

LAS VEGAS Lunar New Year celebrated 2B PARKS Members sought for Tule Springs advisory council 11B

Lawman, critics go many rounds

By Bill Dentzer
Review-Journal Capital Bureau

VIRGINIA CITY — The embattled sheriff of rural Storey County has survived charges of workplace sexual harassment and discrimination, allegations of sexual crimes and three confirmed state ethics violations.

But what might finally prove Sher-

Storey sheriff still standing, but tenuously

iff Gerald Antinoro's undoing are three new pending ethics cases — on balance, among the less serious allegations he has faced — that put him closer to being removed from office than even the recall election he survived in 2017.

The sheriff has twice been found to have willfully committed ethics violations by the state Commission on Ethics, and a third willful violation would trigger action by the commission to seek his removal in the courts. Such a process would likely

be lengthy and laborious, and the sheriff said recently that he would challenge any effort to remove him.

But that might be the least of Antinoro's legal woes, all of which he attributes to efforts of "detractors" fighting him for control of the county.

See STOREY 7B

LEGISLATURE 2019

Oct. 1 spurs lawmakers' intents on legislation

By Rachel Crosby
Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — On the final night of the Route 91 Harvest festival, Nevada Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui was just Sandra, enjoying the star-studded country music lineup with more than 22,000 other fans.

It was her first time at Route 91, but it wasn't her first country music festival. She's been to Stagecoach, the three-day festival in California, and she's traveled to Mexico for Luke Bryan's four-night festival "Crash My Playa," she told the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

That night, Jauregui was at Route 91 with her then-fiancé, now-husband. But shortly after 10 p.m., the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history began to unfold.

"I called my sister when it was happening, and I dropped my cell-phone," Jauregui said while sitting in her office in snowy Carson City, pulling on a black ponytail wrapped around her wrist. "And so, she found out it was happening, and then from then on, she couldn't reach me. My husband's phone was dead and nobody could reach them, so they didn't know what happened to us."

No one in her immediate group was physically injured that night, but everyone saw things that no one should have to see, Jauregui said. Her sister didn't find out she was OK until about 6 a.m..

"You don't realize what stress you put on your family," she said. "After that, you know, I kind of isolated myself. I didn't want to talk to anyone, especially anybody I knew who

See BUMP STOCK 6B



Chitose Suzuki Las Vegas Review-Journal @chitosephoto

Jason and Erin Roberts of Las Vegas smile after their wedding vow renewal ceremony Saturday during a doughnut-themed wedding event. Dunkin' spread some love at Sure Thing Chapel by giving out doughnut bouquets.

Baker's dozen reasons to renew their vows

Dunkin' fans get treats at downtown ceremonies

By Jessica Terrones
Las Vegas Review-Journal

When Erin and Jason Roberts married five years ago, they never capped their nuptials with a ceremony.

So when the Las Vegas couple learned a favorite treat maker was offering free ceremonies, the two jumped at the chance to renew their vows in a sweet way Saturday.

The Dunkin' fans said they found out about the doughnut-themed event on Instagram.

"We came because we never had an actual ceremony," said Erin Roberts, 31. "We went to the courthouse

See DUNKIN' 11B



Jason and Erin Roberts kiss during their wedding vow renewal ceremony. The couple admits to being partial to several Dunkin' treats, including its Boston cream pie and cake and pink-sprinkled doughnuts.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Atkinson says he's evolved in his 16 years in Carson City

By Colton Lochhead
Review-Journal Capital Bureau

CARSON CITY — New Nevada Senate Majority Leader Kelvin Atkinson has come a long way since he was the freshman "getting into all kinds of trouble" some 16 years ago.

It was 2003, and he and Assemblyman William Horne were among the fresh new faces in Carson City trying to navigate the halls of the Legislature building. It didn't take long before they were ruffling the

feathers of the old guard — including then-Speaker and Democratic Assembly caucus leader Richard Perkins.

"I just remember running around the building getting into all kinds of trouble," the North Las Vegas Democrat told the Review-Journal.

During the 2003 session, a bill sponsored by Perkins was going through the Assembly Education Committee, which Horne and Atkinson sat on.

"I guess it was expected that we

would fall in line on the votes," Horne said. "But Kelvin and I, we got to commit, we read out bills, and make our decisions."

They voted against the speaker's bill.

"The chair of the committee, (Assemblyman) Wendell Williams, said, 'You guys are in trouble now,'" Horne recalled with a laugh.

"We stuck to our guns, and that's how we built our reputation," added



Kelvin Atkinson

Horne, now a lobbyist. "Kelvin's always been one to sit there and do the work. Not afraid to change his mind if you get new information. Not afraid to put a bill in the drawer. Not afraid to also roll up his sleeves and fight for what he believes is right, to work with people."

Now, with his first formal week as the Senate Majority Leader com-

See ATKINSON 11B

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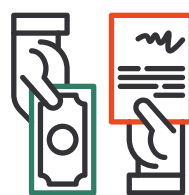
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The sheriff's legal tangles

Storey County Sheriff Gerald Antinoro faces legal issues on a number of fronts. He is the target of multiple state ethics complaints; two ongoing civil suits involving charges of defamation, sexual harassment and discrimination; and more serious allegations of rape, in addition to questions about lascivious off-hours activities.



Ethics complaints

Three violations have been confirmed, and three complaints are pending. Most involve charges that Antinoro misused the powers or trappings of his office in personal or campaign-related matters. Two of the confirmed violations were deemed willful. A third willful finding would prompt the Nevada Commission on Ethics to seek his removal in court.



Civil suits

A Storey County commissioner who is also a county brothel owner and major industrial park principal sued Antinoro for defamation based on comments the sheriff made publicly about the health of workers at the commissioner's brothel. The sheriff has filed a counterclaim.

In September, Antinoro's former chief deputy filed a federal sexual harassment and discrimination lawsuit against him.



Other allegations

Depositions given in the discrimination case refer to allegations of rape in Lodi, California, in 2015 and in Sparks in 2006. The women in the Lodi case said Antinoro set her up to be gang raped by three men in a motel there. No criminal charges have been filed. The Sparks incident, allegedly involving Antinoro and another Storey County deputy, was not reported until 2014, beyond the statute of limitations for sex crimes at the time.



Lifestyle

Deposed in the civil case, Antinoro and others describe the sheriff's visits to a Las Vegas swingers club for voyeuristic sex; instances of pandering; bawdy, sexually charged banter and sexual relations with subordinates; and sex with multiple partners.

Source: Review-Journal research

Severiano del Castillo Galvan Las Vegas Review-Journal

► STOREY

Continued from Page 1B

All of the six pending or previously decided ethics complaints against Antinoro claim that he used various trappings of his office to his advantage in personal matters or failed to disclose potential conflicts.

Besides the complaints, Storey County's top uniformed officer, elected to a third four-year term last June, is the target of a federal civil rights lawsuit filed that alleges sexual harassment and workplace discrimination.

The alleged harassment dates to 2015. An internal investigation by an outside party in 2016 confirmed that the sheriff had violated harassment laws in his conduct toward his former chief deputy, Melanie Keener. Antinoro has denied Keener's claims of discrimination and

harassment and moved to dismiss the case.

Another ongoing lawsuit involves defamation claims filed against Antinoro by one of his chief antagonists, Lance Gilman, a county commissioner, brothel owner and principal of the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center, a 104,000-acre industrial park in Storey County billed as the largest in the country.

Gilman and business associates are behind some of the ethics complaints. They also backed the recall effort and have asked law enforcement for investigations into the sheriff's actions and fitness for office.

"His conduct ought to be unacceptable for a man wearing a badge," said Kris Thompson, business manager for Gilman at the industrial park, who filed two of the latest

See STOREY 8B

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► **STOREY**

Continued from Page 7B

ethics complaints.

Thompson cites alleged activities by the sheriff, as well as other officers under his command, that are graphically depicted in sworn depositions taken in the federal civil rights case, including those of current and former Storey County deputies and Antinoro himself. The deponents describe an illicit affair between a supervising deputy and a department trainee, acts of voyeurism, Antinoro's patronage of a Las Vegas swinger club, partner-swapping, pandering and sex with multiple partners.

"I admit to issues in my life and things that have gone on in my bedroom with consenting adults," Antinoro told the Review-Journal when asked about the behaviors outlined in the depositions. "What goes on in my bedroom with consenting adults is nobody's business. But these guys want to turn it into a circus and try and create something that there's not."

Criminal allegations

The depictions go beyond acts of consensual sex and include allegations of rapes orchestrated or carried out by the 54-year-old lawman, including an alleged 2015 gang rape of a woman he was dating. According to the victim's deposition, Antinoro arranged the attack by three men at a motel in Lodi, California, so he could watch.

The woman was deposed in the civil case but has not filed criminal charges and has resisted cooperation with law enforcement, professing fear of the sheriff in her deposition. Antinoro called her accusations "a complete and utter fabrication."

"The only thing truthful of that is that the two of us were there in Lodi together. The rest of it is complete hogwash," he said.

An accusation of a 2006 rape in Sparks, reported for the first time in 2014, was not investigated because the statute of limitations had expired when the victim came forward. Antinoro has never been criminally charged.

Letters to attorney general

A lawyer for Gilman's industrial park partner asked the attorney



Bill Dentzer Las Vegas Review-Journal Storey County Sheriff Gerald Antinoro is the subject of ethics complaints that could force him from office.

general's office in April 2018 to investigate the various accusations. The office's subsequent review, which included FBI interviews of alleged victims, resulted in what the attorney general's office described as contradictory findings, statutory dead ends or noncriminal activity.

In August, Keener's lawyer in the sexual harassment case wrote again to the attorney general and to the U.S. attorney in Reno and the district attorneys in Storey County and San Joaquin County in California, where Lodi is located, to outline alleged criminal behavior and "address the apparent lack of any meaningful investigation" by law enforcement.

The attorney general's office responded in October, saying it could not pursue matters further. It cited insufficient evidence, contradictory findings, limited jurisdiction and uncooperative witnesses.

The matter became a campaign issue in the race for governor and attorney general because Republican candidates Adam Laxalt and Wes Duncan did not denounce Antinoro's endorsement of them. Laxalt and Duncan both lost their races.

Within days of that letter, the Commission on Ethics returned its second finding of a willful ethics violation by the sheriff.

Ethics complaints

Storey County officials deposed

in the civil case said Antinoro has been the cause of at least 10 lawsuits or complaints since he joined the sheriff's department in 2006.

The three pending ethics cases

stem from complaints filed in May, July and November. Two are related to Antinoro's re-election campaign in June. Antinoro defeated Mike Cullen, a Carson City Sheriff's Office sergeant, who filed one of the pending complaints in July claiming that Antinoro misused the trappings of his office by appearing in uniform at three campaign debates.

Antinoro also appeared in uniform during Virginia City's Memorial Day parade, riding in a patrol car at the start and appearing a second time later in the same parade on a float, according to the complaint.

Additionally, Cullen cited a weekly radio show Antinoro began hosting in May. On his third show, which aired the day of the election, Antinoro talked with guests "about the election, mudslinging and detractors," and one of his guests spoke of a "real clear choice" in that day's contest.

Antinoro, according to Cullen's complaint, also solicited donations to support the program during the broadcast and called out sponsors by name to "reward his friends and political donors."

See **STOREY 9B**

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The commission accepted the complaint for review in September.

Sheriff responds

The commission's investigation is pending. The sheriff will have an opportunity to challenge the complaints as part of the commission's review. But in an interview, Antinoro denied that he wore his official uniform to the debates and said it is his custom to wear a modified or "soft" uniform, typically jeans, a polo shirt and a badge he had specially made. That's what he wore in the parade, he said, calling his activities "pretty standard."

"As a general rule, I lead the parade through town, at least all of the big parades, whether it's political season or not," Antinoro said.

A second complaint filed in May and accepted for review in July also cites Antinoro's inappropriate use of his uniform and badge in campaign materials, saying it constituted "a visual endorsement, affirmation and sanction of his personal reelection campaign for Sheriff and provides an unfair advantage to him at government cost."

The third pending complaint, filed in November, was accepted by the commission Dec. 31. It claims that Antinoro committed 14 ethics violations by repeatedly failing to disclose potential conflicts and abstaining from acting in the sheriff's official capacity to regulate brothel activity because he's involved in litigation with a business he is supposed to be regulating. The Sheriff's Office issues work cards to brothel workers, and the sheriff sits on the county's brothel licensing board.

The conflicts cited in that complaint arise from the disputes playing out in area courts, before the Ethics Commission and in the community at large between Antinoro and Gilman. In 2016, Gilman filed a defamation case against Antinoro for telling a local blogger that brothel workers at Gilman's Mustang Ranch did not have necessary medical clearance.

The November ethics complaint says Antinoro continued to participate in regulating brothels without acknowledging the potential conflict or abstaining because of the ongoing litigation. Thompson filed the complaint and the earlier one from May on Antinoro's campaign materials.

"To claim that there's an ethical violation there by trying to bootstrap it onto the fact that he's suing me, it's just one more attempt to try and keep me from doing my job," Antinoro said.

Thompson cited Antinoro's counterclaim, long-standing personal animus and the fact that since November, Antinoro has recused himself from actions related to brothel regulation.

"You can't sue someone and then be making quasi-judicial or regulatory decisions about their business," Thompson said. "You can't have a clear personal animus or hatred."

Confirmed violations

Among the decided cases, the commission last fall found that the sheriff had breached ethics law against use of government property for personal business by opening his office on a Saturday to allow his wife to meet her ex-husband for a child visitation appointment. Antinoro contended that such accommodations are made for other members of the public. But the commission found that his action constituted an "unwarranted privi-

lege" extended to his wife.

The commission deemed that incident a willful violation, Antinoro's second. His first came in May 2017, when the commission ruled that he improperly used official sheriff's department stationery for a letter endorsing Michele Fiore in her 2016 bid for Congress.

Both findings came with fines. An earlier complaint was resolved by stipulated agreement and no finding of willful violation. In 2014, a deputy running for sheriff against Antinoro filed a complaint when Antinoro barred the deputy from attending a campaign-related community event on his own time.

The commission acknowledged that the move was potentially a First Amendment violation but did not constitute a willful ethics violation as defined in state code.

Antinoro maintains that his accusers are using a "bastardization of rumors" to have law enforcement, the courts or the ethics panel do what county voters have declined to do: remove him from office.

He continues to have strong backing in the county and counts local businesspeople, an active local blogger, lawmakers and police officials from other jurisdictions among supporters. He won re-election in 2018 by a margin of 53 percent to 44 percent and beat back a well-funded recall effort the year before with nearly 60 percent of the vote.

"I've been doing this job for over 30 years," he said. "If I was this individual that these people are trying to present me as, would I have been able to retain it that long? The people of the county here locally see through their nonsense. But that's not good enough for them because they don't want me in this position."

Thompson said the actions by the sheriff depicted in various depositions and other records would prompt anyone who has seen them to call for Antinoro's removal.

"We know the conduct that is in that sworn testimony, including his own conduct that he's admitted to," Thompson said. "When we're bringing the best companies in the world to work in Storey County, we think law enforcement should be held to a better standard than what this guy has established for himself."

Contact Bill Dentzer at bdentzer@reviewjournal.com or 775-461-0661. Follow @Dentzernews on Twitter.



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