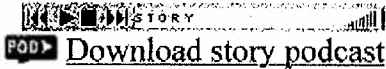




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Riverside County sheriff's captain, wife charged in abuse case



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By TAMMY J. McCOY
The Press-Enterprise

A Riverside County sheriff's captain and his wife are facing charges of abusing her adopted teenage daughter, authorities said Tuesday.

Christine Nordstrom, 41, and David Nordstrom, 58, remain on active duty with the Sheriff's Department and had not been booked into jail on the charges as of Tuesday evening, said Sgt. Dennis Gutierrez, a department spokesman.

On Monday, Christine Nordstrom was charged with child abuse and one count of false imprisonment, said Ryan Hightower, spokesman for the Riverside County district attorney's office.

David Nordstrom was charged with child abuse and failure to report child abuse, Hightower said.

All charges are misdemeanors.

"The department is currently making arrangements with their attorney for their surrender," Gutierrez said. "It is common practice . . . to cite release individuals with a promise to appear in court."

Virginia Blumenthal, a defense attorney representing the Nordstroms, said she expected them to be cite released at her office today. She said Tuesday night that they were innocent.

"The accusations are simply not credible," Blumenthal said. "There is absolutely no example of David abusing this child. If he didn't see abuse, he couldn't report abuse."

Christine Nordstrom is a community services officer, a nonsworn position she's held for eight years at the Lake Elsinore station.

David Nordstrom has been with the department 31 years and is assigned to the Robert Presley Detention Center in Riverside, Gutierrez said.

David Nordstrom denied the allegations during an Oct. 2 interview with investigators, according to the

court records.

He said he never saw his wife verbally or physically abuse her daughter, according to court records.

He told investigators he leaves discipline to his wife, whom he described as very caring and affectionate, according to the court records. He said his relationship with the girl is not close.

The investigation began in September when a friend called Child Protective Services' anonymous hot line and reported the girl was being abused.

The woman, the same person who reported the abuse to child services, later told investigators that during a phone conversation with Christine Nordstrom she overheard the girl being abused, according to the court records.

The woman heard the teenage pleading with Christine Nordstrom "to stop hurting her and not to handcuff her," according to the court records.

When the woman asked, Christine Nordstrom said she handcuffed her daughter and planned to leave her that way, according to the court records.

The teenage girl told investigators that she was handcuffed and then punched in the mouth with a closed fist by her adopted mother, while her mother's husband, David Nordstrom, watched and did nothing to stop the abuse, according to court records.

As a sworn peace officer, David Nordstrom is obligated to report child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

Christine Nordstrom declined numerous requests for an interview with investigators, the records show.

People outside the family told Riverside County sheriff's investigators they witnessed the girl being both physically and verbally abused, according to the court records.

In September, Christine Nordstrom came to her daughter's school after the girl boarded the school bus to go home.

Christine Nordstrom got on the bus and called her daughter a thief and a liar and then ordered her off the bus, a teacher told investigators, according to court records.

Christine Nordstrom offered to provide her daughter with weapons or pills when the teenager threatened to commit suicide, then asked that she kill herself at the family home, according to court records.

"So she would not be embarrassed if (her daughter) was found on the streets by her co-workers," according to the court records.

A teacher at the girl's school told sheriff's investigators that between January and June, the girl came to school with a bruise under her eye, court records say.

The girl told her teacher she was hit by her mother, the records show.

Christine Nordstrom faces up to a year in jail while David Nordstrom faces up to six months in county

jail if convicted, Hightower said.

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