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Reserve Deputy Accused Of Sexually Assaulting Minor

By Hicham Raache
Times Record •
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A reserve deputy for the Crawford County Sheriff's Office has been accused of sexually assaulting a minor.

Oklahoma authorities arrested Thomas Shawn Nelson, 45, after Van Buren police advised law enforcement agencies to be on the lookout for Nelson, who was developed as a suspect in the sexual assault of a juvenile, according to detective Jonathan Wear, public information officer for the Van Buren Police Department.



Thomas Nelson

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Van Buren police were called to Mercy Fort Smith at around 1 a.m. Sunday in reference to sexual assault on a minor. The alleged victim was taken to a child advocacy center in Fort Smith, according to Wear.

"During the investigation, detectives were able to identify the suspect as Thomas Shawn Nelson, who is a family acquaintance of the victim's family," Wear stated in a news release. "Detectives were able to obtain enough evidence for a search warrant of Nelson's residence."

When detectives executed the search warrant, they found that Nelson was not at home. Detectives learned that Nelson works at a car dealership and as a reserve deputy for the Sheriff's Office. It was also learned that Nelson was possibly en route to California, where he has family, according to Wear.

Nelson was found traveling on Interstate 40 in El Reno, Okla., near Oklahoma City. He was arrested on suspicion of rape, Wear said.

Nelson is believed to have sexually assaulted the minor one time. Authorities are not aware of any other victims, Wear said.

Nelson is being held at the Canadian County Detention Center in Oklahoma. He is expected to be extradited to Crawford County, according to Wear.



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