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MPD officer in court over misconduct charges

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Indianapolis - An Indianapolis Metro police officer was in court Wednesday over what an admitted prostitute said he did with her at a west side school.

Officer James Ingalls is facing one count of D felony official misconduct and one count of A misdemeanor patronizing a prostitute. Ingalls turned himself in at the Arrestee Processing Center for booking Wednesday morning after Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi filed the charges Tuesday.

"He wasn't out taking police runs, he wasn't protecting the public. He was abusing his authority," said Brizzi.

In criminal court Wednesday afternoon, Ingalls broke down when his attorney asked him about his two children and his wife. The Ingalls hired high-profile attorney John Kautzman.

"It's an emotional time for everybody. There is nothing for us to do but review the charges and see where we go from there," Kautzman said.

According to the affidavit of probable cause, Ingalls picked up Kristen Harbaugh in October of 2007 near the corner of Tibbs Avenue and 10th Street.

"We have a police officer, marked car, marked uniform, gun. He puts her in the back seat of the car, he says, 'You know I've always found you attractive,'" Brizzi explained. "There's money laying out on the front seat - 50 dollars - two twenties and a ten."

"He says this, 'I'm a man and I have needs'," Brizzi added.

Investigators say Ingalls took Harbaugh to Garden City Elementary School to fulfill those needs right in the nurse's office.

"He disrobes, she sees again the piercing, the tatoos," Brizzi said.

According to investigators, Ingalls worked as a part-time security guard at the school and had codes to get in the building. According to the affidavit, the first encounter lasted about 15 minutes and it states it wasn't their last.

Investigators say the next time Ingalls stopped Harbaugh was to warn her of a prostitution sweep coming through the Haughville area. Police say the Ingalls and Harbaugh would meet for sex at least three more times at the school.

No one is more surprised at the allegations than employees of the school district who say Ingalls worked there for nine years, but went on medical leave last July and never came back.

Ingalls' fellow officers are disappointed.

"It's a disappointing behavior. It's not accepted by officers of this department," said Sgt. Matthew Mount.

Prosecutors wanted the judge to keep Ingall behind bars on his \$10,000 bond, but the judge decided otherwise.

"She indicated that because of his ties to the community, she allowed him to be OR'd. She did not consider him a flight risk," said Deputy Prosecutor David Wyser.

Ingalls remains suspended with out pay, but Police Chief Michael Spears is already working on terminating Ingalls.

"The recommendation for termination is being pushed forward and at the same time the criminal case moves forward," said Sgt. Mount.



Officer Ingalls took the prostitute to Garden City Elementary, where he worked part-time as a security guard.



Officer James Ingalls

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Ingalls' wife didn't want to comment after his hearing Wednesday afternoon.

While the suspended officer could lose his job within weeks, he'll go back to court in March to answer to the criminal charges.

Brizzi, meantime, says the investigation isn't over and they'll be looking into whether other women could have been involved.

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