

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.: L-2023-36

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER FOR CYBER CRIMES

OPERATION NIGHTCRAWLERS

October 4th, 2023 through October 7th, 2023

The Lake County Sheriff's Office, with assistance from other law enforcement agencies, will be conducting an undercover operation to investigate internet crimes against children and identify individuals who arrange to meet with child/children for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity with the child/children. As a result of this investigation, these individuals may travel to an undisclosed location in Lake County and may be arrested by the Lake County Sheriff's Office. This operation will be in effect from October 4th, 2023 through October 7th, 2023, and has been named "**OPERATION NIGHTCRAWLERS.**"

There is concern that if a person arrested is released on bond and accesses the internet, he/she could electronically post and disseminate information about the undercover operation over the internet to other individuals. Such actions would reveal the existence of this undercover operation, and as such, could endanger the law enforcement officers involved. In order to preserve the integrity of the ongoing investigation, as well as the safety of the law enforcement officers involved in the operation, it is necessary to implement certain conditions of pre-trial release in the form of this administrative order prior to the operation.

It is hereby ordered and adjudged that the following conditions of pre-trial release shall be imposed for individuals arrested in connection with the operation:

1. Any defendant arrested in this operation will be held without bond until appearing in front of a Judge at first appearance.
2. No Judge conducting first appearances is authorized to reduce bonds imposed under

Florida Statute(s) 847.0135 and/or 847.0138 and/or 827.071 and/or 800.04 and/or 794.011 or any attempt thereof, for the purposes of this operation between October 4th, 2023 and October 7th, 2023.

3. After first appearance, and upon motion by Defendant bond may be ordered of ***not less than*** \$25,000 per count under Florida Statute 847.0135 ***and/or*** 847.0138 ***and/or*** 827.071 ***and/or*** 800.04 ***and/or*** 794.011 or any attempt thereof. Any other charges will have the standard bond set according to the guidelines of the administrative order dictating the bond schedule for the Fifth Judicial Circuit.
4. Any defendant arrested in this operation shall have the additional bond conditions imposed:
 - a. Defendant may not initiate contact with any child under the age of 18 and may not have intentional contact with any child under the age of 18.
 - b. Defendant may not possess or utilize any computers or electronic devices connected to the internet.
5. This order shall not impair any of the Defendant's rights available under the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.

It is further ordered that this Administrative Order be sealed until October 30th, 2023 in order to preserve the integrity of any ongoing criminal investigation and the safety of the law enforcement officers involved.

DONE AND ORDERED, in Tavares, Lake County, Florida this 20th day of September, 2023.



James R. Baxley
Circuit Court Judge