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# Local cops arrested on sex charges target children, teens



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Pustay

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It's rare for police officers in South Mississippi to face sex-crime charges, but most of those who do are accused of molesting children or targeting young teenagers.

Traffic stops with allegations of sexual abuse may be prevalent in other areas of the nation, but the betrayal of the badge in South Mississippi more often than not involves charges of unlawful touching of a child or sexual battery.

A Sun Herald review of eight cases filed or prosecuted since 2007 shows only one instance in which an officer was accused of forcing himself on a woman in a traffic stop.

Mario Hill resigned from the Gulfport Police Department a couple of weeks after he allegedly tried to sexually assault a woman in 2014. He is accused of pushing the woman against his cruiser, touching her privates through her clothes and exposed himself, telling her, "Hey, look at this." Prosecution in his case is pending.

Hill had been a police officer three years. His prosecution is pending.

In another pending case, the Long Beach Police Department fired Patrick Klis after his arrest in 2014 on charges alleging he had sex on duty and off duty with his teenage girlfriend, a minor. He'd been a police officer 6½ years.

Investigators said Klis had a Facebook page in a fake name and included pictures of himself and the girl, including a picture of him in his uniform.

Three other cases are pending on charges of unlawful touching of a child or sexual battery of a child.

In recent years, three officers exchanged their badges for prison uniforms. Two of them are out of prison and are now registered sex offenders.

Robert Bryan Hill had worked for the Gautier Police Department three years when he was arrested on sex crimes against a 13-year-old girl in 2011. Hill is currently serving time in an Arkansas prison for sex crime charges there. Once he's finished that sentence, he will start serving a 20 year day-for-day sentence for sex crimes in Jackson County.

Darrian Llewellyn Anderson resigned from the Biloxi Police Department in 2010 after he was accused of having oral sex with a girl when she was 14. He'd been a police officer 18 years. A sex offender registry shows he now lives in Stockbridge, Ga.

The most high-profile case occurred in the 2007 prosecution of Tom Pustay. He was chief criminal investigator for the Pass Christian Police Department and a 23-year law enforcement veteran.

Pustay resigned after charges were filed in 2005.

Pustay testified at his trial, denying allegations he had sexually assaulted a family acquaintance from the time she was 9 until she was 16.

The girl, 19 at the time of the trial, testified Pustay told her "it's our secret," and not to tell. She said she didn't tell anyone when she was younger because she didn't understand the touching was wrong. Even after she realized it was wrong, she said she didn't want to get Pustay in trouble.

A Harrison County jury found Pustay guilty on two counts of unlawful touching and three counts of sexual battery.

Then Circuit Judge Steve Simpson sentenced Pustay, 52 at the time, to 40 years in prison and told him he had "violated the most sacred trust."

Pustay will be 92 when he is eligible for release from prison May 11, 2047.

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