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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA -- THIS JUST IN

Deputy linked to burrito caper charged with child molestation

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A Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy was arrested Wednesday after being charged with sexually molesting a child over the course of several months, according to the Los Angeles city attorney's office.

Deputy Oscar Rodriguez is facing a potential 12-year sentence if convicted of the alleged abuse, which authorities say occurred off-duty over a seven-month period.

The sexual molestation charges are not Rodriguez's first run-in with the law. He was under investigation this year for potential involvement in [a scheme to smuggle drugs behind bars](#).

Rodriguez was named in grand jury testimony in the case of a fellow deputy, Henry Marin, who was charged in connection with an attempt to smuggle heroin inside of a burrito to inmates in a courthouse holding cell.

During the grand jury hearing, the deputy was named as another potential sheriff's employee who an inmate leader -- or shot caller -- believed was willing to smuggle heroin behind bars.

Sheriff's spokesman Steve Whitmore said prosecutors have since declined to file drug smuggling charges against Rodriguez, who is on leave from the department.

The district attorney also declined to file felony molestation charges against Rodriguez, opening the door for the city attorney to charge the veteran deputy with 12 misdemeanor child molestation counts.

"Sexual abuse of our children leaves both lasting physical and emotional scars and callously robs them of their innocence," said City Atty. Carmen A. Trutanich in a news release.

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-- Robert Faturechi

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