

Updated: Santa Fe deputy, wife both charged in domestic violence case

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2016 Cop Domestic Violence Jermaine Harris

SANTA FE – A Santa Fe County sheriff's deputy was charged with striking his wife over the weekend and is confined to desk duty pending an internal investigation, according to a sheriff's department spokesman.

Deputy Jermaine Harris, 33, was charged with battery against a household member Saturday after Santa Fe police determined that he punched his wife in the mouth and pulled her hair during a fight at the Coronado Condominiums on Calle de Oriente. His wife, Shelleta Harris, was charged with battery of Jermaine Harris' girlfriend. Both charges are misdemeanors.

Deputy Harris was not arrested and jailed after the incident.

In an emailed statement Wednesday, District Attorney Jennifer Padgett said Harris was not arrested because he and his wife were physically separated by the time police arrived – the deputy was gone – and that officers would have needed an arrest warrant in order to take Harris into custody.

“Because Mr. Harris was not on the scene where the incident took place, the public safety-orientated exception for domestic violence cases to the misdemeanor arrest rule did not apply,” Padgett wrote. “The only way to arrest Mr. Harris would be to acquire a properly approved warrant.”

According to a Santa Fe Police Department incident report, a neighbor called 911 and said a couple was fighting and the woman was bleeding from her mouth. Another call came in before police arrived from a woman who said her husband hit her and took her gun.

Officers met with Shelleta Harris, who said her husband punched her in the face, grabbed her by the hair, slammed her head into a car, bit her, knocked her down and kicked her. Officers noted that she had a cut on her lower lip that was consistent with being punched and noted that her hair braids were loose, which was consistent with her story of being pulled. Officers didn't notice any bite or choking injuries, but saw a scrape on her left ankle.

Deputy Harris was gone before police arrived, but agreed to do an interview at SFPD headquarters. He said he went to the condo to pick up his kids with his girlfriend. The Harrises have been married for 11 years and had been separated for only about a week, the police report says.

Deputy Harris said his wife grabbed his girlfriend from the car and was trying to fight her, but the girlfriend was able to get into the car and lock the doors. He said Shelleta Harris then began

pounding on the windows and yelling, and the deputy grabbed her and was trying to take her back to the condo. He said his hand may have slipped and hit her on the face. Officers reported that Jermaine Harris had several scratch marks on him.

Police interviewed the girlfriend, who said Shelleta Harris had grabbed her wrist and was trying to pull her from the car. She had a scratch on the right side of her face and right shoulder.

State records show that Shelleta Harris is a family assistance analyst with the Human Services Department and has been employed there since March.

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