



#### Press conference

Tuscaloosa Police Chief Steve Anderson announces the arrest of Sgt. Jason Thomas for first-degree sexual assault of a woman allegedly while on duty.

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TUSCALOOSA | A Tuscaloosa police officer accused of raping a woman early Sunday morning was charged Wednesday night with sexual abuse.

Sgt. Jason Thomas, an 11-year veteran of the department, saw the 42-year-old woman walking along Alabama Highway 216 at 1 a.m. Sunday, Tuscaloosa Police Chief Steven Anderson said.

Thomas stopped and gave her a ride to a home on Keenes Mill Road, he said. The woman later called 911 and reported that the officer stopped the patrol car and raped her on the side of the road, outside the patrol car, he said.

In light of the allegation, Anderson held a press conference Wednesday morning where he announced that tests performed at DCH Regional Medical Center had not yet been completed by Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences investigators.

But by Wednesday night, the department had enough evidence to charge Thomas with first-degree sexual abuse. Thomas was arrested around 6 p.m. Wednesday and placed in the Tuscaloosa County Jail on \$7,500 bond.

'We have gotten enough information that we were able to file charges against (Thomas). The information that we've obtained thus far during the investigation does not rise to the level of rape and therefore it falls within the state code for sexual abuse,' Anderson said.

According to Section 13A-6-66 of the Code of Alabama, first-degree sexual abuse is a Class C felony and occurs when someone 'subjects another person to sexual contact by forcible compulsion' or does so to a person who 'is incapable of consent by reason of being physically helpless or mentally incapacitated.'

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