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Custer County sheriff named in sex-slave allegations

By Associated Press
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OKLAHOMA CITY -- Twelve women who were either jail prisoners in Custer County or involved in the county's drug court program have sued the county sheriff, making various sexual allegations against him.

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday, alleges that Sheriff Mike Burgess operated a sex-slave ring and threatened to send the female jail inmates to prison if they did not comply with sexual demands he made.

Burgess could not be reached at his home or at the sheriff's office, and a dispatcher said he was out on medical leave.

Records obtained by The Oklahoman indicate the allegations in the lawsuit have led to a criminal investigation. Custer County District Attorney Dennis Smith sent a letter to state Attorney General Drew Edmondson on July 13, asking to be recused because of Smith's "strong working relationship" with Burgess.

In the letter, Smith noted that an investigation conducted by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation had been ongoing for about two months, "and I believe there will be decisions to be made on whether a criminal case should be, or is, filed in that matter."

The lawsuit alleges that one woman, Joy Mason, was required to drive at least twice to Oklahoma City, where Burgess was staying in a hotel, despite a requirement by the drug court that she not leave Custer County. It also alleges that he ordered Mason to drink alcohol -- another violation of drug court requirements -- as part of his scheme of "extreme sexual slavery, including sexual battery, sodomy, rape and blackmail."

Other allegations include that Burgess offered to trade sexual favors for his ability to cause the drug court to impose lighter sentences and that one female inmate was required to bare her breasts to receive food and aspirin.

Female inmates who rejected sexual advances by Burgess and jailers were punished by being placed in lockdown, having medication withheld or losing privileges they had earned, according to the lawsuit.

"It is one of the most disgusting things I have seen in my 40 years of practice," said Tulsa attorney Thomas Seymour, who filed the lawsuit.

By Associated Press

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Dave (4 years ago)

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If these allegations are true, I hope these gals win their freedom along with a big pile of money. When will this drug war madness end?

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Chris (4 years ago)

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I'm sure they are true. Remove him from office now. Someone needs to act before more people are harmed and hurt.

nanny (4 years ago)

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These allegations seem pretty ludicrous. I'm not sure I believe these "ladies". He forced one to drink alcohol? Of course, if there is no merit to the charges, why hasn't it been dropped already?

JW (4 years ago)

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sounds like he had a good racket going.

dt (4 years ago)

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whats funny is if it was someone besides the police violating these women they would have already been locked up. police are always put on PAID leave????????? the worst thing that happen to the police is to loose their job usually. just as its always been said the police make the best criminals.

normal joe (4 years ago)

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All they need to do is look at the security dideo and see if this is true. I think the lawyer is the biggest crook here. Trying to get money for BS again. Keep in mind these ladies are criminals to begin with and would not be in jail if they were not crooks or liars. Go sheriff!

Shelly Larson (4 years ago)

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This is another instance where absolute power corrupts absolutely. To the one who wrote "Go Sheriff" shame on you. Hopefully your are not ignorant enough to believe if you wear a badge you are honest. I would certainly think a county sheriff would at least have the sense to not be seen on video breaking the law.

Dean (4 years ago)

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Normal Joe,

It does not matter what these ladies did or didn't do. They are still Human Beings. They should not be treated this way. As for the Sheriff and his deputies/jailers, they should loose their badges and be labeled as a sex offender. They are a disgrace to all law enforcement everywhere. This completely disturbs me, in regards to the fact that we teach our children that our law enforcement is here to protect them. And then some idiot does this...

Dale Gregory (4 years ago)

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(1) Dave "When will this drug war madness end?"

It will end when we rise up and vote RON PAUL for president. He is a Republican that stands for what America should. Ron Paul voted against the Iraq "War" from the beginning, he also voted against the patriotic act which allows the govt to search your house without a warrant, and without you even knowing it. Ever heard of the gestapo? Ron Paul wants to reclaim the Constitution, is against gun control, abolition of income taxes, he's against federal control of your childrens education (Dept of Educ), Ron Paul wants to return the power to the states where it belongs. The drug war hasn't worked and is only strangling our poor. Ron Paul believes that if a state wants to legalize Marijuana then so be it. It's not the Fed's job to babysit us and never has been.

It will end when we educate ourselves on our presidential candidates and quit voting for the status quo that has put America in the crapper. Do yourselves and all of us some good and do some research on RON PAUL.

GOOGLE: RON PAUL

YouTube: Ron Paul

Visit/CONTRIBUTE: RonPaul2008 . c o m

He can save our country, but only when we take off the blinders and educate ourselves.

Dale (4 years ago)

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That should read "Un-Patriotic Act" if you disagree, then you don't know what's in it. Do some research, what has happened to our libeties right under our noses, and in the name of "security", will scare you.

km (4 years ago)

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That county is cursed. Just look at the name, anyone in that line of occupation obviously lets it go to his head (no pun intended). I'm for the girls, they shouldn't have to lower themselves to lechers such as this lowlife representing such an upstanding position. I hope they get a good settlement.

Mable (4 years ago)

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Didn't realize sheriffs were so powerful! But that can happen in a rural county where there is such a close relationship between the DA and the sheriff. These women probably believed him when he threatened them with prison or longer sentences, or whatever else he might have used. If he's guilty, and hard to imagine he is not guilty of a few things, he should be forced to do public service work of the lowest kind, perhaps cleaning sewage tanks or ditches. Imprisonment doesn't always fit the crime.

Mike (4 years ago)

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I'm ashamed, but not shocked, that anyone would assume which side is guilty in this matter. We should wait for the truth, and then pass our harsh judgment. Is'nt that what we want for ourselves? That is what our Patriots fought and died for.

Slick (4 years ago)

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Anohter fine example of our glorified law enforcement officers. We put these guys on a pedestal with no oversight whatsoever and they pull crap like this and other things repetitively. It's time for an agency to oversee all law enforcement officers and hold them accountable for their actions. Too many officers, district attorneys, and judges are all crooks!

Tim (4 years ago)

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Can't wait for the next 100 years Of Oklahoma Pride !!!!!!! Ahhhhhhh yes I'll be here in the after life.

boofboy (4 years ago)

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that custer county sheriff is a diamond grade douchebag!

the rev'n good dok-tah dah-da-nell-duh x. magbaahjaah (4 years ago)

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I'm driving around in my'69(sixtehnaahne) buik skylarc and . . . It's so old. . I have one cylander left. . .how much will a ponn shop giv me fer my one cylander. . .ev'ry body do the michigan raaaaaahhaaagg!!!!

Jesse (4 years ago)

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One might keep in mind the lessons learned via the allegations of rape at Duke University. I'm still waiting for those who protested so loudly with no evidence of guilt to come forward and apologize just as loudly. But I suspect Santa will probably bring me that pony I asked for 40 years ago before that happens.

Jack Ash (4 years ago)

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WOW - I didn't think you could rape the "willing."

Anon Y. Mous (4 years ago)

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To #19...it doesn't matter if they were willing. The sheriff dude and deputies were in a position of power and authority over those women. In the case of the women in the jail, that automatically means that any sex with them, weather it was physically forced on them or not, was rape. In the case of the...parolee?...Well, in her case, he used threats/blackmail. When that is used to procure sexual favors, it is also rape, weather she was physically forced or not.

Or at least, that's how it works in my hometown...don't know about the details in Oklahoma.

Anon Y. Mous (4 years ago)

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IF they actually did what the women say they did. Don't really know at this point...women have been known to lie about this sort of thing...but police officers have been known to do this sort of thing.

Dan B (4 years ago)

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I know Burgess very well, and find him to be a sleazy excuse for a human being. He has always tried to force his way with "dirt" and extortion, and find this very unsurprising. However, this IS a lawsuit by women that were in his jail. As a correctional office, I can see it being possible that this particular lawsuit is simply in retaliation for not getting their way while in custody. It happens. We should also remember that there is more than one deputy or jailer, and not all of them are guilty or even named in the suit. With this in mind, lets not accuse a whole department for the bad acts of a few.

belladonna112 (4 years ago)

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If this man is found to be guilty, I am sure he did not act alone. I have lived in many small towns in Oklahoma and Texas, I have found there to be much corruption in most all of them. look at Crook County oops, I mean Creek County. I have never been fond of Custer County simply because of the rumors that have circulated for years as to the corruption. Who did this cops psych eval...

They just cost us the taxpayer a bundle, you can be certain of that.

******* (4 years ago)

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i think what normal joe is saying is that these women are crooks to begin with so they could definately be lying. my opinion is that the lady, 'joy' probably did have a relationship with the sheriff, however, as soon as all this came about and the letters were sent to prior inmates asking if they had been assaulted, raped or whatever im sure they were thinkin, "sure i was" they see the dollar signs just as 'joy' does.. why didnt she report this a long time ago? why didnt she attempt to get the police involved before? set up a sting? record his voicemails? HELLO? doesnt anyone have any sense... she did these things im sure to get where she needed to go just as much as the sheriff did.its a sad sad world...

Ted (4 years ago)

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Sounds like the Sheriff may have let the job go to his "head"

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