

## Former Columbia County Sheriff's deputy arrested on sex charges

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ST. HELENS — A former Columbia County Sheriff's deputy and school resource officer at Rainier Junior/Senior High School was arraigned May 10 for multiple counts of rape, sex abuse and incest committed against his daughter.

A tearful John Lawrence Hinkle, 47, of St. Helens was arraigned via video from the Columbia County Jail. Circuit Court Judge Steven Reed presided over the hearing.

Reed issued a release agreement conditional on whether he posts 10 percent of his \$1.5 million bail, does not leave the state or contact his daughter.

According to District Attorney Steve Atchison, Hinkle's daughter, now 22 years of age, is the only victim listed on the indictment. It is alleged the crimes took place between 1999 and 2006.

Hinkle was arrested at about 8 p.m. on May 6 in Woodburn and housed in the Columbia County Jail.

Allegations of sex abuse were made on May 5 regarding the crimes committed against the victim, according to Detective Matt Beeson.

Beeson began investigating Hinkle when a number of students from Rainier High alleged sexual abuse.

Also, another Scappoose girl, 19 at the time of the incident, alleges Hinkle put his hands down her pants and tried to kiss her in the days following a car crash. She did not report the incident until after Hinkle's arrest on these current charges.

Hinkle resigned from the CCSO in April 2010. He had been out on administrative leave since December 2009, according to Sheriff Jeff Dickerson.

The sheriff's office was investigating Hinkle for "truthfulness and performance type issues," said Dickerson. The sheriff's office discovered Hinkle lied in court. The sheriff's office also received several complaints from county residents about how he treated them — such as yelling at residents — during traffic stops, said Dickerson.

Hinkle is charged with 10 counts of first-degree rape, five counts of first-degree sodomy, 25 counts of first-degree sex abuse and 15 counts of incest.

The hearing will continue on May 16 at 8:30 a.m. Hinkle will announce his attorney and decide whether to waive his preliminary hearing.

The case is scheduled to go before the Columbia County Grand Jury on May 12.

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