



News Release

Alachua County Sheriff's Office

Sadie Darnell, Sheriff

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For Immediate Release:

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Intended Termination of Employment for Detective Zachary Zedalis and Sergeant Kathleen Zedalis:

On July 30, 2015, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office responded to a 9-1-1 call regarding a domestic battery event involving Sergeant Kathleen Zedalis and Detective Zachary Zedalis. As a result of the preliminary information garnered during the Alachua County Sheriff's Office's (ACSO) initial response, the investigation into any and all criminal allegations between the parties was referred to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for an independent investigation.

Testimony provided to and evidence collected by FDLE confirmed that on July 30, 2015, Sergeant Kathleen Zedalis and Detective Zachary Zedalis were involved in a confrontation that escalated into a physical altercation between them. There were no other witnesses inside the apartment where the altercation took place. Both Sergeant Zedalis and Detective Zedalis resolutely denied being the primary aggressor in the altercation. Injuries sustained by both Sergeant and Detective Zedalis could be viewed as defensive in nature, and responsibility for physical damage to the apartment could not be definitively determined. It was evident that a physical altercation did take place between the parties; however, with no witnesses to corroborate the accounts of the altercation, and the testimony of Sergeant and Detective Zedalis being diametrically opposed, it was deemed impossible to definitively determine which party's conduct constituted defensive action and which party's conduct constituted criminal action.

The criminal investigation conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement was reviewed by Third Judicial Circuit State Attorney, Jeff Siegmeister. His review culminated in an October 20, 2015 written decision not to prosecute this case where he wrote "the interests of justice are best served in letting this be handled through the pending dissolution of marriage and any administrative internal affairs proceedings pending or to be instituted by the employing agency".

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On October 26, 2015, the ACSO's Office of Professional Standards began its internal administrative investigation into multiple allegations of professional misconduct resulting from the July 30, 2015 incident. Furthermore, several additional allegations of professional misconduct, raised through the course of examining FDLE's criminal investigative report (EI-14-0149) as well as statements and testimony given by ACSO employees throughout the internal investigation process, were thoroughly investigated as well.

These comprehensive internal administrative investigations have been concluded by our Office of Professional Standards and their results and recommendations have been reviewed at every level of the involved employees' chain of command. As a result, Sheriff Sadie Darnell, keeping with the recommendations made by subordinate officers in the chain of command, served Mr. Zachary Zedalis this morning with notification of her intent to terminate his employment with the Alachua County Sheriff's Office for violations of employee misconduct as follows:

15-IA-50:

- Criminal Conduct (Sustained)
- Untruthfulness [2 Counts] (Sustained)
- Performance of Duty (Sustained)

15-IA-51:

- Criminal Conduct (Sustained)

Mr. Zedalis will have an opportunity to meet with Sheriff Darnell to appeal his termination if he so chooses.

In addition, Sheriff Darnell also served Ms. Kathleen Zedalis with notification of her intent to terminate her employment with the Alachua County Sheriff's Office for violations of employee misconduct as follows:

15-IA-50:

- Criminal Conduct (Sustained)

Ms. Zedalis will have an opportunity to meet with Sheriff Darnell to appeal her termination if she so chooses.

In preserving Mr. Zedalis' and Ms. Zedalis' due process rights under Section 112 Florida Statutes, we are unable to release any additional information regarding the investigation until the conclusion of those individual meetings and upon a final determination of disciplinary actions taken by Sheriff Darnell. Additional information regarding this investigation will be made available at that time.

Furthermore, as a result of the internal administrative investigations and sustained allegations of criminal conduct against Mr. Zachary Zedalis, a subsequent criminal investigation has been launched by detectives assigned to the ACSO Criminal Investigations Division, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Children and Family Services (DCF), with regard to allegations of child abuse.

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