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DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

TODD SPITZER

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PRESS RELEASE

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**Former Garden Grove Police Sergeant and President of Police Union
Charged with Kidnapping Fellow Officer to Sexually Assault Her,
Sexually Assaulting Civilian Police Employee**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A former Garden Grove police sergeant who retired while under investigation for sexual harassment has been charged with sexually assaulting a fellow officer and another department employee, including kidnapping one of the women from a bar to sexually assault her after they celebrated completing their police officer probation.

Charles “Chuck” William Starnes, III, 52, was charged on October 16, 2026, with one felony count of kidnapping to commit a sex offense, one felony count of sexual penetration by a foreign object by force, one felony count of sexual penetration by a foreign object by intoxicating and controlled substance, and one felony count of assault with intent to commit a sexual offense.

He faces a maximum sentence of seven years to life plus 14 years in state prison if convicted on all counts. Starnes lateraled to the Garden Grove Police Department in 2005 after working as a deputy with the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. He previously served as the president of the Garden Grove Police Officers’ Association and served as a sergeant in the Garden Grove Police Department’s Traffic Operations Unit from 2025 until he retired in May 2026 while on administrative leave.

Starnes was arrested on a warrant early Thursday morning by the U.S. Marshals Service in cooperation with the California Highway Patrol. The criminal charges against Starnes were unsealed by an Orange County Superior Court judge today.

Starnes is accused of sexually assaulting a fellow officer in March 2007 at a Stanton bar when she left the women’s restroom. Starnes is accused of dragging the woman out of the bar and into the parking lot where he continued the assault until being stopped by two fellow officers.

In March 2020, Starnes is accused of sexually assaulting a female civilian police employee on a car ride back from an “off probation” party at a Long Beach bar while driving to the Garden Grove Police Association Stress Release Center, a makeshift bar/lounge for police personnel run by the police association.

“The badge is not a shield from accountability, and we are grateful that these acts of sexual violence have finally come to light so that justice can be pursued on behalf of these victims who suffered in silence,” said Orange

County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “Sexual assault is an act of cowardice, and it takes incredible courage for victims to come forward and speak out against someone in a position of power.”

Senior Deputy District Attorney Sarah Rahman of the Sexual Assault Unit is prosecuting this case.

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