



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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Palm Coast Couple Arrested for Elder and Child Neglect, Home Infested with Cockroaches

BUNNELL, Fla. —The Flagler County Sheriff's Office has arrested a Palm Coast couple for child neglect and elderly neglect after a welfare check revealed a severe cockroach infestation and deplorable living conditions inside the home.

On Tuesday, Jan. 13, a member of Flagler County Fire Rescue requested a welfare check while assisting an elderly man at a residence in the W-Section of Palm Coast after observing bedding heavily soiled with feces and urine as well as live cockroaches, cockroach droppings, and garbage scattered throughout the residence. FCSO deputies responded to the residence, and, upon completion of the welfare check, contacted the Florida Department of Children and Families. Due to the information obtained during the welfare check, FCSO Major Case Unit detectives immediately took over the investigation.

Inside the residence, Major Case Unit detectives immediately observed a pungent odor of urine emanating from the home as well as spoiled food and feces scattered throughout. While speaking with Tashaye Brown, 31, of Palm Coast, about the condition of the home, detectives observed an infant inside a Pack 'n Play that was infested with cockroaches.

Brown told detectives that she was aware of the infestation, but it was too expensive to hire a professional. As such, she would turn the Pack 'n Play upside down and shake the insects out, place the infant back inside, and then spray a circle of cockroach insecticide around the base of the Pack 'n Play.

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Upon further inspection, detectives observed black spots along open electrical outlets consistent with roach droppings as well as black spots along the walls and ceilings and mold around the HVAC system vents.

While on scene, detectives also conducted an interview with an elderly man who told detectives that he had just returned home from the hospital and that a nurse who used to come to the home to address his medical needs no longer works there, and he doesn't know who is supposed to help him. The elderly man — who was unable to walk, feed or change himself, or take his medication without assistance — had scabs on his legs and insects emerging from his socks.

According to Brown, she and her fiancé, Nikolas Cummings, 32, of Palm Coast, moved into the home about two years ago to care for the elderly man because her cousin was unable to care for him, but stated that it was his responsibility. Cummings told detectives that he and Brown were the elderly man's sole providers and caretakers.

Upon completion of their investigation, detectives determined that the elderly victim's son was not mentally or physically capable of caring for him and that Brown and Cummings were the sole responsible parties for the elderly victim's care, and that they showed willful disregard for the care of both victims.

"The deplorable conditions of that house were no place for a toddler or a senior with serious medical issues," said Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly. "These two feigned ignorance over the trash, feces and insects covering the floors, walls and the victims inside the home. This was not a matter of money, they did not care about the hygiene of their home, the welfare of their child, or the medical needs of their family members. They put in zero effort. We will make sure their cells are clean at the Green Roof Inn."

The elderly victim was transported to a local hospital for treatment, and the infant was placed in the care of family members. In addition to the criminal investigation, DCF is conducting a separate investigation to assess the welfare of both victims.



Nikolas Cummings (left) and Tashaye Brown (right) (Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility mug shots)

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Cummings and Brown were arrested for child neglect without great bodily harm and neglect of an elderly or disabled adult without great bodily harm. They were transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility, where they are being held on a \$15,000 bond.

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