

WALKER MAN IS FACING CHARGES AFTER ALLEGEDLY SHOWING UP AT AN OFF-DUTY OFFICER'S HOME WHILE ARMED IN AN ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE HIM AHEAD OF A TRIAL.

BY [MN CRIME](#) STAFF

Investigators say the incident happened around 11:53 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 26 at a residence in **Nisswa**.



Jerry Allen Stangel, 50, is charged with first-degree witness tampering, two counts of felony aggravated harassment and a misdemeanor trespass charge. Prosecutors allege Stangel attempted to prevent or influence testimony in a felony drug case involving his wife while in possession of a firearm.

According to the criminal complaint, the off-duty officer reported that a man knocked on the front door late at night and claimed he had run out of gas on a snowmobile. The officer did not open the door and instead spoke through it, repeatedly telling the man he wasn't allowed to be there and directing him to leave. The officer warned that law enforcement was going to be called. The man initially walked away but continued moving around the yard before eventually leaving the area on foot.

Police responding to the call soon located the driver of a Jeep Grand Cherokee leaving nearby and conducted a traffic stop. The driver matched the description provided by the

officer and was identified as Stangel. He told police he was traveling from **Elk River** to **Walker**, was low on gas and stopped at the residence because he was lost. He said he didn't see a gas station he had passed while driving north and claimed he only had about \$5 available for fuel. Stangel denied being at the residence and was no longer wearing the face mask described by the officer. He was initially released and advised to go to the gas station.

After speaking further with the off-duty officer, police learned the officer was scheduled to testify the next day in a felony drug case involving Stangel's wife. The officer had reported the woman was "acting strange" during a court hearing earlier that afternoon. Based on that information, police returned to the gas station and contacted Stangel again.

During that encounter, Stangel denied knowing anything about the court proceedings. He was taken into custody and later agreed to speak with investigators. According to the complaint, Stangel admitted he went to the officer's residence but claimed it was to get gas and said he left when asked. He also made statements suggesting evidence in his case would disappear, similar to claims he made about his wife's case.

Investigators say Stangel later admitted he had been carrying a gun that night and threw it from his vehicle after seeing squad cars. He told officers he had stolen the handgun weeks earlier from an unidentified residence and had searched online for the officer's address. Stangel admitted he wanted to confront the officer about his wife's case because he believed evidence had been altered and said that at worst he thought he might beat the officer up.

An inventory search of Stangel's vehicle turned up a note in the center console with the officer's name and address written on it, along with Stangel's phone. The following morning, officers returned to the area and followed fresh footprints in the snow near the residence. Those tracks led to a handgun partially hidden against a tree about 50 to 100 yards from the driveway.

The firearm was identified as a Smith and Wesson 9mm loaded with an extended magazine. Investigators noted the gun appeared recently placed and compared the boot prints in the snow to the boots Stangel was wearing at the time of his arrest, finding significant similarities. The firearm, boots and impression evidence were sent to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for further analysis.

Stangel faces up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine on each felony count if convicted. He remains in custody with bail set at \$2 million with no conditions.