



## GEORGETOWN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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July 22, 2024

**CARTER  
WEAVER**  
SHERIFF



### Joint Operation Busts Nine Online Predators

Sheriff Carter Weaver announces that a joint operation spearheaded by the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office and the South Carolina Attorney General's Office Internet Crimes Against Children Division led to the capture of nine men seeking to exploit and abuse children through online platforms. Operation Tidal Wave, finalized after extensive enforcement efforts begun with a sting operation in late February, brought together representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), the US Secret Service, the US Attorney's Office, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, the Horry County Sheriff's Office, the Mount Pleasant Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff's Office, Myrtle Beach Police Department, Conway Police Department, and the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

The operation targeted individuals who were identified through coordinated investigation as attempting to establish illicit relationships with minors online. During the endeavor, suspects were arrested after trying to meet with who they believed were children. Some compounded their crimes by sharing pornographic photos online or bringing drugs to the meeting.

#### Those arrested:

Thomas Jarrod Hood, 32, of Myrtle Beach  
Nicardo Melbourne Vassell, 35, of Myrtle Beach  
Kevin John Richmond, 51, of Myrtle Beach  
Jason Alexander Morgan, 25, of Calabash, NC  
Mark E. Tilghman, 62, Surfside Beach  
Nicholas James Russo, 31, of Myrtle Beach  
Robert Edward Calloway, 48, of Myrtle Beach  
Weunder Inai Segura Lopez, 34, North Myrtle Beach  
Julio Francisco Gomez Sauzo Apellidos, 31, foreign national

Sheriff Weaver thanked all the agencies who brought their experience and resources to the joint effort.

"The sad reality is that I am not surprised by the number of predators that were charged, but I am sickened nonetheless by how arrogant and willing they were to victimize our children," Sheriff Weaver said.

