



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

Date: August 28, 2020
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Release #: 165

UPDATE: Former Deputy Varnes Arrested for Additional Aggravated Stalking Case

Now former Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) Deputy Dedorious Varnes resigned on August 4, 2020, during an internal investigation following his arrest on July 3, 2020 for Aggravated Stalking. He had been suspended without pay and was facing termination. FCSO detectives discovered that Varnes made over fifty threatening phone calls to a 67-year-old Palm Coast man who was the victim of a battery.

While investigating the above threats, detectives discovered that Varnes had created a "Text Now" phone number in June of 2019. In November of 2019, Varnes responded to a call for service in the "P" section of Palm Coast. The following day, a resident of the "P" section filed an online complaint alleging that Varnes did not handle the call for service sufficiently.

Varnes' supervisor was made aware of the complaint and requested that Varnes meet with the complainant to properly handle the call. The complainant would later tell detectives that Varnes did call regarding the incident but was rude to the complainant causing the complainant to hang up on Varnes.

In the weeks to follow, the complainant received numerous text messages from the "Text Now" phone number that Varnes created in June 2019. Varnes would text the complainant and imply that an inappropriate relationship was occurring between him and the complainant's wife. Varnes also drove by the complainant's home while on duty and took photos of the complainant's home and texted them to him along with threatening messages.

The threatening messages continued for several days even after the victim told the sender to stop sending messages. The victim reviewed his home surveillance footage and saw that a patrol vehicle was driving past his home around the same time that the photos of the victim's home were being texted to him.

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FCSO Detectives were able to pull the GPS coordinates from Varnes' patrol vehicle and determined that it was Varnes' patrol vehicle driving by the victim's home, even though Varnes was not on a call for service in the area and had to drive out of his way to drive past the victim's home.

Detectives also located two separate text conversations on the "Text Now" phone number with two women that were occurring during the same time frame as the threatening messages to the victim. Detectives interviewed the recipients of those texts and both confirmed that they were texting with Varnes. Detectives interviewed Varnes who admitted to having the "Text Now" phone number and communicating with the two women.

"This is an instance of a rouge officer tarnishing the badge," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "This type of behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated and to see that he has done it on more than one occasion is appalling. He is an embarrassment to the law enforcement profession and deserves to go to prison. We are doing everything we can to have the state revoke his law enforcement certificate."

A warrant was signed on August 27, 2020 for the arrest of Dedorious Varnes. He was taken into custody and charged with Aggravated Stalking. Varnes was booked into the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility and released after posting a \$25,000 bond.

Original News Release below.

Date: July 3, 2020
Prepared by: Shannon Martin
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Release #: 120

FCSO Deputy Suspended without Pay Following Arrest for Aggravated Stalking – Termination of Employment Pending

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) has suspended Deputy Dedorious Varnes without pay pending further investigation after a criminal investigation by FCSO detectives revealed he made over fifty threatening phone calls to a 67-year-old Palm Coast man who was the victim of a battery.

The FCSO responded to Angela Drive on February 26, 2020 after receiving a phone call from the victim stating he had been battered by Patell Troutman (42-years-old). The victim told deputies that Troutman, Ray Muller (another neighbor) and he were watching TV inside his garage when the topic of racism was introduced and an argument between the three men began.

The victim stated the argument turned physical after Troutman began pushing him in a manner that he described made him feel like he was being "swung around like a ragdoll". The victim said Troutman then left his residence but returned shortly after and began banging on his door, demanding he come back outside. Instead of engaging further, the victim called FCSO.

Prior to this incident, the victim told deputies that Troutman and he had been friendly, and that he had

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even loaned Troutman \$340.00 to buy groceries for his child. When FCSO arrived, Troutman was no longer in the area. Witness testimony and surveillance footage confirmed his description of events.

While FCSO was still on scene, the victim began receiving calls from a restricted number he believed to belong to Troutman. In the calls, the caller began asking the victim not to press charges against Troutman and to think about what damage could be done emotionally to Troutman's child if he went to jail. The victim told deputies that he had never given Troutman his phone number and did not know how he had it. FCSO forwarded charges against Troutman to the State Attorney's Office for battery.

Deputies eventually made contact with Troutman on March 9, 2020 during a traffic stop. When questioned about the incident that occurred in February on Angela Drive, Troutman stated that he did push the victim but only in self-defense. Deputies informed Troutman that the victim was pursuing charges against him for battery and the case is under review by the State Attorney. For the next three months, the victim received 53 more threatening phone calls from a blocked number. The victim reported that he would receive these calls at all hours and that the caller would frequently use racial slurs and make threats against his life. The victim told FCSO that he believed Troutman was the one making the phone calls and that he was in fear for his life.

The State Attorney's Office worked together with FCSO in conducting the investigation into the battery as well as the threatening phone calls. Eventually it was discovered that the blocked calls were linked to a phone number belonging to Dedorious Varnes, a deputy with the FCSO since January 2018.

"I was shocked, disappointed and angry to find out that an employee of this agency was behind these atrocious phone calls," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "He took an oath and is supposed to serve and protect this community and instead he actively participated in threatening and tormenting a resident. He abused his status as a law enforcement officer and we will do everything we can to have the state revoke his license so he can never work in law enforcement again. He has let down this community; he has embarrassed this agency and tarnished his badge and dishonored law enforcement officers everywhere. No one is above the law and that is why he is in jail where he belongs."

During the investigation, numerous deputies responded to the victim's home to take reports on the harassing phone calls and on one occasion the responding deputy was Varnes.

"The fact that he could look this victim in the eye and listened to just how upset these phone calls were making him and then continued to call him again and again is an indicator that he has a serious problem," Sheriff Staly said. "In reviewing his personnel file and talking to his supervisors and those on his interview board and reviewing his psychological background there were no indicators that he would do anything like this. In my 45-years in law enforcement, this is the most bizarre behavior I have ever seen by a law enforcement officer. I want to assure the community that his behavior is not a reflection of the many men and women that serve our community in a professional manner every day."

After the arrest Sheriff Staly spoke to the victim apologizing on behalf of the agency that an employee

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thought this behavior was inappropriate and assured him that his behavior was not representative of FCSO employees. The victim and the Sheriff plan to meet next week.

Varnes was arrested and charged with Aggravated Stalking and is currently being held on no bond.

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