



SHERIFF LAURIE SMITH

For Immediate Release- Media

Office of the Sheriff

55 West Younger Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110

Sergeant Michael Low

michael.low@shf.sccgov.org

408-808-4905

Deputy Jessica Gabaldon

jessica.gabaldon@shf.sccgov.org

408-808-4942

TYPE OF INCIDENT: Teacher Arrested for Sexual Assault of a Minor

LOCATION: Los Gatos, CA

CASE NUMBER: 20-135-0253S

DETAILS:

On May 14, 2020, a 13-year-old boy reported to Sheriff's Deputies that the Director of the Los Gatos Youth Theater, later identified as 50-year-old Joseph Houg, made him feel uncomfortable during a one-on-one Zoom meeting. According to the victim, Houg repeatedly requested to see the boy's abdominal muscles. The victim ended up complying with Houg's requests after failed attempts to redirect the conversation. The victim reported another 13-year-old boy who also felt uncomfortable with his interactions with Houg. The second victim reported that Houg requested to see a pair of the boy's underwear during a one-on-one Zoom meeting.

Detectives later received information from a third victim, who reported that Houg touched him inappropriately when he was a child. The third victim said that Houg pulled the victim's shorts down during physical education class and touched his abdomen and genital area. This incident occurred around 2008 when the victim was in 5th grade.

After further investigation, Sheriff's detectives learned that Houg is a 5th grade teacher at Blossom Hill Elementary in Los Gatos and has worked there for over 20 years. Detectives executed a search warrant of Houg's residence and seized numerous electronic storage devices. A forensic analysis of the storage devices revealed a plethora of behavior indicative of a pedophile. Houg had multiple recordings of Zoom meetings of his class performing yoga exercises, videos of young boys changing clothes and videos and images of children in their underwear.

On September 3, 2020, deputies arrested Houg at a residence in San Jose. Houg was transported to the Santa Clara County Main Jail and booked on felony Lewd and Lascivious Acts with a Minor and several counts of Annoying and Molesting a Minor. Houg is being held on \$100,000 bail.

This is an active and ongoing investigation. Sheriff's detectives are working closely with the school district and Youth Theater to ensure there are no other victims. We are asking anyone that may have had any inappropriate contact with Houg to contact the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office at (408) 808-4500. Alternatively, you can contact the Sheriff's Office Investigative Services anonymous tip line at (408) 808-4431.

Prepared By: Sergeant Michael Low
Approved By: Undersheriff Rick Sung

Date / Time Prepared: 09/03/2020 @1100
Date / Time Approved: 09/03/2020 @1315



Joseph Houg-EGA448

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