



Arrest Affidavit

MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
692 NW 30TH AVE
OCALA, FL 34475

Report Date / Time 1/16/2026 01:14 PM	Report Number MCSO55ARR19083S	Case Number/Cad Number MCSO26OFF001317 / 2601160458	Reporting Officer Name MANNING, J
Originating Agency ORI FL0420000	Occur Date Time Range 01/16/2026 13:09:00 -	OBTS	Clearance

Location of Occurrence

County MARION	Location Type	Location Description			
Street Number 800	Street SE HIGHWAY 42	Apt/Lot/Bldg	City SUMMERFIELD	State FL	Zip Code 34491

Suspect

First Name BENITO	Middle Name ORLANDO	Last Name COTTO COLON	Suffix	Race WHITE	Sex MALE	Height 5'10"	Weight 200	Hair BRO	Eyes BRO
MNI # MCSO25MNI128757	SSN [REDACTED]	Date of Birth 11/05/1991	Age 34	Place of Birth PR	Drivers License or other ID C324074914050	State FL	ID Type E		
Address * / 17454 S HIGHWAY 475 , SUMMERFIELD, FL 34491 / 352-233-1640									

Arrest Affidavit Data

Question Primary Language	Answer English
Question Immigration Status	Answer American Citizen
Question Vehicle Company / Address	Answer

Arrest

Arrest Date/Time	Arrest Location Type	Arrest Location Description				
Street Number	Street	Apt/Lot/Bldg	County	City	State	Zip Code

Warrant Affidavit

Sent to Court Date/Time	Affidavit Status	Affidavit Disposition	Affidavit Disposition Date/Time
Court County	Court	Court Location	
Comments			

Charge :

Counts 1	Charge 828.12.1	Bond Amount \$0.00	<input type="checkbox"/> No Bond
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Charge Degree F	Charge Level MISDEMEANOR	General Offense Code CONSERVATION-ANIMALS
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Charge Description TORMENT DEPRIVE MUTILATE KILL
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Probable Cause

Before Me, the undersigned authority personally appeared Detective James Manning ID 5796 who being duly sworn, alleges, on information and belief, that on the 16th day of January 2026

in Marion County, Florida the defendant did:

Commit the offense of one count Animal Cruelty to wit:

ON JANUARY 15TH, 2025, INVESTIGATOR JUSTIN MCCLURE, ID 7062 RECEIVED AN EMAILED TIP THAT WAS SUBMITTED BY MAY MARROUQUIN. THE TIP ALLEGED AS FOLLOWS:

“My horse, Secreto de Besilu, was brutally abused by his trainer, Benny Cotto, who resides in Summerfield, Florida. I am in possession of a video showing him kicking my horse, punching him, and violently pulling the bit, to the point that I am now concerned he may have caused serious injuries to my horse’s mouth and tongue. I currently live in Miami, but I am traveling to Summerfield and I urgently need help and guidance on how to proceed with this situation. This is a very serious case of animal abuse, and I am requesting immediate assistance.”

INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE THEN CONTACTED THE REPORTEE, WHO WAS IDENTIFIED AS LUZ MARIA MARROQUIN WHO ALSO GOES BY “MAY”. THE REPORTEE STATED THAT SHE HIRED THE DEFENDANT, BENITO ORLANDO COTTO COLON, APPROXIMATELY A YEAR AND A HALF AGO TO TRAIN AND TAKE CARE OF TWO OF HER HORSES. REPORTEE ADVISED THAT SHE WAS CONTACTED BY THE SUBJECT THIS PAST TUESDAY (JANUARY 13TH, 2026) IN WHICH HE ADVISED THAT HE WANTED TO TAKE HER HORSE TO A HORSE SHOW IN MIAMI, FLORIDA. THE REPORTEE STATED THAT THE DEFENDANT REQUESTED THE HORSES COGGINS AND SHE ADVISED HIM TO CONTACT HIS WIFE, BRITTAIN COTTO, AS SHE SHOULD HAVE THE COGGINS AND THE HORSES REGISTRATION PAPERWORK.

THE REPORTEE ADVISED THAT SHE HAD A PHONE CONVERSATION WITH BRITTAIN COTTO THAT EVENING AS SHE WAS UNABLE TO TEXT DUE TO HER DRIVING. SHE STATED THAT SHE SPOKE WITH BRITTANY AND THAT IS WHEN SHE WAS NOTIFIED OF THE VIDEO OF THE ALLEGED ABUSE. THE REPORTEE WAS ADVISED THAT THIS ALLEGEDLY OCCURRED A MONTH AGO AND COULD NOT GIVE ME THE EXACT TIME/DATE THAT THE VIDEO WAS TAKEN. INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE REQUESTED THE REPORTEE SEND HIM A COPY OF THE VIDEO VIA

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EMAIL AND SHE STATED THAT SHE WOULD. PRIOR TO ENDING THE CONVERSATION, SHE ADVISED THAT SHE HAS CONTACTED THE UNITED STATES EQUINE FEDERATION AND THE PASO FINO HORSE ASSOCIATION TO FILE A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE DEFENDANT.

INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE LATER RECEIVED A VIDEO VIA EMAIL FROM THE REPORTEE

REVIEW OF VIDEO

THE VIDEO IN ITS ENTIRETY IS 16 SECONDS LONG. IT DEPICTS WHAT APPEARS TO BE A BAY PASO FINO HORSE IN AN ARENA THAT HAS A SADDLE AND BRIDLE ON. THERE IS A MALE IN THE PHOTO THAT IS WEARING A BLACK POLO STYLE SHIRT WITH AN ORANGE LONG SLEEVE UNDER SHIRT AND BLUE JEANS. THE VIDEO SHOWS THE MALE KICKING IN THE HORSE IN THE ABDOMEN FOUR SEPARATE TIMES. DURING THIS, THE HORSE IS ATTEMPTING TO EVADE THE MAN WHO HAS A HOLD OF THE REINS OF THE BRIDLE. THE MAN THEN STOPS KICKING HORSE AND PROCEEDS TO SNATCH/YANK ON THE HORSE'S HEAD APPROXIMATELY SEVEN TIMES CAUSING THE HORSES HEAD TO JERK AND FLY UP.

BASED OFF INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE'S TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE, HE ADVISED THAT THIS HORSE WAS IN OBVIOUS DISTRESS AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT. THE HORSE WAS CONTINUOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO EVADE THE MAN AND WAS SHOWING A FEAR RESPONSE BY CONSTANTLY MOVING AWAY FROM THE MAN WHILE HE WAS KICKING IT. I ALSO NOTICED THAT WHILE HE WAS KICKING THE HORSE, WHENEVER HE MADE CONTACT WITH THE ABDOMEN, THE HORSE WOULD "POP" UP ON ITS HIND END OR BOUNCING EVERY TIME HE MADE CONTACT WITH THE ABDOMEN.

ON JANUARY 16TH, 2026, INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE CONTACTED WITNESS, BRITTAIN COTTO, VIA PHONE. SHE CONFIRMED THAT SHE WAS THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE VIDEO AND WAS AN EYE WITNESS TO THE INCIDENT. BRITTAIN ADVISED THAT SHE WOULD MEET WITH INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE AND SHE WOULD ALSO SEND HIM VIDEOS THAT SHE TOOK FROM THE DATE OF INCIDENT. INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE RECEIVED THREE VIDEOS FROM BRITTAIN VIA EMAIL. THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS;

THE FIRST VIDEO WAS LABELED "VIDEO". THIS IS THE SAME SIXTEEN SECOND VIDEO THAT

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HE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED AND DEPICTS THE MALE KICKING AND PULLING ON THE HORSE.

THE SECOND VIDEO WAS LABELED "VIDEO_5". THIS WAS A TWENTY SECOND VIDEO THAT DEPICTED THE SAME INDIVIDUAL THAT WAS DESCRIBED IN THE VIDEO OF THE INCIDENT RIDING A BAY PASO FINO. THIS VIDEO DOES NOT DEPICT ANY ABUSE.

THE THIRD VIDEO WAS LABELED "VIDEO_6". THIS WAS A TWENTY ONE SECOND VIDEO THAT DEPICTED THE SAME INDIVIDUAL THAT WAS DESCRIBED IN THE VIDEO OF THE INCIDENT RIDING A BAY PASO FINO. THIS VIDEO DOES NOT DEPICT ANY ABUSE.

VIA A FACEBOOK SEARCH, INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE FOUND AN ACCOUNT LINKED TO "BENNY ORLANOD COTTO". IN REVIEWING HIS FACEBOOK PAGE, THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC WITH NO PRIVACY RESTRICTIONS, INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE LOCATED A POST THAT SUBJECT COTTO MADE APPROXIMATELY EIGHTEEN HOURS AGO. THE TIME THAT INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE WAS LOOKING AT THIS POST WAS 0933 HOURS. THE POST STATED AS FOLLOWS;

"I want to clarify a situation that has been shared recently. The video circulating was recorded over a month ago. Minutes before what appears in that video, the horse nearly threw me off. If I had fallen the way it was about to happen, the horse could have seriously injured or even killed me. Because of that, I dismounted and continued working the horse from the ground. Yes, that is me in the video, and I take full responsibility for my actions. I acknowledge that the way I was handling the horse at that moment was not appropriate, and I sincerely apologize for it. I was not aware that my ex-wife was present or that she was recording me. That video was later shared with the intention of harming me. Anyone who truly knows me, my work, and my history with horses knows that I deeply love these animals and would never intentionally hurt a horse. Horses are my life, and their well-being has always been my priority. I am truly sorry for what happened and appreciate your understanding of the full context of this situation."

INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE AND I MET WITH WITNESS, BRITTAIN COTTO AT THE AGRICULTURE INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE. WITNESS BRITTAIN STATED THAT ON DECEMBER 12TH, 2025, SHE WAS AT 1309 SW 145TH STREET, IN OCALA FLORIDA AT THE REQUEST OF THE SUSPECT TO VIDEO HIM TRAINING A HORSE. BRITTAIN ADVISED THAT THE TRAINING STARTED AT 1:12 P.M. AND THE VIDEO THAT DEPICTED HIM KICKING AND YANKING ON THE HORSE OCCURRED

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AT 1:23 P.M. BRITTAIN ADVISED THAT THE SUSPECT WAS THE MAN IN THE BLACK POLO SHIRT WITH AN ORANGE LONG SLEEVE UNDER SHIRT. INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE INQUIRED IF THE SUSPECT WAS AWARE THAT SHE WAS FILMING HIM AND SHE STATED THAT HE WAS. INVESTIGATOR MCCLURE THEN PRESENTED BRITTAIN WITH A SCREEN SHOT PRINTED IMAGE FROM THE VIDEO THAT SHE SENT HIM AND SHE ADVISED THAT THE SUSPECT WAS THE MAN IN THE PHOTO.


BASED UPON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THIS CASE, IT IS APPARENT THAT THE DEFENDANT UNNECESSICARILY TORMENTED A BAY PASO FINO HORSE BY CAUSING UNJUSTIFIABLE PAIN OR SUFFERING TO SAID HORSE BY REPEATEDLY KICKING THE HORSE'S ABDOMEN AND YANKING/PULLING ON THE HORSES BRIDLE .

Officer Name Rank / ID #	Involvement On Report / Reporting Role	Officer Agency Org/Unit
MANNING, J CORPORAL 5796	REPORTING OFFICER	MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AGRICULTURAL/MARINE UNIT
OGLETREE, T SERGEANT/M 2406	APPROVING SUPERVISOR	MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AGRICULTURAL/MARINE UNIT

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The undersigned certifies and swears that he/she has just and reasonable grounds to believe that the above named Defendant, committed violation(s), of law, on the below date(s) and time(s), as listed in the probable cause associated with this report:

Reporting Officer

Officer Name MANNING, J Office Rank CORPORAL Officer ID No 5796 Officer Agency MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE 	Sworn and subscribed before me, the undersigned authority This the _____ day of _____, _____ DEPUTY OF THE COURT, NOTARY OR LAW ENFORCEMENT
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Officer Signature

<hr/> <p>COUNTY / CIRCUIT JUDGE</p>
