PROCESS WHERE THEY DO NOT HAVE A ROLE AND WE BELIEVE IT IS INTENTIONAL, IT IS MALICIOUS."

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTIFIED THE FLORIDA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RELATIONS COMMISSION, OR "PERC" THAT UNION REPRESENTATION DID NOT MEET THE THRESHOLD IN TIME FOR RECERTIFICATION.

A DISTRICT SPOKESPERSON TOLD EYEWITNESS NEWS IN A STATEMENT:

"THE CERTIFICATION VUE TURNED IN DID NOT RECONCILE WITH THEIR PERC FILING, AND OUR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE RESPONDED TO THEIR RECERTIFICATION PETITION TO PROVIDE PERC WITH THE INFORMATION WE HAD FROM VUE'S SOLIDARITY REPORTS. IT WAS AN ACCOUNTING OF INFORMATION ONLY AND A TIMELINE. THERE IS AN OBLIGATION FOR DISTRICTS TO DO THEIR DUE DILIGENCE TO ENSURE THAT STATUTE IS FOLLOWED."

ELIZABETH ALBERT:

"ESSENTIALLY, OUR OWN SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ARE ALLEGING THAT THERE IS AN ERROR IN WHAT WE HAVE SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF OUR EMPLOYEES."

ALBERT SAYS ACCORDING TO THE FLORIDA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION – VOLUSIA UNITED EDUCATORS IS THE ONLY UNION IN THE STATE DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE.

SHE ADDS – IF A UNION DOESN'T MAINTAIN 60-PERCENT MEMBERSHIP, THERE IS AN OPTION FOR AN ELECTION.

SHE BELIEVES IF THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THAT STEP, THE UNION WOULD BE SAFE.

ELIZABETH ALBERT:

"THIS CURRENT SITUATION HAS LED TO A ABSOLUTE NEW MOMENTUM AND REVITALIZATION OF OUR RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AND WE HAVE PEOPLE KNOCKING AT OUR DOOR TO JOIN."

THE UNION MAINTAINS THAT THE ONLY REASON MEMBERSHIP HAS FALLEN RECENTLY IS BECAUSE THE UNION CAN NO LONGER OBTAIN DUES THROUGH PAYROLL DEDUCTION. SO -- IT IS IN A TRANSITION PERIOD. THE DISTRICT SAYS IT WAS SIMPLY MAKING THE STATE AWARE OF INFORMATION THAT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED.

FEBRUARY

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 2/9

10:00PM Duration: 1:14 Demie Johnson

A DELAND NEIGHBORHOOD HAS BEEN DEALING WITH FLOODING PROBLEMS FOR MONTHS ... AND PEOPLE LIVING THERE ARE FED UP. THE HOMES ARE DIRECTLY BEHIND A VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOL'S F-F-A COMPOUND THAT HOUSES ANIMALS.

CHANNEL 9 VOLUSIA COUNTY REPORTER DEMIE JOHNSON SPOKE WITH NEIGHBORS -- WHO SAY NEW DEVELOPMENT IS TO BLAME.

DEBBIE GRAVES:
"IT UPSETS ME THAT IT EVEN GOT TO THIS POINT."

THIS FLOODED FIELD USED TO BE WHERE DEBBIE GRAVES WATCHED CATTLE GRAZE BEHIND HER HOME.

DEBBIE GRAVES:
"THE COW IS UP OVER ITS BELLY AND IT'S REACHING TRYING TO GET THE GRASS TO EAT BECAUSE 80 PERCENT OF THEIR GRAZING AREA IS UNDER WATER"

MOST OF THE ANIMALS THAT LIVE AT THE VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FFA COMPOUND HAVE BEEN MOVED TO OTHER PARTS OF THE PROPERTY DUE TO THE SERIOUS FLOODING ISSUES. AND OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, GRAVES AND HER NEIGHBORS WHO LIVE ON NORTH SHERIDAN AVENUE, HAVE NOTICED THE WATER STARTING TO POOL IN THEIR YARDS.

DEBBIE GRAVES:
"YOU STEP ON IT AND YOU JUST SINK DOWN AND THEN THE FURTHER DOWN THE NORTHERN PART OF THIS PROPERTY THAT I CALL THE NORTH 40, THAT'S FLOODED 6 TO 8 FEET INTO THE YARD"

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SAYS IT'S WORKING TO COME UP WITH SOLUTIONS. IN A STATEMENT A SPOKESPERSON SAID: THE FLOODING IN THE AREA HAS NOT ONLY AFFECTED VCS AND CHAPTER ANIMALS BUT ALSO NEIGHBORS IN THE AREA. WE UNDERSTAND THE FRUSTRATION THIS MAY CAUSE BUT WANT TO ASSURE THE COMMUNITY WE ARE WORKING DILIGENTLY TO FIND THE CAUSE AND A SOLUTION.

DEBBIE GRAVES:
"IF YOU START IT FINISH IT. THIS IS NOT NORMAL."

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SAYS IT HAS HAD REPRESENTATIVES MEETING WITH THE COUNTY AND CITY TO SEE IF ANYTHING MORE IMMEDIATE CAN BE DONE.

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 2/16

10:00PM

Duration: 1:58 Chantelle Navarro

ANOTHER CENTRAL FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT IS TAKING A STANCE AGAINST MAJOR SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES. GOOD EVENING, I'M GREG WARMOTH. AND I'M MARTHA SUGALSKI. LAKE COUNTY JUST JOINED A MULTI-DISTRICT LAWSUIT -- ALONGSIDE VOLUSIA COUNTY AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. CHANNEL 9'S CHANTELE NAVARRO HAS BEEN DIGGING INTO THIS STORY FOR US TONIGHT. CHANTELE -- IT'S ALL IN THE NAME OF PROTECTING CHILDREN AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

THE LAWSUIT IS ABOUT 100 PAGES LONG -- AND THEY'RE CALLING OUT EVERY MAJOR COMPANY -- LIKE FACEBOOK, TIKTOK, AND YOUTUBE SAYING THEY ALL INTENTIONALLY AND RECKLESSLY TEMPTED CHILDREN -- INCLUDING THOSE IN OUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS. AND THEY WANT SOMETHING DONE TO MAKE IT RIGHT.

YET ANOTHER CENTRAL FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS JOINED IN ON THE FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES. IN THIS MORE THAN 100-PAGE LAWSUIT, THE LAKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FILED AGAINST ALL THE MAJOR PLAYERS -- META AKA FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT, TIKTOK, GOOGLE AND YOUTUBE.

IT'S CALLING THEM ALL A PUBLIC NUISANCE, BLAMING THEM FOR HARMING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AND IMPACTING BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS LIKE ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, EATING DISORDERS AND CYBER BULLYING. IT SAYS THIS IS ALL MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO TEACH IN CLASSROOMS....

LAWYERS ARE CITING THIS STUDY BY PEW RESEARCH CENTER THAT FOUND NEARLY HALF OF TEENAGERS SURVEYED NEVER STOP BEING ON SOCIAL MEDIA... ADMITTING THAT THEY ARE SO ADDICTED, THEY STAY CONNECTED ALMOST CONSTANTLY.

THE LAWSUIT SAYS IN RETURN FOR THE NEGLIGENCE AND MISCONDUCT, THE DISTRICT WANTS MONEY TO FUND TREATMENT FOR EXCESSIVE AND PROBLEMATIC USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND PREVENTION EDUCATION, ALONG WITH RELIEF FOR THE DAMAGES COST THUS FAR.

“PEOPLE ARE DYING, CHILDREN ARE BEING ABUSED, AND THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE.”

THIS LAWSUIT COMES JUST TWO WEEKS AFTER PARENTS TRAVELED TO D-C, WHERE META CEO MARK ZUCKERBURG AND MOST OF THE SAME COMPANIES NAMED IN THE DISTRICT'S SUIT DEFENDED THEIR COMPANY'S POLICIES OF PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, AND HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE EASILY REPORT UNWELCOME CONVERSATIONS.

AT ONE POINT, ZUCKERBURG ADDRESSED THE PARENTS WHO BROUGHT PICTURES OF THEIR CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN IMPACTED IN SOME WAY BY SOCIAL MEDIA.

MARK ZUCKERBURG, META

“YOUR FAMILY HAS SUFFERED? AND THIS IS WHY WE INVESTED SO MUCH. AND ARE YOU DOING BIG EFFORTS TO MAKE SURE THAT NO ONE HAS TO GO THROUGH WHAT YOUR FAMILIES HAVE.”

FRIDAY, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER ALSO ANNOUNCED MORE THAN 60 SENATORS ARE NOW CO SPONSORING A BIPARTISAN BILL DUBBED "THE ONLINE SAFETY ACT -- IT WOULD BRING BIG CHANGES TO THE DIGITAL PLATFORMS, INCLUDING MORE OPTIONS TO DISCONNECT FROM THE APPS, AND GIVES PARENTS BETTER TOOLS TO MONITOR THEIR KIDS' ACTIVITY ONLINE.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE -- THESE TYPES OF LAWSUITS RARELY SUCCEED. THAT'S BECAUSE OF A FEDERAL LAW DATING BACK DECADES, CALLED "SECTION 2-30," IT SHIELDS TECH COMPANIES FROM LIABILITY FOR CONTENT PEOPLE POST ON THEIR PLATFORMS. IN STUDIO CN WFTV TONIGHT

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 2/19 10:00PM Duration: 1:22 Sabrina Maggiore

THE CITY OF ORLANDO IS EXPANDING A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM THAT WORKS WITH AT-RISK YOUTH! THE MY BROTHER'S KEEPER PROGRAM STARTED IN ORLANDO IN 2014. BUT -- OVER THE LAST YEAR -- A FULL-TIME MENTOR HAS BEEN WORKING WITH STUDENTS AT FIVE ORLANDO MIDDLE SCHOOLS.

TODAY -- CHANNEL NINE'S SABRINA MAGGIORE LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE NEW EXPANSION -- AT EDGEWATER AND JONES HIGH SCHOOLS -- AS WELL AS THE WAYS THE PROGRAM IS ALREADY MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

EVEN THOUGH CLASSES AREN'T IN SESSION AT CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL RIGHT NOW-- THE WORK CONTINUES FOR DEYONTE HENDERSON AND THIS GROUP OF STUDENTS IN THE MY BROTHER'S KEEPER PROGRAM.

"ITS JUST LIKE HAVING A BIG BROTHER IN THE HALLWAYS."

HENDERSON - SPENDS HIS DAYS ON CAMPUS... WORKING WITH 25 KIDS REFERRED BY O-C-P-S WHO HAVE HIGH BEHAVIORAL ISSUES OR ABSENCES.

**DEYONTE HENDERSON - LEAD STUDENT ADVOCATE, CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL:
"I LET THEM KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IM DOING ON THEIR BEHALF. JUST HAVING THEIR BACK EVERY DAY. MAKING SURE THEY STAY OUT OF TROUBLE."**

STUDENT ADVOCATES LIKE HENDERSON HAVE WEEKLY ONE ON ONES, AND GROUP SESSIONS WHERE THEY WORK ON GOAL SETTING AND PROBLEM SOLVING...

"TALK ABOUT HOW OUR DAYS GOING-- AND HOW WE CAN MAKE OUR DAY BETTER. YEAH, HOW WE KEEP IT ON TRACK."

WHATS BEEN THE MOST HELPFUL PART OF YOUR TIME WITH HIM?

"IT WENT FROM REFERRALS, I WAS ONE OF THE STUDENTS BEFORE HE CAME, TO HELP ME DROP MY REFERRALS."

IN ONE YEAR OF FULL TIME WORK DISCIPLINARY REFERRALS DECREASED BY 48 PERCENT AT CARVER ... THE CITY SAYS RESULTS ARE POSITIVE FOR THE 4 OTHER MIDDLE SCHOOLS WITH STUDENT ADVOCATES AS WELL...

DO YOU LIKE BEING IN THE PROGRAM SO FAR?

"I LOVE IT. I LOVE IT."

TODAY THE CITY APPROVED A 750-THOUSAND GRANT BRINGING IT TO EDGEWATER AND JONES HIGH SCHOOL

**BOBBY BELTON - PROGRAM MANAGER, MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
"THIS GRANT ALLOWS US TO EXPAND OUR SERVICES AND PROVIDE A CONTINUUM SO THAT THESE YOUNG MEN ARE RECEIVING SERVICES IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL DO NOT JUST GET DROPPED OFF BUT THAT CONTINUES."**

THE PROGRAM APPROVED TODAY WILL KEEP TRACK OF GRADUATION RATES, G-P-A'S AND DISCIPLINARY ISSUES. IT'S SET TO BEGIN IN THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR.

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 2/21

10:00PM

Duration: 1:35

Raphael Pires

TURNING NOW TO OUR OTHER TOP STORY. WITNESSES SAY A FIGHT BROKE OUT BETWEEN SEVERAL EVANS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS -- AFTER DOZENS GATHERED IN THIS MCDONALD'S PARKING LOT! IT HAPPENED THIS AFTERNOON -- ON SILVER STAR

ROAD NEAR PINE HILLS ROAD. IN THIS VIDEO YOU CAN SEE SOME OF THE TEENS -- THROWING PUNCHES -- AS OTHERS WERE SHOVED TO THE GROUND!

BEFORE BEING SENT TO BREAKING NEWS -- RAPHAEL PIRES SPOKE WITH A SCHOOL PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT EVANS HIGH -- ABOUT SIMILAR INCIDENTS, EARLIER THIS MONTH... AS WELL AS A WOMAN WHO WAS STANDING FEET AWAY FROM THE BRAWL WHEN IT BROKE OUT!

THE WITNESS I SPOKE WITH DIDN'T WANT TO GO ON CAMERA...BUT SAYS SHE WAS WAITING AT THIS BUS STOP...WHEN SHE HEARD THE COMMOTION COMING FROM THE MCDONALD'S PARKING LOT. SHE TURNED AROUND AND SAW THE FIGHT BREAKING OUT...SO SHE CALLED 911 AND THEN BEGAN RECORDING WHAT SHE SAW.

FISTS WENT FLYING AT THIS MCDONALDS IN PINE HILLS WENDESDAY AFTERNOON. A WITNESS SENT US THIS CELL PHONE VIDEO OF WHAT SHE SAYS IS DOZENS OF EVANS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FIGHTING AFTER SCHOOL.

SANDRA FATMI-HALL / UNITED FOUNDATION CENTRAL FLORIDA:
"WHEN YOU SEE STUDENTS FROM THE SCHOOL INVOLVED IN THAT KIND OF ACTIVITTY, WHAT GOES THROUGH YOUR MIND."

"IT BREAKS MY HEART. IT BREAKS MY HEART BECUASE WHEN YOURE TRYING YOUR BEST TO MAKE A CHANGE AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY AND POUR INTO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM CHOICES TO TAKE ANOTHER PATH ITS VERY DISTURBING TO SEE THE VIDEO."

SANDRA FATMI HALL IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNITED FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL FLORIDA-- A NON-PROFIT FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING AFTER SCHOOL NEEDS...AND EARLY INTERVENTION. SHE ALSO OPERATES THE LARGEST AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM AT EVANS HIGH SCHOOL.

SANDRA FATMI-HALL:
"I THINK THAT EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO DO AFTER SCHOOL, BECUASE THERES A SAYING 'THE DEVIL FINDS WORK FOR IDLE HANDS' AND THATS WHAT YOU SAW IN THAT VIDEO."

THIS IS AN AREA...THAT HAS HAD ISSUES WITH LARGE GROUPS OF STUDENTS FROM EVANS -- SKIPPING CLASS AND HANGING OUTSIDE BUSINESSES. EARLIER THIS MONTH -- SOME BUSINESS OWNERS TOLD US THEY WERE FORCED TO LOCK THEIR DOORS TO KEEP THE STUDENTS OUT.

THE WOMAN WHO SHOT THIS VIDEO SAYS IT TOOK 3 CALLS TO 911 AND ABOUT 11 MINUTES FOR A DEPUTY TO SHOW UP. SHE WAS FRUSTRATED AT HOW LONG IT TOOK.

SANDRA FATMI-HALL:18:23:27
"THEY'RE OUT HERE EVERY SINGEL DAY FROM THE JAYWALKING TO THE STUDENTS FIGHTING, TO THE THINGS THAT TAKE PLACE HERE."

BUT FATMI HALL SAYS THAT'S UNUSUAL. AND TELLS US THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY HELPING ADDRESS THE ISSUES IN THE AREA.

SANDRA FATMI-HALL:
"I THINK ITS MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE OR ELSE YOU PROBABLY SEE MORE FIGHTS."

FATMI HALL SAYS TO AVOID WHAT WE SAW FROM HAPPENING AGAIN...IS GONNA TAKE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. PARENTS, THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS, LAW ENFORCEMENT ALL WORKING TOGETHER. IN ORANGE COUNTY RP WFTV TN.

WE REACHED OUT TO THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND SCHOOL DISTRICT TO GET MORE ANSWERS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED. RIGHT NOW -- WE ARE STILL WAITING TO HEAR BACK.

MARCH

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 3/10

10:00PM Duration: 1:33 Sam Martello

U-C-F AND THE CITY OF ORLANDO ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO CO-DESIGN A PORTABLE RESILIENCE HUB. IT'S MEANT TO SERVE AS BOTH AN EDUCATION CENTER FOR UNDERSERVED PEOPLE, AND A SAFE HAVEN DURING SEVERE WEATHER. CHANNEL 9'S SAM MARTELLO HAS MORE ON THE IMPACT THE SO-CALLED "REACH HUB" WILL HAVE ON OUR COMMUNITY.

THE REACH HUB IS ONLY IN THE DESIGN PHASE RIGHT NOW... THESE ARE SOME OF THE RENDERINGS. THE PLAN IS FOR RESEARCHERS AND THE CITY TO COME TOGETHER TO PROVIDE NECESSITIES, CONNECTIONS, AND EDUCATION TO A PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY THEY SAY NORMALLY WOULD MISS OUT ON THAT.

KELLY STEVENS, ASST. PROFESSOR, UCF

"HAVING THE ABILITY TO PREPARE FOR A NATURAL DISASTER OR PICK UP THE PIECES AFTER... IS NOT ALWAYS SOMETHING AN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY CAN DO."

MICHAEL HESS, DIRECTOR, SUSTAINABILITY, RESILIENCE, AND FUTURE READY INITIATIVE, CITY OF ORLANDO:

"NOT EVERYONE CAN AFFORD A BACKUP GENERATOR OR AFFORD TO STOCK UP FOOD FOR A HURRICANE."

THIS IS WHERE THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA AND THE CITY OF ORLANDO ARE STEPPING IN WITH A SOLAR-POWERED, PORTABLE HUB. THE RESILIENCE, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY CENTER FOR HAZARD PREPAREDNESS... OR REACH HUB... WILL PROVIDE A CONNECTED SPACE IF THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

KELLY STEVENS, ASST. PROFESSOR, UCF

"A PLACE TO CHARGE DEVICES IN THE EVENT OF A POWER OUTAGE. IT WILL ALSO HAVE A FREEZER AND REFRIGERATOR TO DELIVER COLD WATER AND ICE TO THE COMMUNITY. WE'LL HAVE SATELLITE AND WI-FI CONNECTION. WE'LL ALSO HAVE A PLACE TO COOL OFF."

THE HUB DESIGN WAS INSPIRED BY THE TINY GREEN HOUSE AT THE ORLANDO SCIENCE CENTER. IT WILL BE PRIMARILY POWERED THROUGH CLEAN SOLAR ENERGY WITH A SOLAR ARRAY ON TOP AND A BATTERY BACKUP. WHEN THE HUB IS NOT BEING USED FOR EMERGENCIES... IT WILL BE USED AS AN EDUCATION SPACE.

KELLY STEVENS, ASST. PROFESSOR, UCF:

"WE WANT TO EDUCATE ON RESILIENCE PROGRAMS. LIKE FREE TREES OR SOME OF OUR LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVES TO HELP PEOPLE BE MORE RESILIENT ON THEIR OWN."

UCF WAS AWARDED MORE THAN ONE-MILLION DOLLARS IN GRANTS THROUGH THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO BRING THIS HUB TO LIFE.

AGAIN, THE REACH HUB IS ONLY IN THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE. PLANNERS HOPE TO HAVE IT UP AND RUNNING BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IN ORLANDO SAM MARTELLO C9EWN.

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 3/12

10:00PM Duration: 1:32 Jeff Levkulich

STUDENT DISCIPLINE IN SEMINOLE COUNTY IS AT THE HEART OF A NEW AUDIT. IT FOUND 5 AREAS THAT THE DISTRICT NEEDS TO WORK ON -- INCLUDING THE IMPROPER REPORTING OF BAD BEHAVIOR. ONLY SEMINOLE COUNTY REPORTER JEFF LEVKULICH LOOKED THROUGH THE REPORT.

ALL CENTRAL FLORIDA COUNTIES SAW A RISE IN BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS SINCE 2017. HOWEVER, WHEN IT COMES TO CERTAIN TYPES OF ISSUES...SEMINOLE COUNTY WAS ABOVE THE STATE AVERAGE IN AREAS SUCH AS STUDENTS USING ALCOHOL...LARCENY AND THEFT...DRUG USE OR POSSESSION...THREATS AND INTIMIDATION...

AS WELL AS ABOVE BOTH THE STATE AND COMPARABLE COUNTY AVERAGE FOR BULLYING.

CHIEF RICK FRANCIS:

"BULLYING, WE'VE SEEN A CORRELATION, YOU KNOW, ON WORST CASE SCENARIOS WHERE BULLYING HAS LED TO, YOU KNOW, ACTIVE SHOOTERS IN SCHOOLS ARE VERY RARE, BUT IT DOES HAPPEN. AND SO THE SIMPLE BULLYING COMPLAINTS MAY SEEM MINOR, AT THE BEGINNING, IT MAY BE ABOUT 99% OF OUR MINOR STUFF. BUT WE NEEDED TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THOSE AT THE SAME TIME AND LOOK AT THEM HOLISTICALLY"

CHIEF RICK FRANCIS LEADS THE DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL SAFETY FOR THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE. HE CREDITS THE UPTICK WITH MORE INCIDENTS BEING REPORTED

CHIEF FRANCIS:

"I 'M ACTUALLY NOT OVERLY SURPRISING. AND WE'VE SEEN WE'VE HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT OKAY, WHY YOUR THREAT NUMBERS UP? OR WHY HAVE YOUR BULLYING NUMBERS UP? YOU KNOW, FIRST OF ALL, WE HAVE MORE KIDS ARE GOING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS."

BUT ACCORDING TO THE AUDIT SOME OF THOSE INCIDENTS WERE NOT REPORTED CORRECTLY. FRANCIS SAYS THAT'S BEING CORRECTED.

"IF YOU'RE PROVIDING BAD INFORMATION, THE FRONT END THEN IN THOSE REPORTS ARE GOING TO HAVE FALSE INFORMATION. SO WE'VE REALLY TRIED AT LEAST IN SEMINOLE COUNTY TO MAKE SURE THAT WE'RE DOING A BETTER JOB OF EXPLAINING THE WHY BEHIND IT, HEY, LISTEN, IF YOU HAVE A BULLYING INCIDENT, LET'S JUST RECORD IT."

THE AUDIT SUGGESTS SWITCHING FROM A MANUAL TO AN AUTOMATED PROCESS WHEN ENTERING STUDENT DISCIPLINARY BEHAVIOR IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE MORE ACCURATE.

“AT THE END OF THE DAY IS WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING. AND OF COURSE, YOU CAN'T FIX IT, AND YOU CAN'T SEND THE RIGHT RESOURCES IF IT'S NOT BEING REPORTED.”

THE DISTRICT WOULD NOT TALK ON CAMERA. HOWEVER -- IT SAID -- IT WOULD LOOK AT THE DATA AND DETERMINE HOW TO USE IT -- TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS.

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 3/17

10:00PM Duration: 1:32 Geovany Dias

COVERING VOLUSIA COUNTY...OFFICIALS ARE SET TO DISCUSS A PLAN TO MOVE STUDENTS FROM AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL IN DAYTONA BEACH -- TO THE SITE OF THE FORMER OSCEOLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- IN ORMOND BEACH. IT'S A MOVE THAT HAS SPARKED SOME CONTROVERSY. CHANNEL 9'S GEOVANY DIAS HAS MORE ON THE ISSUE -- AHEAD OF A COMMUNITY MEETING TOMORROW. THEY CLAIM IT'S A SAFETY ISSUE. THAT'S BECAUSE STUDENTS AT ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTERS ARE CONSIDERED AT RISK. NOW RESIDENTS AND THE CITY ARE PUSHING BACK.

LINDSEY WOLF:

“THESE CHILDREN HAVE ALL COMMITTED OFFENSES THAT NO LONGER ALLOW THEM TO BE ON REGULAR VOLUSIA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL CAMPUSES SO WHY DO THEY THINK THAT IF THEY'RE A THREAT TO THOSE REGULAR POPULATIONS THAT THEY WOULDN'T BE A THREAT TO MY NEIGHBORHOOD.”

ABOUT 80 STUDENTS ARE SET TO BE TRANSFERRED FROM DAYTONA BEACH TO ORMOND BEACH, TO THE FORMER OSCEOLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAMPUS. RIGHT NOW, HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AT RIVERVIEW ALTERNATIVE ARE IN A BUILDING ON WILD OLIVE AVENUE IN DAYTONA BEACH, WHILE THE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ARE ABOUT 10 MILES AWAY AT ANOTHER SITE.

ACCORDING TO THE DISTRICT, THE MOVE WILL CONSOLIDATE PROGRAMS INTO ONE LOCATION. A DECISION THAT WAS MADE LAST MONTH...

MAYOR BILL PARTINGTON:

“THE BIGGEST ISSUE IS THE LACK OF COMMUNICATION. THE SCHOOL BOARD IS ALMOST A BILLION AND A HALF DOLLAR ENTITY AND THEY NEED TO HAVE A COMMUNITY MEETING AND GET PUBLIC INPUT BEFORE THEY JUST GO AND DO WHAT THEY WANNA DO.”

THE DISTRICT CLAIMS IT DID HOLD A COMMUNITY MEETING ... BUT THE MESSAGE WENT OUT TO VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS FAMILIES, NOT RESIDENTS.

LINDSEY WOLF:

“THIS CAME OFF VERY INAPPROPRIATE AND AS IF THE SCHOOL BOARD WAS TRYING TO PULL ONE OVER ON US AND NO ONE IN THE COMMUNITY REALLY KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.”

THE COMMUNITY MEETING TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTERS IS SET FOR TOMORROW AT 5-30 PM AT THE OSCEOLA ELEMENTARY CAMPUS.

Category: SCHOOL STORIES:

Date: 12/9 10:00PM Duration: 1:47 Goevany Dias

OSCEOLA COUNTY...IS CRACKING DOWN ON DRIVERS SPEEDING NEAR SCHOOLS. DURING A MEETING TODAY -- COUNTY COMMISSIONERS UNANIMOUSLY DECIDED ON THE VENDOR THAT WILL PROVIDE NEW SPEED DETECTION DEVICES IN SCHOOL ZONES. CHANNEL 9'S GEOVANY DIAS SPOKE WITH RESIDENTS WHO SAY THEY ARE HOPING THOSE NEW DEVICES WILL BE UP AND RUNNING VERY SOON. THEY SAY LIGHTS AND SIGNS LIKE THIS ONE RIGHT HERE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH TO CONTAIN TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS ALL ACROSS THE COUNTY, ESPECIALLY NEAR THE SCHOOLS. IT'S A KNOWN PROBLEM IN OSCEOLA COUNTY.

HECTOR GONZALEZ, OSCEOLA COUNTY RESIDENT:

"MOST PEOPLE DON'T OBEY THE SPEED LIMITS, THEY DISREGARD ALL THE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS."

A STUDY CONDUCTED LAST YEAR IDENTIFIED THE AREAS WITH HIGHER SAFETY RISK ACROSS THE COUNTY.

THE REPORT SHOWS THAT OF THE 65-THOUSAND CARS THAT PASSED BY SCHOOL ZONES, WELL MORE THAN A HALF WERE SPEEDING. SOME OF THEM GOING AS FAST AS 70-MILES PER HOUR WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT WAS 20 MILES PER HOUR DURING SCHOOL HOURS.

"I'VE SEEN THAT. I'VE SEEN PEOPLE PRESSURING ME TO GO FASTER, BUT I TRY TO STAY ON THE SPEED LIMIT. IF THEY DON'T LIKE IT, I'M SORRY FOR THEM. THEY PASS ME OVER THE YELLOW LANE, AND THEY GO AND VIOLATE THE LAW AND PASS ME."

THESE ARE THE 14 SCHOOL ZONE LOCATIONS WHERE THE DEVICES WERE RECOMMENDED. THE NEW SYSTEM USES RADARS TO VERIFY HOW FAST A VEHICLE IS GOING... AND TAKES A PICTURE OR A VIDEO OF THE PLATE. DRIVERS GOING FASTER THAN 11-MILES PER HOUR ABOVE THE LIMIT, WILL FACE A 100-DOLLAR FINE PER VIOLATION.

THE MOVE COMES AFTER A NEW LAW WENT INTO EFFECT IN JULY 20-23, ALLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PUT CAMERAS IN SCHOOL ZONES TO FINE ANYONE GOING MORE THAN 10-MILES ABOVE THE SPEED LIMIT.

BRANDON ARRINGTON, OSCEOLA COUNTY COMMISSIONER:

"WE KNOW OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE STRETCHED THIN, AND CANNOT BE IN EVERY ROADWAY, EVERY POINT OF THE DAY. THE WHOLE IDEA BEHIND PUTTING THESE CAMERAS IN PLACES IS TO GET PEOPLE TO SLOW DOWN AND HOPEFULLY MAKE THE SCHOOL ZONES SAFER."

THE COUNTY SAYS MONEY -- GENERATED FROM THE FINES -- WILL PAY FOR THE DEVICES. THE AGREEMENT APPROVED TODAY WILL LAST THROUGH MARCH 20-29 -- AND COULD BE EXTENDED UP UNTIL 2031. IT'S NOT CLEAR YET WHEN THE DEVICES WILL BE INSTALLED.

JANUARY

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 1/22 10:00PM Duration: 2:52 Jeff Deal

A CENTRAL FLORIDA MAN WAS OUT 17-HUNDRED DOLLARS -- AFTER SIGNING A LEASE FOR A HOME HE CALLED UNLIVABLE. HE TRIED RENTING THE SANFORD HOME FROM A COMPANY ACTION 9 HAS WARNED CONSUMERS ABOUT BEFORE.

CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL HAS A LOOK AT THE CONDITION OF THE HOME AND HOW HE HELPED THE RENTER... GET HIS MONEY BACK. ADVERTISED AT \$675 A MONTH FROM SUNBELT LLC... THE SMALL HOME DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A BAD DEAL TO DUANE WALKER WHO HAD RECENTLY LOST HIS JOB.

DUANE WALKER-RENTER:

"AND IT LOOKS LIKE OKAY, IT'S A DECENT PLACE. IT AGAIN, IS NOT THE TAJ MAHAL, BUT FOR 675 WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?"

DESPERATE TO GET IN, HE AGREED TO SIGN THE LEASE--JUST BASED ON THE AD-- HE PAID A 17-HUNDRED DOLLAR DEPOSIT--A MOVE HE SOON REGRETTED.

DUANE WALKER-RENTER:

"WHEN I WENT THERE, THE DOOR WAS HANGING OFF. THEY SAID EVERYTHING WAS CLEAN AROUND IT, NOTHING WAS CLEANED."

HE SHOWED US PICTURES OF THE CONDITIONS HE TOOK AFTER HE CLAIMS SUNBELT TOLD HIM IT HAD BEEN CLEANED--BUT SAID THE FILTH AND THE ROUGH CONDITIONS SHOWN IN THE PHOTOS ARE NOTHING COMPARED TO THE SMELL.

DUANE WALKER-RENTER:

"IT SMELLED LIKE URINE, HUMAN AND ANIMAL FECES. AND IT WAS JUST DISGUSTING."

AND HE BELIEVED THE HOME WAS UNSAFE-- WHEN HE REFUSED TO MOVE IN AND ASKED FOR HIS MONEY BACK--SUNBELT TOLD HIM-NO REFUNDS... AFTER ALL, HE HAD SIGNED A LEASE THAT SPECIFICALLY WARNS-- NO REFUNDS OR TRANSFERS.

"WHEN WE SHOWED UP TO CHECK ON THE PLACE, PARTS OF THE HOME APPEARED TO BE CRUMBLING AND WE FOUND HIS SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME TAPE STILL ATTACHED TO THE HOME."

THE GRASS WAS OVERGROWN AND DEBRIS EVERYWHERE. THE HOME IS NO STRANGER TO THE SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES. THEY'VE BEEN CALLED HERE EIGHT TIMES OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS HERE FOR REPORTS FOR FRAUD, GRAND THEFT, DRUGS, SQUATTERS... AND NUMEROUS CODE ENFORCEMENT CHECKS. THE MOST RECENT CODE ENFORCEMENT CHECK LISTED THE HOME "OUT OF COMPLIANCE."

DUANE WALKER-RENTER:

"CALL ME NAIVE, BUT I'M THINKING OKAY, IF YOU A BUSINESS YOU'RE GOING TO BE HONORABLE AND HAVE SOME INTEGRITY."

THE HOME IS OWNED BY VERMONT LLC... STATE RECORDS SHOW THAT COMPANY AND SUNBELT LLC ARE BOTH MANAGED BY BEN SPIVEY. YOU MIGHT REMEMBER HIM

AS DOCTOR BEN SPIVEY, A CONTROVERSIAL OCALA DENTIST. THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REPEATEDLY SUSPENDED HIS LICENSE FOR POOR PATIENT CARE AND EVENTUALLY PERMANENTLY REVOKED HIS LICENSE.

AND WE'VE REPORTED ON OTHER CONSUMER COMPLAINTS ABOUT RENTAL HOME ISSUES AND LEASES... COMPLAINTS COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF MID-FLORIDA HAS ALSO SEEN IN RECENT YEARS.

JEFFREY HUSSEY, ATTORNEY, COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF MID FLORIDA
"THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW THE MAN. I'VE NEVER MET THE MAN, BUT ON PAPER, THAT'S WHAT IT CERTAINLY LOOKS LIKE."

AFTER WE REACHED OUT TO SUNBELT ABOUT THE ISSUE... A MANAGER GAVE DUANE WALKER HIS ENTIRE 17-HUNDRED DOLLAR DEPOSIT BACK. STILL, AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE, HE HAS A WARNING:

DUANE WALKER-RENTER

"I JUST WANT TO HELP PEOPLE BE AWARE COMPANY SUNBELT LLC, YOU SEE THAT NAME? STAY AWAY FROM IT."

SUNBELT HAS NOT RESPONDED TO US ABOUT THE COMPLAINT. WE ARE ALSO WAITING FOR THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES -- THE AGENCY IN CHARGE OF LANDLORD- TENANT ISSUES -- TO LET US KNOW IF IT'S INVESTIGATING SUNBELT OR IF IT HAS RECEIVED COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE COMPANY.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 1/25

10:00PM

Duration: 2:06 Jeff Deal

AN ORANGE COUNTY WOMAN WANTED TO BUILD HER DREAM HOME ON LAND HER FAMILY ALREADY OWNED. BUT -- AFTER PAYING THE BUILDER A LARGE AMOUNT UPFRONT -- SHE CLAIMS THAT BUILDER GHOSTED HER. ACTION 9 CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL WORKED TO GET ANSWERS AND HAS A LOOK AT WHERE... THE CASE STANDS NOW.

AFTER MORE THAN 20-YEARS IN THIS WEST ORANGE COUNTY HOME... THAT MELISSA SAPP SAYS WAS GIFT FROM HER BROTHER...

N-F-L GREAT WARREN SAPP. MELISSA DECIDED IT WAS TIME FOR HER TO DOWNSIZE... SHE WANTED A CONTAINER HOME, MADE WITH SHIPPING CONTAINERS, BUILT ON WARREN SAPP DRIVE--ON THE LAND SHE AND HER FAMOUS BROTHER GREW UP ON.

MELISSA SAPP-HOMEBUYER:

"ONCE I STARTED DOING MY RESEARCH AND WHAT I WANT, I WENT AHEAD AND SOLD MY HOME."

MELISSA TOOK THE MONEY FROM THE SALE... ENTERED AN AGREEMENT WITH A BUILDING COMPANY 369 BIZ LLC... MANAGED BY A MAN NAMED MAURICIO CHIARA-- AND SAYS SHE PAID CHIARA MORE THAN 200-THOUSAND DOLLARS UP FRONT.

MELISSA SAPP-HOMEBUYER:

"EVERYTHING IS GOING SO SMOOTH. AND THEN TWO MONTHS LATER, POOF. HE'S GONE."

SHE CLAIMS CALLS AND EMAILS WENT UNANSWERED...AND THE HOME WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FINISHED NO LATER THAN THIS PAST AUGUST.

"THE PLANS CALLED FOR TEARING DOWN THE FAMILY HOME WHERE MELISSA GREW UP, BUT YOU CAN SEE THE DEMOLITION HASN'T EVEN STARTED."

MELISSA HAS SINCE FILED A REPORT WITH THE ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE--AND THE CASE IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF THE STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO DETERMINE IF CHARGES SHOULD BE FILED. WE COULDN'T FIND A CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE FOR CHIARA... HIS BUSINESS ADDRESS IS THIS STOREFRONT MAIL DROP IN ORLANDO... AND HE HAS NOT RESPONDED TO MY PHONE CALLS. MELISSA SAPP TOLD US SHE'S FELT A RANGE OF EMOTIONS FROM DEPRESSION TO ANGER... AND HOPES THE LAW WILL SOON HELP HER GET JUSTICE FOR WHAT SHE LOST.

MELISSA SAPP-HOMEBUYER:

"FIRST OF ALL, JUST WANT MY MONEY BACK ALL THIS IS FORGIVEN ALREADY. JUST GIVE ME MY MONEY BACK. SO I CAN DO FIND SOMEONE ELSE TO DO WHAT I WANT TO HAVE DONE."

MAKE SURE YOU RESEARCH ANYONE YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT HIRING--CHECK FOR PROPER LICENSING. GET MORE THAN ONE QUOTE... AND ONCE YOU FIND THE RIGHT BUILDER, SET-UP A PAYMENT SCHEDULE BASED ON PROGRESS, INSTEAD OF PAYING FOR EVERYTHING UPFRONT.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 1/30

10:00PM

Duration: 3:05 Jeff Deal

COMPLAINTS ARE MOUNTING AGAINST AN ORLANDO COMPANY THAT CLAIMS TO BE THE LARGEST FOOD TRUCK MANUFACTURER IN THE UNITED STATES. CUSTOMERS TURNED TO ACTION 9 AFTER THEY PAID "ONE FAT FROG" THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS... BUT -- CLAIM THE COMPANY HAS FAILED TO DELIVER THEIR FOOD TRAILERS AS PROMISED. CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL CONFRONTED COMPANY LEADERS AND LEARNED ABOUT FINANCIAL ISSUES THAT MAY BE CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROBLEM.

COOKING IS LIFE FOR KENDRA BREWSTER... AND HER FIANCE MUYIDEEN OLOWU (UH-LOW)...

MUYIDEEN OLOWU-CUSTOMER:

"WE ALWAYS HAVE FRIENDS OVER WE COOK FOR THEM COOKING WAS YOU KNOW, IT'S I GUESS IT'S OUR LOVE LANGUAGE."

LAST YEAR, WHEN THE COUPLE DECIDED TO TAKE THEIR NEW ORLEANS-NIGERIAN FUSION CUISINE TO THE COMMUNITY WITH A FOOD TRAILER...THEY TURNED TO "ONE FAT FROG" AN ORLANDO COMPANY THAT BILLS ITSELF AS THE NATION'S LARGEST FOOD TRUCK MANUFACTURER.

MUYIDEEN OLOWU-CUSTOMER:

"LIKE, THE WAY THEY SPOKE TO US, EVERYTHING, THE CUSTOMER SERVICE, THEY JUST SEEM AMAZING."

BUT AFTER PAYING 40-THOUSAND DOLLARS... AND WITH AN ESTIMATED BUILD AND DELIVERY TIME OF 16-WEEKS-- MUYIDEEN NOW NEARLY A YEAR LATER... BELIEVES THEY ARE ANYTHING BUT AMAZING.

YOU PAID \$40,000 AND YOU HAVE NO TRAILER?

MUYIDEEN:
"NO TRAILER... NOTHING."

AND HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE. WE SAW SIMILAR COMPLAINTS ONLINE. "ONE FAT FROG" HAS AN "F" RATING WITH THE BETTER BUSINESS...AND THE COMPANY HAS BEEN SUED A DOZEN TIMES IN THE PAST YEAR WITH CREDITORS WANTING MONEY... OR CUSTOMERS CLAIMING THEY HAVEN'T RECEIVED THEIR MOBILE KITCHEN... INCLUDING MICHELLE COSTELLO:

MICHELLE COSTELLO-ONE FAT FROG CONSUMER:
"I LOST THE WHOLE YEAR. AND EVENTUALLY I CLOSED MY BUSINESS AS OF DECEMBER 31."

SHE EXPECTED HER TRAILER IN MAY AND IS STILL WAITING. WE WENT TO "ONE FAT FROG" FOR ANSWERS.

THIS GENTLEMAN RIGHT HERE MUYIDEEN OLOWU SAID HE PAID \$40,000 HE WAS PROMISED THE TRAILER IN JULY, SIX MONTHS LATER, AFTER THE PROMISE DATE.

OFF CAMERA, THE COMPANY TOLD US SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES COMING OUT OF COVID CONTINUE TO IMPACT BUILD TIMES, AND THE ESTIMATED DELIVERY DATES IN THE CONTRACTS ARE JUST THAT... ESTIMATES. OPERATIONS MANAGER FRANK CONNELL ALSO OFFERED THIS APOLOGY.

FRANK CONNELL-ONE FAT FROG-OPERATIONS MANAGER:
"I FEEL SORRY, I FEEL SORRY THAT WE'RE NOT ABLE TO PERFORM LIKE WE INTENDED TO DO WITH, WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE ECONOMY WITH THE STRUCTURE OF GETTING THE MATERIALS IN."

COURT RECORDS SHOW THE COMPANY PRESIDENT CONNIE (BALKER) BAUGHER AND HER HUSBAND, FORMER C-E-O AMIN HASSANIEN ARE GETTING A DIVORCE. FRANK CONNELL TOLD US THERE ARE ALSO MONEY ISSUES TIED UP IN THE LEGAL BATTLE... AND POINTED THE FINGER AT HASSANIEN... CLAIMING HE MISDIRECTED COMPANY FUNDS.

FRANK CONNELL-ONE FAT FROG-OPERATIONS MANAGER:
"IT I WOULD SAY IT'S HAVING A SLIGHT IMPACT, BUT IT'S NOT TO THE POINT WHERE IT'S DESTROYING US."

HASSANIEN TOLD US OVER THE PHONE THAT'S NOT TRUE... HE NEVER MISDIRECTED ANY MONEY FROM THE COMPANY. AND REMEMBER THIS GUY?

"HEY, JEFF DEAL CHANNEL NINE. HOW ARE YOU DOING?"

HIS NAME IS THOMAS SADAKA... THE COMPANY DIRECTOR OF COMPLIANCE. HE'S A FORMER STATEWIDE PROSECUTOR--AND PRIVATE ATTORNEY WHO WAS DISBARRED AFTER HE WAS ACCUSED OF STEALING MORE THAN 200-THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM THE LAW FIRM OF AN ORLANDO ATTORNEY... AND FOR PRACTICING LAW WHILE UNDER SUSPENSION. IN 2018, SADAKA PLEADED NO CONTEST TO SECOND DEGREE

GRAND THEFT... AND ADJUDICATION WAS WITHELD. HE JUST GOT OFF PROBATION IN DECEMBER. BUT NO MATTER WHO'S WORKING THERE--AND WHAT THE FINANCIAL CONDITIONS ARE LIKE-- MICHELLE COSTELLO AND MUYIDEEN OLOWU JUST WANT THEIR MONEY BACK AND TO MOVE ON WITH THEIR LIVES.

MUYIDEEN OLOWU-CUSTOMER:

"AND NOT JUST ME, THEY'VE KILLED THE DREAMS OF SO MANY PEOPLE."

THE COMPANY CLAIMS THE MISDIRECTED MONEY IS THE REASON IT CAN'T OFFER REFUNDS. THOMAS SADAKA TOLD US HIS CASE CAME OUT OF A CIVIL DISPUTE BETWEEN LAW PARTNERS FROM 10-YEARS AGO AND PEOPLE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMPANY.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 1/31 10:00PM Duration: 1:28 Sabrina Maggiore

HUNDREDS OF CENTRAL FLORIDIANS COULD LOSE FOOD STAMPS AND MEDICAID BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS WITH THE STATE'S NEW ONLINE PORTAL FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS. THE NEW PORTAL LAUNCHED LAST MONTH. IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MORE USER FRIENDLY.

BUT -- SINCE ITS LAUNCH -- WE'VE SHOWED YOU LONG LINES FOR IN-PERSON REQUESTS, ONLINE GLITCHES, AND OVERWHELMED CALL LINES. SABRINA MAGGIORE HAS FOLLOWED EVERY STEP OF THIS STORY -- AND EXPLAINS THOSE IN NEED WANT ANSWERS. THIS ORANGE COUNTY MOTHER OF TWO FOUND HERSELF HAVING TO MAKE THE FOOD IN THIS FRIDGE LAST.

"I NEED THE ASSISTANCE AND ITS LIKE PULLING TEETH."

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO SHOW HER FACE ON CAMERA, BUT TOLD US HER CALL CENTER JOB WASNT BRINGING IN ENOUGH TO FEED HER FAMILY... WHEN SHE APPLIED FOR SNAP, SHE FOUND EVEN MORE CHALLENGES

"OUT OF 6 UPLOADS AND RECEIPTS THAT I'VE UPLOADED, THEY ONLY SEE ONE."

DOCUMENTS THE STATE NEEDED WOULDN'T SHOW UP ON THE NEWLY LAUNCHED "MY ACCESS" PORTAL, AND THAT WASN'T THE ONLY PROBLEM.

DOZENS OF TROUBLESHOOTING CALLS TO THE STATE, ENDING WITH THIS AUTOMATED MESSAGE.

"IF YOU STILL REQUIRE ASSISTANCE FROM AN AGENT PLEASE TRY YOUR CALL AGAIN LATER. AND THATS WHEN THEY HANG UP."

3 WEEKS LATER -- SHE GOT HER BENEFITS. BUT HAD TO FAX OVER HER DOCUMENTS

VANESSA BRITO- COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

"THAT IT'S FASTER TO FAX IN YOUR DOCUMENTS THAN TO DIGITALLY UPLOAD THEM DIRECTLY FROM YOUR PHONE OR A LAPTOP IS A TESTAMENT TO HOW DYSFUNCTIONAL THE SYSTEM IS."

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE VANESSA BRITO HAS COLLECTED INFORMATION FROM MORE THAN 160 FLORIDIANS DEALING WITH THE SAME ISSUES... LEAVING SOME FAMILIES HUNGRY AND UNINSURED.

VANESSA BRITO- COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

"THE SYSTEM FLAGGED THEM FOR NOT UPLOADING THE DOCUMENTS, EVEN THOUGH THEY DID AND THEY ARE TERMINATED."

FOR THE LAST THREE WEEKS, WE'VE BEEN REQUESTING INFORMATION FROM THE STATE ABOUT WHAT IT IS DOING TO FIX THIS. MUCH LIKE THOSE WAITING FOR BENEFITS... SO FAR, THE STATE HAS ONLY SAID, THEY'RE WORKING ON IT.

VANESSA BRITO- COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

"IT'S OKAY TO HAVE PROCEDURAL ISSUES. THE PROBLEM IS THE LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND THE LACK OF CLARITY"

IN EARLY JANUARY, THE STATE TOLD US MORE THAN ONE-MILLION DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN UPLOADED, AND NEARLY 500-THOUSAND PEOPLE SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED FOR BENEFITS THROUGH THE PORTAL. HOWEVER, AS WE PRESSED D-C-F WITH FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, THE AGENCY FAILED TO RESPOND WITH ANY NEW DETAILS.

FEBRUARY

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 2/14 10:00PM Duration: 2:49 Jeff Deal

THIS PAST WEEK, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS CELEBRATED LOVE ON VALENTINES DAY. IT'S A TIME FOR ROMANCE ... BUT THIS TIME OF YEAR IS ALSO A HOT TIME FOR ROMANCE SCAMS. ACTION NINE CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL HAS A LOOK AT THE LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION BEHIND THESE SCHEMES AND HOW THEY ALMOST DROVE ONE LOCAL WOMAN TO TAKE HER OWN LIFE. LOOKING ONLINE FOR LOVE...IT'S NOT UNSUAL THESE DAYS...

REBECCA D'ANTONIO-ROMANCE SCAM VICTIM

"HE WAS VERY GOOD LOOKING."

AND FOR REBECCA D'ANTONIO--MEETING "MATTHEW" ON A POPULAR DATING SITE IN 2016 WAS A TIME OF JUBILATION.

REBECCA D'ANTONIO-ROMANCE SCAM VICTIM

"HE MADE ME FEEL VALUED. HE MADE ME FEEL HEARD, HE MADE ME, LIKE, FEEL SPECIAL."

LITTLE DID SHE KNOW, "MATTHEW" WAS NOT A REAL PERSON... BUT A SCAMMER... OR PERHAPS A TEAM OF SCAMMERS FROM NIGERIA...USING A PLAYBOOK, WITH SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS AND KEY PHRASES DESIGNED TO WOO AMERICAN WOMEN... AND MAKE THEM FALL IN LOVE.

TAMMY MIZER-FBI:

"ROMANCE SCAMS ARE VERY SOPHISTICATED AND JUST CONTINUE TO GROW IN SOPHISTICATION AS, TECHNIQUES EVOLVE."

TAMMY MIZER WITH THE FBI SAYS THE SCAMMERS ARE RELENTLESS, THEY KEEP JOURNALS AND LOG BOOKS ON POTENTIAL VICTIMS--AND OFTEN ADAPT THEIR TECHNIQUES. FOR REBECCA, IT SEEMED TO MIRROR A REAL RELATIONSHIP, THERE'S A "GET-TO-KNOW-YOU" PHASE, LIFE STORIES WERE BELIEVABLE. IN HER CASE, ... "MATTHEW" HAD A SON... THE SCAMMERS PLAYED OFF HER EMOTIONS... AND EVENTUALLY ASKED HER FOR JUST A SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY--AFTER THE FATHER AND SON SUPPOSEDLY GOT STRANDED ON A TRIP WITH A CREDIT CARD THAT WASN'T WORKING.

REBECCA D'ANTONIO-ROMANCE SCAM VICTIM

"HE'S THE VICTIM. HE'S THE VICTIM, AND I NEED TO HELP THEM, YOU KNOW, AND BUT, YOU KNOW, HE'LL FIX EVERYTHING WHEN HE GETS HOME."

OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR, THE MANIPULATION CONTINUED...REBECCA GAVE OVER AROUND 100-THOUSAND DOLLARS-- HER FINANCES AND THE RELATIONSHIP WERE SPIRALING OUT OF CONTROL--TO THE POINT SHE WAS STOCKPILING SLEEPING PILLS.

REBECCA D'ANTONIO-ROMANCE SCAM VICTIM

"THERE WAS THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE LEFT FOR ME. I WAS GOING TO TAKE MY OWN LIFE."

FORTUNATELY A FRIEND INTERVENED AND SAVED HER LIFE. REBECCA FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY, CONNECTED WITH A GROUP CALLED "SCAMHATERS UNITED"-- A NON-PROFIT THAT HELPS VICTIMS LIKE HER... SHE LEARNED ABOUT THE ORGANIZED GANGS--THAT OPERATE ALMOST LIKE CORPORATIONS IN NIGERIA.

REBECCA D'ANTONIO-ROMANCE SCAM VICTIM

"THEY REFER TO IT AS THE HK, THE HUSTLE KINGDOM."

IT WAS ONLY THEN SHE BEGAN TO LEARN ABOUT THE LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION OF ROMANCE SCAMS--AND THE TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION THEY LEAVE BEHIND. FOR VICTIMS LIKE HER, FAMILIES, FRIENDS... AND IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS WHOSE PHOTOS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION ARE USED IN THESE SCHEMES OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

ACCORDING TO THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION, NEARLY 70,000 AMERICANS LOST A RECORD \$1.3 BILLION TO ROMANCE SCAMS IN 2022... AND THAT'S LIKELY JUST A FRACTION OF THE REAL COST SINCE MANY PEOPLE REMAIN SILENT AND DON'T WANT TO REPORT THEY WERE VICTIM OF THIS KIND OF CRIME. JD CH9 EWN.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 2/25 10:00PM Duration: 2:28 Jeff Deal

A GRIEVING DAUGHTER HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO BURY HER FATHER AFTER SHE FELL VICTIM TO AN ONLINE BORROWING SCAM. THE SCAMMERS IN THIS CASE WERE PRETENDING TO WORK FOR A LEGITIMATE ONLINE LENDER. ACTION 9 CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL HAS A LOOK HOW THE SCAM WORKED AND THE WARNING THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU HAS ISSUED SHERRY HAWKINS CONSIDERS HERSELF A DADDY'S GIRL...

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

"HE WAS AN AMAZING, AMAZING DAD."

SO, SHE WAS HEARTBROKEN WHEN HER FATHER ROBERT WAGONER PASSED AWAY IN MID-JANUARY

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

“JUST WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR ANYBODY. HE WAS JUST A GOOD SOUL.”

BUT TIMES ARE TIGHT FOR THE FAMILY AND SHERRY ADMITS HER CREDIT SCORE ISN'T GOOD...SO SHE WAS LOOKING ONLINE FOR LOAN OPTIONS TO TRY TO GET THE MONEY TO BURY HER DAD. SHE FOUND AN AD FOR CASHNET USA...

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

“I GOOGLED THEM AGAIN, READ THE REVIEWS. EVERYTHING SEEMED LEGITIMATE. EVERYTHING.”

CASHNET USA IS A LEGITIMATE LENDER...AND AFTER FILLING OUT AN ONLINE APPLICATION SHERRY RECEIVED A CALL.

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

“AND SAID, OH, YEAH, WE CAN GET YOU APPROVED. SAID OKAY, AND THEY SAID, HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.”

THE PERSON ON THE PHONE TOLD HER SHE NEEDED TO PROVE SHE HAD AN ACCOUNT AND THAT SHE NEEDED TO IMPROVE HER CREDIT SCORE... BY TAKING SEVERAL DEPOSITS INTO HER ACCOUNT... AND THEN RETURNING THE MONEY USING CASH APP... AND WIRE TRANSFERS.

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

“SO THEY SENT THE MONEY TO MY ACCOUNT. IT SHOWED IT THE NEXT DAY THAT IT WAS AVAILABLE. I DID JUST AS THEY SAID, I SENT THE MONEY BACK TO HIM THROUGH CASH APP.”

BUT IT TURNS OUT, SCAMMERS WERE USING A LOOK-ALIKE WEBSITE... THEY SENT HER THIS BOGUS LOAN PAPERWORK--THAT EVEN INCLUDES THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU SEAL. AND THOSE DEPOSITS INTO HER ACCOUNT? THOSE WERE BOGUS TOO.

BYAN OGLESBY-BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF WEST FLORIDA:

“THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF AN ADVANCED FEE, LOAN SCAM THAT BBB HAS BEEN WARNING ABOUT.”

BRYAN OGLESBY WITH THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU SAID IT'S RECEIVED COMPLAINTS ABOUT THIS SPECIFIC SCAM COMPANY IMPERSONATING CASHNET USA-- GOING BACK MORE THAN 10-YEARS. THE REAL CASHNET USA HAS AN "A-PLUS" RATING... THE SCAM CASHNET AN "F". IT'S APPARENTLY SO PREVALENT, CASHNET ALSO HAS A WARNING ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "ADVANCE-FEE LOAN SCAM" ON ITS WEBSITE.

BYAN OGLESBY-BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF WEST FLORIDA:

“WE HAVE OVER 100 COMPLAINTS PRESENTED TO THAT PROFILE. REGARDING THAT SCAM SITUATION.”

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

“IT'S BEEN A NIGHTMARE. NIGHTMARE. THEY'VE PRETTY MUCH DESTROYED MY LIFE.”

NOT ONLY DIDN'T SHERRY HAWKINS GET THE LOAN... SHE LOST A FEW THOUSAND DOLLARS OF HER OWN MONEY... AND SO FAR HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO COME UP WITH ENOUGH MONEY TO BURY HER OWN FATHER.

SHERRY HAWKINS-DAUGHTER

"I DON'T KNOW HOW SOMEONE COULD BE SO CRUEL AND HEARTLESS. THEY KNEW MY SITUATION. AND I TOLD THEM THAT I NEEDED THE LOAN TO BURY MY DAD."

THE REAL CASHNET HASN'T RESPONDED OUR INQUIRIES, YET. BUT ITS WEBSITE SHOWS IT DOESN'T EVEN OFFER LOANS IN FLORIDA. EXPERTS SAYBE WARY OF ANY COMPANY OR PERSON THAT EXPECTS YOU TO SEND THEM MONEY FIRST TO GET A LOAN--ESPECIALLY IF THEY'RE ASKING FOR THE MONEY BY WIRE TRANSFER, PAYMENT APPS OR GIFT CARDS.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 2/26 10:00PM Duration: 2:33 Jeff Deal

FOR YEARS -- CRIMINALS HAVE USED CREDIT CARD SKIMMERS TO TRY TO STEAL YOUR CREDIT AND DEBIT CARD INFORMATION...BUT NOW, SO-CALLED "SHIMMERS" OR "SUPER SKIMMERS" ARE BECOMING MORE POPULAR AMONG THIEVES.

ACTION NINE CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL HAS A LOOK AT THESE PAPER THIN DEVICES AND HOW THEY'RE BEING USED TO TARGET YOUR WALLET.

IN OUR BUSY LIVES, SWIPING A CARD TO MAKE A PAYMENT... OR A BANKING TRANSACTION IS JUST PART OF THE ROUTINE... THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS FOR ELAINE FISCHER-- UNTIL JUST AFTER THANKSGIVING SHE REALIZED TWO WITHDRAWALS TOTALING A THOUSAND DOLLARS HAD BEEN MADE FROM HER CREDIT UNION ACCOUNT.

ELAINE FISCHER-VICTIM

"I JUST SAT THERE STUNNED, BECAUSE LIKE, HOW IS THIS MONEY TAKEN OUT OF MY ACCOUNT? WHEN I HAVEN'T LEFT THE HOUSE AND MY CARD IS RIGHT HERE IN MY HAND."

ELAINE FOUND A WAY TO LOCK HER ACCOUNT ONLINE... AND THEN NOTIFIED THE CREDIT UNION. THAT STARTED AN INVESTIGATION.

ELAINE FISCHER-VICTIM

"WELL, THEY DO ASK YOU A LOT OF QUESTIONS. HAS ANYBODY ELSE? HAVE YOU LENT YOUR CARD TO ANYBODY? DOES ANYBODY ELSE KNOW YOUR PIN NUMBER?"

TURNS OUT, SHE WASN'T THE ONLY VICTIM--THERE HAD BEEN HUNDREDS. SCAMMERS HIT A HANDFUL OF A-T-M'S IN ONE WEEKEND... USING INFORMATION FROM WHAT'S CALLED A SHIMMER.

NATS- CHRIS HANSEN-U.S. SECRET SERVICE:

"THIS BASICALLY JUST GETS INSERTED INTO THE MOUTH OF AN ATM WHERE YOU PUT THE CARD IN."

CHRIS HANSEN WITH THE U-S SECRET SERVICE SHOWED US AN EXAMPLE OF THE SHINY, PAPER-THIN DEVICE. IT'S SO THIN... YOUR CARD CAN STILL SLIDE INTO THE MACHINE WITH IT--HARDER TO DETECT THAN THE BULKY OVERLAY SKIMMERS WE'VE SEEN FOR YEARS.

AND THE SHIMMER READS THE INFORMATION OFF THE YOUR CARD'S MAGNETIC STRIPE--MAKING YOU VULNERABLE--EVEN IF YOU USE A CHIP CARD.

CHRIS HANSEN-U.S. SECRET SERVICE:

“A SHIMMER IS SPECIFIC TO A TYPE OF DEVICE WE'VE SEEN IN ATMS, WHERE PEOPLE ARE INSERTING THIS DEVICE INTO THE PLACE WHERE YOU PUT YOUR CREDIT CARD IN.”

THE SHIMMER IS USUALLY COUPLED WITH A SMALL PINHOLE CAMERA INSTALLED NEAR THE KEYPAD--TO CAPTURE YOUR PIN AS YOU TYPE IT IN.

“YOU CAN SEE HOW SMALL IT IS.”

THIS CREDIT UNION SHARED VIDEO OF A MASKED AND GLOVED MAN WALKING UP TO AN A-T-M TO MAKE THE INSTALLATION. IN THIS VIDEO, IT APPEARS THE CAMERA WAS INSTALLED FIRST... THEN... MOMENTS LATER... THE THIN SILVER SHIMMER INSERTED INTO THE SLOT. THE SUSPECT WAS IN AND OUT IN ABOUT A MINUTE.

ANN FLANNIGAN-CREDIT UNION:

“SO NOW THEY'VE GOT BOTH PIECES OF THE EQUATION, RIGHT. THEY HAVE THE CARD NUMBER AND THEY HAVE THE PIN. AND WITH THOSE TWO PIECES OF INFORMATION, UNFORTUNATELY, THEY CAN MAKE A NEW CARD AND AND GET TO USING IT.”

ANN FLANIGAN WITH THE CREDIT UNION POINTS OUT IT'S RARE TO FIND THEM ON THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION'S PROPERTY-LIKE THIS... MORE OFTEN THEY'RE AT ATMS IN REMOTE PLACES LIKE KIOSKS AT GAS STATIONS. STILL IT REMAINS A CAT AND MOUSE GAME AS FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT WORK TO CATCH UP WITH THE EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYED BY CRIMINALS TO GET YOUR MONEY.

ELAINE FISCHER-VICTIM

“YES, IT IS UNNERVING. YEAH, IT IS UNNERVING”

AND IT HELPS IF CUSTOMERS TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT THEIR OWN ACCOUNTS... COVER THE KEYPAD WHEN TYPING IN YOUR PIN, CHECK YOUR ACCOUNT ON A REGULAR BASIS, AND REPORT ANY SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTIONS RIGHT AWAY.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 2/29 10:00PM Duration 2:41 Jeff Deal

DOZENS OF ANGRY CENTRAL FLORIDA HOMEOWNERS CLAIM A POOL CONTRACTOR TOOK BIG DEPOSITS FROM THEM --- THEN CLOSED.

ACTION-9 CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL EXPLAINS HOW THE COMPANY'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES LEFT THEM HIGH AND DRY... AND WHAT OPTIONS THOSE FAMILIES...HAVE NOW.

I'M EMBARRASSED THAT WE EVEN WENT THROUGH THIS. I'M EMBARRASSED THAT I LET THIS HAPPEN TO US. KENYA AND TIRRELL STURDIVANT REGRET EVER CALLING SUPREME POOLS IN LONGWOOD

“THIS IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN DEALING WITH FOR A VERY LONG TIME.”

FAR FROM THE BACKYARD OASIS THE COUPLE IMAGINED WHEN THEY SIGNED THIS CONTRACT WITH SUPREME OVER 2 YEARS AGO ... THEIR DREAM POOL HAS TURNED INTO A LIVING NIGHTMARE...

“I CAN'T EVEN REALLY ENJOY THIS HOUSE BECAUSE MY BACKYARD IS A MESS. IT'S A COMPLETE TRAIN WRECK UP THERE.”

KENYA CLAIMS THEY PAID OVER \$60,000 OF THE \$70,000 POOL... AND SAYS EIGHT MONTHS INTO THE PROJECT, SHE STARTED GETTING A FUNNY FEELING...

“SOMETHING'S OFF. THEY'RE NOT SHOWING UP LIKE THEY WERE UNLESS THEY'RE ASKING FOR THEIR MONEY.”

URNS OUT HER SUSPICIONS WERE RIGHT ... THIS EMPTY STOREFRONT IN LONGWOOD IS WHERE SUPREME POOLS USED TO BE

THE COMPANY FILED CHAPTER 11 BANKRUPTCY IN LATE 2022 ... THEN MOVED TO LIQUIDATION LAST YEAR ... LEAVING DOZENS OF ANGRY CUSTOMERS LIKE THE ONES ON THIS FB GROUP...RUN BY JEANIE DUARTE...

SPEAKER 1:

“NOW WE'RE UP TO LIKE 74 MEMBERS REPRESENTING OVER 45 POOLS.”

DUARTE HAS BEEN DEALING WITH A SUPREME MESS SINCE 2021.... AND AS THE NUMBER OF UNFINISHED JOBS GREW SO DID THE DESPERATION FELT BY SO MANY HOMEOWNERS....

“I HAD TWO OF THEM THAT WERE SO DEPRESSED THAT THEY WERE CONCERNED THEY WERE GOING TO COMMIT SUICIDE. THEY WERE TALKING SUICIDE.”

“IT'S VERY UNFAIR THAT HE GETS TO WALK AROUND AND DO THIS WHILE ALL THESE FAMILIES ARE SUFFERING”

KENYA'S TALKING ABOUT COMPANY OWNER RAY TORRES... SEEN HERE FLASHING JEWELRY WE WENT LOOKING FOR HIM AT THIS BUSINESS MAILING ADDRESS IN SANFORD ...

WE'VE GOT A LOT OF COMPLAINTS SAYING HE TOOK MONEY FOR POOLS AND HE'S NOT COMPLETING THE JOBS...(WOMAN)...YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO CALL HIM

THE WOMAN AT THE DOOR TOLD US HE WASN'T THERE... RAY HAS NOT RETURNED MY CALLS.. ADDING INSULT TO INJURY... THIS FILING ON SUPREME POOLS' CHAPTER 7 BANKRUPTCY...STATES THERE 'IS NO PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION'

KENYA FEARS SHE AND SO MANY OTHERS WON'T SEE A DIME FROM THE LIQUIDATION, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S STILL MAKING LOAN PAYMENTS ON THIS CONCRETE PIT...BUT SAYS THEY'LL KEEP ON FIGHTING FOR WHAT'S RIGHT....

WE'RE SEEKING JUSTICE...WE'RE GOING TO FIGURE OUT SOME WAY TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID.

HOMEOWNERS THAT FEEL VICTIMIZED COULD FILE COMPLAINTS WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICEAND THEY CAN ALSO APPLY WITH DBPR FOR THE

STATE'S CONSTRUCTION RECOVERY FUND TO TRY TO GET SOME OF THAT MONEY BACK... BUT THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES, AND IT CAN BE A LENGTHY PROCESS...
STD

MARCH

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 3/10 10:00PM Duration: 2:44 Jeff Deal

THERE ARE MORE CONCERNS ABOUT FUEL TANKS ON CERTAIN KIA MODELS. WE SHOWED YOU IN JANUARY -- A MOTHER'S BACK SEAT POPPED UP WITH HER KIDS IN THE CAR AFTER SHE SAID HER GAS TANK SUDDENLY EXPANDED. NOW, AN OSCEOLA COUNTY MAN TOLD ACTION NINE CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL HE HEARD WHAT SOUNDED LIKE AN EXPLOSION WHEN THE FUEL TANK ON HIS KIA EXPANDED

JOHN LAUKAITIS, CAR OWNER:

"THE SOUND WAS SO LOUD IT SHOOK MY CAR, I COULD FEEL IT MY CHEST."

FOR JOHN LAUKAITIS--DRIVING HIS 2023 KIA K5 ON I-4 IN ORLANDO... HEARING THE SOUND MADE HIM THINK SOMETHING SCARY WAS HAPPENING AROUND HIM.

JOHN LAUKAITIS:

"HEARD A HUGE BANG IN THE CAR, BOOM, LIKE AN EXPLOSION."

AT FIRST THE KIA DEALERSHIP COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH IT... BUT AFTER DRIVING HIS CAR OFF THE LOT--HE STARTED HEARING MORE STRANGE SOUNDS--AND SAW HIS ENTIRE BACK SEAT HAD POPPED UP. WHEN HE TOOK IT BACK IN, THAT'S WHEN THE SHOP SAW THE PROBLEM.

JOHN LAUKAITIS:

"TOLD ME THAT APPARENTLY THE FUEL TANK HAD SWELLED ALONG WITH THE FUEL PUMP AND BLEW AND THAT'S ULTIMATELY WHAT THAT EXPLOSION WAS."

A FRIEND SHOWED HIM ACTION 9'S STORY FROM JANUARY-- INVOLVING BRITTANY KELLEY, A CLERMONT MOTHER WHOSE KIDS WERE IN THE BACKSEAT WHEN HER 2022 KIA K5 SHOOK WITH A SIMILAR LOUD BANG SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT THE DEALER'S REPAIR SHOP TOLD HER

BRITTANY KELLEY-CAR OWNER:

"YOUR GAS TANK EXPANDED. AND YOU'RE LUCKY YOU MADE IT HERE SAFELY. YOUR CAR IS NO LONGER SAFE TO DRIVE."

THE LOCAL DEALERSHIP LATER SENT HER AN EMAIL STATING ITS "SHOP FOREMAN BELIEVES THAT THE PCV VALVED FAILED DUE TO A DEFECT OF THE GAS TANK. THE TANK EXPANDED AND CAUSED THE PCV VALVE TO LOCK SHUT."

AND IN A MESSAGE TO KIA... IT WROTE THEY "FOUND DAMAGE UNDER THE SEAT AND THE FUEL PUMP COVER BENT." BOTH CONSUMERS DRIVE A LOT FOR THEIR WORK--BRITTANY HAD AROUND 72-THOUSAND MILES ON THE 2022, JOHN HAD AROUND 48-THOUSAND.

PATRICK COUSINS-ATTORNEY:

"FOR A FUEL TANK TO DO THAT YOU'RE THINKING SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN ON THE ROAD 50-YEARS SITTING, IT'S GOT RUST, IT'S GOT A HOLE IN IT, BUT NOT A BRAND NEW VEHICLE."

ATTORNEY PATRICK COUSINS SPECIALIZES IN LEMON LAW CASES AND OTHER CASES INVOLVING CAR DEFECTS...HE SAYS THE QUESTION IS... WILL THIS START HAPPENING TO MORE KIA K5S AS MORE OF THEM REACH HIGHER MILES.

PATRICK COUSINS-ATTORNEY:

"YOU KNOW, THE AVERAGE PERSON TO GET 48,000 MILES, IT'S GONNA TAKE ABOUT FOUR YEARS. AND YOU KNOW, YOU MAY BE RUNNING AT THE END OF THE WARRANTY."

WE ASKED KIA IF IT'S LOOKING AT THAT... AND IF SO, HOW MANY CARS COULD THIS IMPACT. KIA HAS SAID IT'S INVESTIGATING. MEANWHILE, BRITTANY KELLEY AND JOHN LAUKAITIS ARE HOPING IF THERE IS A BIGGER PROBLEM KIA WILL SOLVE IT BEFORE SOMEONE GETS HURT... AND HELP DRIVERS LIKE THEM WHO ARE IMPACTED.

JOHN LAUKAITIS:

"I JUST HOPE ULTIMATELY KIA DOES THE RIGHT THING BY ME AND BY THEIR CUSTOMERS."

SOMEONE IN SOUTH FLORIDA ALSO MADE A SIMILAR COMPLAINT TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ABOUT 2021 KIA K5. WITH THE TWO LOCAL CASES, KIA HAS OFFERED TO REPURCHASE OR REPLACE THEIR VEHICLES WITH DIFFERENT DOLLAR FIGURES, BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN FINALIZED YET IN EITHER CASE. JD CH9 EWN.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 3/13 10:00PM Duration: 2:41 Jeff Deal

A LOCAL BUSINESSMAN -- WHO USES THE ONLINE MONIKER -- GRANITE GANGSTER IS NOW FACING EVEN MORE CHARGES. WE REPORTED ON CHUCK OGDEN LAST YEAR -- WHEN HE WAS ACCUSED OF CONTRACTING WITHOUT A LICENSE. AND NOW -- AS ACTION NINE CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL LEARNED -- HE'S FACING NINE ADDITIONAL FELONIES... WITH THREE NEW VICTIMS. SHOWING OFF CASH... AND FLASHY CARS...

CHUCK OGDEN WHO USES THE SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLE GRANITE GANGSTER-- ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO WORK HARD SO THEY CAN MAKE MONEY LIKE HIM.

"IF YOU WANT IT BAD ENOUGH, LOOK HERE, YOU CAN HAVE IT. THERE'S MY WEALTH. THERE'S MY SUCCESS."

BUT LAST YEAR HE WAS ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH CONTRACTING WITHOUT A LICENSE--AFTER MELANIE CAIN CAME FORWARD.... COMPLAINING ABOUT "SUBSTANDARD AND SHODDY" WORK.

MELANIE CAIN-HOMEOWNER:

"MY HOME IS UNFINISHED. I HAVE A CHILD LIVING HERE. I DON'T HAVE ANY PLUMBING IN MY KITCHEN. I HAVE AN UNFINISHED MASTER BATHROOM."

SHE SIGNED A CONTRACT THROUGH OGDEN THAT LISTED THE COMPANY NAME AS EAST COAST COUNTERTOPS & REMODELING. BUT AFTER SHE PAID MORE THAN 33-THOUSAND DOLLARS, THE CITY OF PORT ORANGE PUT A STOP WORK ORDER ON THE PROJECT... INSPECTORS SAID PARTS OF THE JOB REQUIRED A CONTRACTORS LICENSE AND PERMITS WHICH WERE NEVER PULLED.

SINCE THEN--OGDEN HAS BEEN HIT WITH NINE ADDITIONAL CHARGES... THREE COUNTS EACH OF CONTRACTING WITHOUT A LICENSE DURING AN EMERGENCY, GRAND THEFT AND ORGANIZED SCHEME TO DEFRAUD. PAT HERLEHY WAS ONE OF THE VICTIMS.

PAT HERLEHY HOMEOWNER:

"I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S GOING TO BURN MY HOUSE DOWN OR NOT."

HERLEHY AND HIS WIFE CONTACTED OGDEN WHEN FLOOD WATERS TORE THROUGH THEIR HOME DURING HURRICANE IAN. BUT POLICE RECORDS SHOW OGDEN HIRED AN UNLICENSED HANDYMAN TO DO ELECTRICAL WORK-- AND CREWS USED CARPENTRY SCREWS THAT PIERCED THE WIRING-- PAT TOLD US AN ELECTRICAL SPARK IN THE KITCHEN SHOCKED HIS WIFE.

PAT HERLEHY -HOMEOWNER:

"ENOUGH SPARK CAME OUT THAT SHE BOUNCED BACK, AND WE SHUT THE BREAKER OFF."

AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING... HE POINTED TO UNEVEN COUNTERTOPS, CABINETS A NEW CONTRACTOR TOLD HIM AREN'T HUNG PROPERLY AND INSULATION INSTALLED BACKWARDS. HE PAID OGDEN 48-THOUSAND DOLLARS... RECORDS SHOW 10-THOUSAND OF IT WAS FEMA MONEY. POLICE SAY OGDEN TOOK \$25,000 FROM ANOTHER HURRICANE VICTIM BUT NEVER DID ANY WORK.

"I'M JEFF DEAL WITH CHANNEL 9. IS CHUCK HERE? WE WANTED TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT HIS ARREST AND THE ALLEGATIONS THAT HE'S FACING. -DOOR CLOSES-"

NO ONE WOULD OPEN THE DOOR WHEN WE SHOWED UP AT HIS HOLLY HILL STOREFRONT TO ASK ABOUT IT LAST YEAR. OGDEN LATER CALLED AND SAID HIS SON OWNS THAT BUSINESS AND HE WAS JUST WORKING AS A SALES REP AT THE TIME. BUT OGDEN HAS ENTERED "NO CONTEST" PLEAS TO CONTRACTING WITHOUT A LICENSE TWICE SINCE 2019.

HE EVEN SERVED PRISON TIME FOR SELLING COCAINE FROM 2002 TO 2005. WHILE BOTH MELANIE AND PAT SAY THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY ANYONE TO FINISH THEIR HOMES... OGDEN IS FREE TO SHOW OFF HIS STACKS OF CASH AND LUXURY CARS.

PAT HERLEHY HOMEOWNER:

“SHADY. IT'S LIKE, HOW COULD YOU DO THAT TO SOMEBODY, YOU KNOW, IT'S ALREADY WE'RE ALREADY VULNERABLE, VULNERABLE AS IT IS BECAUSE OUR HOUSES WERE DESTROYED.”

OGDEN WAS ARRESTED ON THE MOST RECENT CHARGES THIS WEEK. WHEN WE CONTACTED HIM ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL CHARGES -- IN AN EMAIL -- HE WROTE THAT HE AND HIS ATTORNEYS ARE WORKING ON AN AIRTIGHT DEFENSE.. AND THAT THEY ARE GOING TO PROVE HIS INNOCENCE IN ALL OF THIS.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date: 3/16 10:00PM Duration: 1:13 Clark Howard

A HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT CAN BE A QUICK WAY TO GET SOME MONEY, BUT IT CAN ALSO DO A LOT OF FINANCIAL DAMAGE. CHANNEL NINE CONSUMER ADVISER CLARK HOWARD EXPLAINS WHEN TAKING OUT THAT LINE OF CREDIT CAN GET YOU IN TROUBLE.

THERE ARE SO MANY SOLICITATIONS RIGHT NOW COMING FROM EVERY DIRECTION, MAILBOX, EMAIL, WEBSITE, TEXT TRYING TO GET YOU TO OPEN UP A HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT. I'M A MEMBER OF TWO CREDIT UNIONS. BOTH OF THEM SOLICITED ME THIS MONTH TRYING TO GET ME TO OPEN A HE-LOC. WHY? THESE ARE INTENSELY PROFITABLE FOR BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS. YOU BORROW MONEY AT A PRETTY HIGH INTEREST RATE. THE RATE CAN CHANGE EVERY SINGLE MONTH, AND YOU ARE EATING IN TO THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME THAT YOU OWN, INSTEAD BEING OBLIGATED TO A BANK OR CREDIT UNION AGAIN.

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE OUT A HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT? WHEN YOU'RE IMPROVING YOUR HOME, RENOVATING, ADDING ON REPAIRING BUT NOT TO JUST DO STUFF, BUY STUFF OR GO SOMEWHERE. REMEMBER, THE PURPOSE OF YOUR HOME IS TO BUILD SECURITY FOR YOU LONG TERM AND HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE. I'M CLARK HOWARD

CLARK HOWARD HELPS OUR ACTION NINE TEAM LOOK OUT FOR CONSUMERS LIKE YOU. HE HAS POSTED EVEN MORE VALUABLE RESOURCES ONLINE AT CLARK DOT-COM.

Category: LOCAL CONSUMER CONCERNS/ALERTS:

Date 3/18 10:00PM Duration: 2:22 Jeff Deal

ONE IN THREE AMERICANS HAS MORE CREDIT CARD DEBT THAN EMERGENCY SAVINGS, WITH LESS THAN HALF OF AMERICANS SAYING THEY'D BE ABLE TO AFFORD A SUDDEN 1-THOUSAND-DOLLAR EXPENSE. THESE NUMBERS COME FROM A NEW STUDY BY BANK-RATE -- EXAMINING THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF THE NATION. CONSUMER INVESTIGATOR JEFF DEAL Poured OVER THE NUMBERS FINDING A SILVER LINING AND A FEW...MAJOR RED FLAGS.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, INFLATION IS FALLING AND WAGES ARE RISING. BUT, MOST PEOPLE ARE STILL HAVING A HARD TIME SAVING ANY MONEY. IF YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, YOU'RE NOT ALONE AND ODDS ARE YOU'RE ALSO YEARS FROM RETIREMENT.

GREG MCBRIDE - BANKRATE CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST

"THE LIKELIHOOD OF HAVING MORE CREDIT CARD DEBT THAN EMERGENCY SAVINGS IS NOTICEABLY HIGHER AMONG MILLENNIALS AND GEN XERS THAN AMONG OTHER GENERATIONS"

GREG MCBRIDE IS THE CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST AT BANK-RATE, WHERE A NEW REPORT IS SHOWING JUST HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK. THE GROUP FOUND 36-PERCENT OF AMERICANS HAVE MORE CREDIT CARD DEBT THAN EMERGENCY SAVINGS, A MAJOR PROBLEM CONSIDERING CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATES ARE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH, MEANING THAT DEBT ISN'T JUST FINANCIALLY CRIPPLING, IT MAY ALSO LIMIT LIFE CHOICES

GREG MCBRIDE - BANKRATE CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST

"DEBT CAN BE A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO THOSE, LIFE EVENTS, WHETHER IT'S TAKING A PROMOTION IN ANOTHER CITY. STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS OR JUST SWITCHING CAREERS ALTOGETHER"

MAKING MATTERS WORSE, THE GROUP ALSO FOUND THAT 22-PERCENT OF AMERICANS HAVE NO EMERGENCY SAVINGS, AND ONLY 44-PERCENT OF AMERICANS SAID THEY HAVE AT LEAST 1-THOUSAND DOLLARS IN SAVINGS. BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS, THE SAME STUDY FOUND THAT 36-PERCENT OF AMERICANS ARE CURRENTLY WORKING TO PAY DOWN DEBT AND BUILD SAVINGS, A POSITIVE TREND FOR THOSE IN THEIR PRIME EARNING YEARS.

GREG MCBRIDE - BANKRATE CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST

"SUCCESSFUL SAVING IS ALL ABOUT THE HABIT, AND THE SOONER YOU ESTABLISH THAT HABIT, THE LONGER IT WILL STICK WITH YOU."

THERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW -- TO TRY AND SAVE MORE MONEY. FIRST -- PAY OFF HIGH-INTEREST CREDIT CARD DEBTS -- OR TRANSFER THE BALANCES TO LOWER CARDS WITH LOWER INTEREST RATES. THE OTHER IS TO SET UP A DIRECT DEPOSIT -- FROM YOUR PAYCHECK INTO A DEDICATED SAVINGS ACCOUNT. THAT WAY -- THE SAVINGS HAPPEN AUTOMATICALLY.