



CITIZENS FOR HONEST GOVERNMENT INC

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FDLE LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION OF SHERIFF MARCO LOPEZ

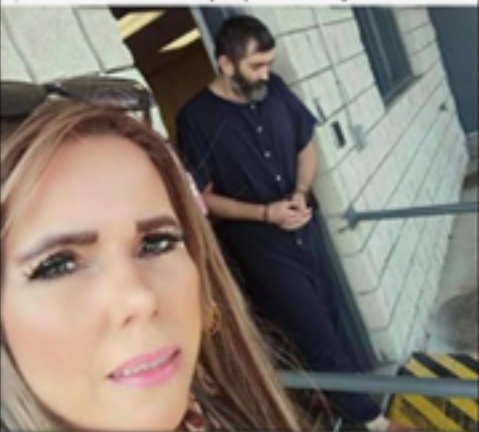
By Shannon Butler, WFTV.com and Nikki DeMarco, WFTV.com April 17, 2024 at 5:13 am EDT



Nirva Rodriguez

3h · 🌐

"If God's love been poured out over your life, don't allow evil to keep you away from what he has prepared for you".



A SELFIE of agency Executive Director Nirva Rodriguez in front of Stephan Sterns, the prime suspect Madeline's Disappearance - was posted to Rodriguez's personal Facebook with the caption in spanish translated. It appears to have been taken seconds before Sterns was videoed placed in the back of a patrol car.

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9 Investigates also asked FDLE for a comment on the selfie that Lopez's executive director Nirva Rodriguez took with suspect Stephan Sterns after his arrest but has not heard back.

OSCEOLA COUNTY, Fla. — A Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigation is now underway into a picture that was shared on a social media account belonging to the Osceola County sheriff. **Osceola County Sheriff Marcos Lopez shared a picture of what appeared to be Madeline Soto's body on his Instagram account the morning after her body was found.** The picture was taken down a short time later.

9 Investigates has followed this story since the beginning and has learned that **FDLE is now investigating** how this happened and has interviewed people involved, including those who found Soto's body.

9 Investigates does not know how long the investigation will take or what, if any, charges could come from what appears to be a mistake.

SOURCE

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SHERIFF LOPEZ ELIMINATED 7 OUT OF 8 TOP HISPANICS



PUBLISHED January 25, 2021 at 2:24pm

By ORLANDO SENTINEL & ORLANDO SENTINEL EDITORIAL BOARD | insight@orlandosentinel.com

SOURCE

Osceola County Sheriff Marco Lopez, with his administrative team following his swearing ceremony outside the Osceola County Historical Courthouse in downtown Kissimmee, on Tuesday, Jan 5, 2021. Marcos López couldn't have been much clearer when the Orlando Sentinel Editorial Board interviewed him ahead of the 2020 Democratic primary for Osceola County sheriff.

He promised to deliver a sheriff's office that reflected the county's racial and ethnic diversity. "If you don't look like the people you serve, you're never going to create the transparency and present that accountability for our community," He told the board. López took specific aim at the makeup of the command staff under then Sheriff Russ Gibson, who was seeking reelection. **"We should be at least 60% minority based,"** López said. **"This is going in the wrong direction."**

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CITIZENS FOR HONEST GOVERNMENT

FDLE LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION OF SHERIFF MARCO LOPEZ

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The Sheriff's Office told 9 Investigates that it was an **accidental post** on Instagram, but then told our partners at WDBO that it was not the body of Madeline Soto in that picture, just an area of interest where the body was found.

Lopez called the claims that it was Soto a "political stunt." It is clear from the investigation that his claims are not true and, in fact, the body in the picture was dressed in clothing that matched the description of the clothes Soto was said to be wearing when she was reported missing.

Tyler Wallace, Soto's biological father, told 9 Investigates that he did not see that picture, but he did have something to say about it. **"I hate that I live in a world where I have to call my parents and warn them that an internet troll might send them a picture of my dead daughter, and that they should just go ahead and start preparing for that possibility,"** he said. **"I hate that we live in that world."**

9 Investigates also asked FDLE for a comment on the selfie that Lopez's executive director Nirva Rodriguez took with suspect Stephan Sterns after his arrest but has not heard back.

Meanwhile, local and state law enforcement agencies have been meeting to discuss the investigation into Sterns to determine if it is time to file more charges against him or anyone else who could be involved in the disappearance and death of Soto.

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It is incredible to believe that the Administrator of Osceola Sheriff Department took a selfie with the suspected murderer of a child and posted it on her social media page with a commentary that reflected religion and evil. A Law Professor of a top Law school was contacted with the info of the selfie that Nirva Rodriguez posted. **"She should be immediately fired, this selfie would only go to show in some kind of predisposition or attitude of the department as to guilt,"** said Law Professor. The photo and statement could possibly taint any testimony from the Osceola Sheriff's department in the court case. It could be viewed as influencing the jury and the defendant's lawyer may possibly request that the court case be moved to another geographic jurisdiction.

TEEN ACCUSES OSCEOLA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OF FORCIBLY KISSING HER, GIVING HER ALCOHOL

By Ashlyn Webb, WFTV.com July 20, 2023 at 7:25 pm EDT

SOURCE



OSCEOLA COUNTY, Fla. - Osceola County School board member **Julius Melendez** is **accused of providing alcohol to a teen & forcibly kissing her.** Osceola County Sheriff's Office confirmed they received a complaint from the school district where an **18 year old girl alleged "inappropriate conduct"** by **45-year-old Julius Melendez.**

The teen is not a student in Osceola County Schools. We now have a copy of the complaint the teen sent to the school on July 1. **The teen accusing Melendez only spoke to Channel 9's Ashlyn Webb.**

Julius Melendez was her manager at a café in Kissimmee. She says she was having a tough time with family, and Melendez offered for her to stay at his house.

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LOPEZ ELIMINATED THESE HISPANIC COMMAND OFFICERS....



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Daniel Caban

Director of Information Technology



Puerto Rico

Jacob Ruiz

Administrative Bureau



Cuba

Jose Campa

Assistant General Counsel



Cuba

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Special Operations Division



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Puerto Rico

Alejandro Guevara

Patrol West Division



Colombia

Diego Agreda

Digital Media Specialist



Puerto Rico

Ruben Pacheco

Communications Division

WHEN LOPEZ TOOK OFFICE JANUARY 25 , 2021
HE REPLACE THE COMMANDERS THAT WERE
HISPANIC (ABOVE) WITH THE CREW BELOW.

THE ONLY HISPANIC
CURRENTLY
WITH MARCO LOPEZ
CAPTAIN IVAN MOLINA





SHERIFF LOPEZ ELIMINATED 7 OUT OF 8 TOP HISPANICS

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López was elected in November as the first Hispanic sheriff in Osceola's history, but the **composition of the department is still going in the wrong direction.** According to Sentinel reporting, **López's top sworn command staff — which includes captains and majors — so far has two fewer Hispanics than it did under Gibson. And still just one woman.** So much for looking like the public you serve. **And so much for transparency.**

According to the Sentinel's Jan. 22 news report about **López's command staff, the sheriff said he wouldn't be free for an interview until February.** And a list of **questions to the department's new spokeswoman weren't answered.** This from a sheriff who promised greater accessibility to the media.

In the general election interview, López repeated his dedication to diversity, saying, "We're going to enhance the quality of life by looking like the people we serve." It didn't take long for him to break what, to us, was an important promise.

In one of his first actions after the election, López forced out two of the top-ranking Hispanics in the sheriff's office. **Major Jacob Ruiz, a 17-year veteran** of the department, and **Capt. Alejandro Guevara, who had 21 years there,** would retire. A terse letter from **López informed them their services "will no longer be needed."**

The direction López is taking so far appears headed toward having fewer people of color in the top ranks, not more. That's not what we were looking for, not what the people who voted for him wanted, either.

Voters had high hopes when they picked López over an incumbent sheriff who had made some progress on diversity, but not fast enough. We'll say this for Gibson: At least he wasn't going in reverse.

It's early. López might start filling the ranks with men and women who, as he put it in our interview last summer, "look like the people you serve..." If López doesn't do that, if he doesn't start keeping his promises, he'll have to answer for it to voters in less than four years.

Certain segments of the Article not reposted in its entirety. Credit given to the Orlando Sentinel Editorial Board. All Editorials are the opinion of the Orlando Sentinel Editorial Board and are written by one of its members or a designee. The editorial board consists of Opinion Editor Mike Lafferty, Jennifer A. Marcial Ocasio, Jay Reddick and Editor-in-Chief Julie Anderson. Send emails to: insight@orlandosentinel.com

Accusations of Corruption in Osceola say...

www.CitizensforHonestGovernment.com

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CITIZENS FOR HONEST GOVERNMENT

TEEN ACCUSES OSCEOLA COUNTY-SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OF FORCIBLY KISSING HER, GIVING HER ALCOHOL

By Ashlyn Webb, WFTV.com July 20, 2023 at 7:25 pm EDT

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Before they went to Melendez's home, she says they stopped at the café where he poured her drinks. **She said one drink turned to nine and her trying to get as far away as possible from him. "I thought it was a little weird. But you know, he told me prior to this, that he looked at me like I was his own.** I believe that would mean like one of his own children," she said.

She said that's what was going through her mind as she said Melendez first poured her and him three mimosas each at the café. She said they were there for about 20 minutes before they locked up the café and began driving to his house. **She said the car ride was uncomfortable.** He spoke about being a school board member and how he was often on the news. Then, she said, he started talking about her. "He did start calling me beautiful in the car," she said.

When they got to Melendez's home, she said she set down her bags while **Melendez fixed more drinks.**" We probably had about six drinks at his house and wine glasses," she said. She states in the complaint Melendez repeatedly offered to fix her more drinks throughout the night. **She tells Channel 9 he sat close to her, touching her arms, shoulders, and then, her thigh.**

"He had **asked if he could kiss me, and I told him no,**" she said. "He apologized for asking to kiss me." She said she told him she was going to bed in the guest bedroom. Melendez carried her bags into the room. **"He leaned in, and he kissed me,"** she said. **"And then what did you do?" Channel 9 asked.** "I told him like, "no, like, I already told you, you know, like, I need to go to sleep. I'm tired." And he ended up leaving the room and going downstairs to his room," she said.

She said the bedroom door wouldn't lock, and she was afraid to go to sleep."I was scared to leave my room," she said. She says **hours later, she snuck out of the home and took an Uber home.** She tells Channel 9 she thought Melendez was in his early 30s. It wasn't until she spoke to investigators that she learned he's 45. **"It made me really disgusted... like he's older than my dad,"** she said. She told Channel 9's Ashlyn Webb she wanted to share her story so other girls could gain the confidence to speak up if this happened to them.

The teen says she does plan to move forward with charges against Melendez. The Sheriff's Office said they've passed this case on to the State Attorney's office for review. So far, Melendez

has not been charged. State Attorney Monique Worrell's office said in an emailed statement Thursday that the case is still open and under review to determine what charges would be appropriate. Channel 9 did speak to Julius Melendez by phone Thursday morning before airing the story. He declined to comment.

Channel 9 confirmed Melendez no longer works at the café in Kissimmee he previously managed. The school board declined to comment saying it's an open investigation.

COURT SCHEDULE RECORD

DATE	EVENT	JUDGE	RESULT
4/29/2024	JURY TRIAL	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	
4/15/2024	DEMAND FOR SPEEDY TRIAL	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	EVENT HELD
4/3/2024	JURY TRIAL	DORN, CELIA THACKER	RESET
4/3/2024	JURY TRIAL	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	RESET
3/28/2024	STATUS HEARING	DORN, CELIA THACKER	CANCELLED
3/5/2024	PRETRIAL	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	CANCELLED
3/4/2024	MOTION HEARING	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	CANCELLED
2/28/2024	DEMAND FOR SPEEDY TRIAL	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	EVENT HELD
1/8/2024	JURY TRIAL	JANCEWICZ, STEFANIA	DEF CONTINUANCE
12/20/2023	MOTION TO SUPPRESS	SANDERS-MORENCY,	EVENT HELD
12/12/2023	PRETRIAL	SANDERS-MORENCY,	EVENT HELD
11/14/2023	ARRAIGNMENT	SANDERS-MORENCY,	NOA RECEIVED SET
11/6/2023	ARRAIGNMENT	EPPERSON, HAL C JR	CANCELLED