



# **KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE**

## **STATE ATTORNEY**



### **ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Police Officer and Associate Charged with Dealing in Stolen Property**

Miami (June 24, 2019) – An investigation conducted by the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) Professional Compliance Bureau and the Public Corruption Division of the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office has led to the arrest of 6-year veteran MDPD Officer Orestes Santiago Verdura and an associate, 38-year-old Ariel Sanchez.

The charges stem from an investigation of stolen trucks allegedly delivered by Sanchez and allegedly sold (or brokered) by Verdura. Verdura, presently suspended by MDPD, was formerly assigned to Uniform Patrol in the Town of Miami Lakes. Both individuals are being charged with:

- 1 count - Conspiracy to Commit Organized Scheme to Defraud - 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree felony
- 1 count - Organized Scheme to Defraud - 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree felony
- 2 counts - Dealing in Stolen Property - 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree felonies

Bond is set at \$110,000 for each individual with a Nebbia requirement.

The arrest resulted from information provided by a confidential informant who alleged that Officer Verdura was engaged in acts that involved dealing in stolen property, specifically stolen vehicles. Initially, the discussions involved stealing and selling a Lamborghini from an acquaintance they both knew. However, that plan fell through with no action undertaken. Later conversations between Verdura and the informant resulted in Verdura brokering two separate sales of Ford F-250 pickup trucks reported stolen in Palm Beach County. In both instances, payment was made in official Miami-Dade County funds to Verdura, who collected the payment while on duty, dressed in his police uniform, and driving a marked MDPD police vehicle. Verdura was taken into custody immediately after the sale of the second vehicle.

“Officer Verdura betrayed everything and everyone he pledged to honor when he began engaging in his alleged criminal activities,” said State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “I am proud of the swift action taken by the Miami-Dade Police Department to end Verdura’s fraudulent activities and bring him and his associate to justice.”

“Today’s arrest although extremely disappointing, in no way represents the hard work and dedication of the men and women of our department who serve their community with distinction each day.” Said Miami-Dade Police Deputy Director Alfredo “Freddy” Ramirez. “I am proud and grateful of our Professional Compliance Bureau’s investigative efforts to expose this breach of the public’s trust and allow us to hold those involved accountable for their actions.”

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FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ed Griffith, Public Information Officer  
(305) 547-0535

[EdGriffith@MiamiSAO.com](mailto:EdGriffith@MiamiSAO.com)