

Osceola deputy used database to help sex-abuser coach, investigation finds



Former Osceola County deputy Arturo Domínguez (left) is accused of assisting Omar Ayala, a childhood friend, by keeping him informed of whether there were arrest warrants against him. (Osceola County Sheriff's Office)



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UPDATED: June 1, 2023 at 2:02 p.m.

An Osceola County deputy was arrested after using law enforcement databases to help an Okeechobee County coach evade an arrest for sexually abusing a minor, the Osceola County Sheriff announced Thursday.

Arturo Domínguez, 31, is facing felony charges of unauthorized access to a computer, official misconduct, disclosure of confidential law enforcement information and accessory after the fact to unlawful sexual activity with a minor. He was accused of assisting Omar Ayala, a childhood friend, by keeping him informed of whether there were arrest warrants against him.

Sheriff Marcos López further announced Domínguez, a deputy with the Sheriff's Office for the last two years, was fired from the agency.

"It doesn't matter to me or my investigators whether you wear civilian clothes or a law enforcement uniform," López told reporters. "When one of my deputies violates the law, it feels personal to me because my deputy didn't just commit a crime, he violated public trust and the trust of all of the hardworking and dedicated members of the Osceola County Sheriff's Office."



Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda/Orlando Sentinel

Osceola County Sheriff Marcos López talks to the media following a press conference on Friday, July 2, 2021. (Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda/ Orlando Sentinel)

The arrest was connected to an investigation by the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office into two school coaches accused of sexually abusing a student that began in April. Donny Raney, a 36-year-old pastor at Okeechobee Missionary Baptist Church who also coached at Yearling Middle School, was charged with being an authority figure soliciting a romantic relationship with a student, court records show.

According to an arrest affidavit, the victim's mother reported the interactions with Raney after finding photos, videos and text messages on the victim's phone. Raney later confessed to meeting the victim through work he did as a chaplain at Okeechobee High School, the affidavit added.

The victim's mother also told detectives the victim had a relationship with Ayala in 2020, before her 18th birthday while he was serving as her cross-country coach, the affidavit said.

Charges weren't filed against Ayala, who instead was banned from coaching female sports and had to pay a fine, Okeechobee County School District spokesperson Dylan Tedder said in an email.

Ayala, who has not been arrested, and Raney no longer work at the district. Investigators believe Ayala fled the county, and the search for him is being conducted by the U.S. Marshals Service, said Cpl. Jack Nash, spokesperson for the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office.

Though Domínguez initially told investigators he searched Ayala's name after pulling him over for a traffic stop, he later confessed to having conversations with him about his arrest warrant, López said.

No records regarding Domínguez's arrest were available in the court system as of Thursday afternoon.

Domínguez is the latest of several deputies who are facing or have faced criminal charges since López took office in 2021. Most recently, Deputy David Crawford was [charged with culpable negligence after firing a stun gun on a motorcyclist as he lay in a pool of gasoline](#), sparking a blaze that caused burns on three-quarters of his body.

He is currently on administrative leave while the criminal case against him proceeds.

In May last year, former Deputy Dirio Sinclair was sentenced to probation after being convicted of battery for [repeatedly punching a suspect who was handcuffed to a hospital bed](#). And in 2021, Kevin Encarnación was accused of [using law enforcement resources to help his cousin avoid an arrest](#) for aggravated assault against his wife.

Encarnación pleaded no contest to two of the three charges against him, and was sentenced to probation and community service at a nonprofit focused on women's safety, according to court records.

Both deputies have since been fired from the Sheriff's Office. López said he is "concerned" about public perception of his agency, but defended the work of his investigators to root out employees accused of crimes.

Domínguez, he added, passed extensive background checks before getting the job at the Sheriff's Office.

"We have almost 1,000 employees," López said. "If I had a solve-all on how to really read your mind or be able to read a red flag thinking it would lead to misconduct, I would be a millionaire and use it every day, and I would spread that to every law enforcement agency in America."

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Source:

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2023/06/01/osceola-deputy-used-database-to-help-sex-abuser-coach-investigation-finds/>