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ARMED AND DANGEROUS

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Cops behaving badly

Police department arrests, jails, investigates 10 officers in 4 months

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One police department appears to be suffering from a serious case of officers behaving badly.

After one officer was charged with raping a woman while on duty last week, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department is having trouble with two more of its officers – bringing the number of arrested, jailed or investigated cops to 10 in the past four months.

According to the Indianapolis Star, Officer Christopher Poindexter, 34, allegedly allowed his fiance to drive his department-issued patrol car. When she sideswiped another vehicle, Poindexter filed a false report and said the car was involved in a hit-and-run accident, police said.

Police Chief Michael Spears said he will fire another suspended 10-year veteran named James Ingalls. **The officer allegedly had sexual intercourse with a prostitute while on duty.**

The two recent cases come after Monday's suspension of Officer Anthony Smith. He has been charged with seven felonies including rape, criminal deviate conduct, sexual misconduct and official misconduct and two misdemeanor counts of intimidation after he allegedly pulled a 19-year-old over and threatened arrest if she didn't get into his car and have sex with him.

The three police officers have each been suspended without pay, and Spears has recommended that they be fired.

"I hope by taking extremely quick action that we're sending a message to our



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officers and to the citizens of our city that this conduct will not be tolerated," he said.

Indianapolis Metropolitan police officers have faced charges such as organizing a prostitution ring, selling firearms to felons, drunken driving and drug trafficking

In April, former Officer Noble Duke pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to alerting a drug dealer before a 2007 police raid, according to the Star.

Only two months later, on June 16, the U.S. attorney's office busted narcotics Detectives Robert B. Long and Jason P. Edwards and officer James D. Davis for stealing money and drugs from criminal dealers.

(Story continues below)

Eleven days later, Detective Jason S. Barber was accused of selling a gun to a convicted felon.

Patrolman Jeremy Lee faced charges of aiding in promoting prostitution one week afterward.

According to the Star, robbery Detective George Leon Benjamin retired last week after he was charged with felony drunk driving and five misdemeanors stemming from two crashes in department vehicles.

Now that the official count of cops arrested, jailed or under investigation has reached 10, some people are beginning to ask questions. Angela Mansfield, a Democratic city-county councilwoman who represents a local district expressed concern about department policies.

"There's got to be more accountability and better screening," she said. "There have just been too many incidents."

Gerald Frazier, president of police watchdog group Citizens Alert, said the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department needs to do more.

"I'm surprised councilors haven't called for some kind of investigation and called the chief on the carpet and asked what the heck is going on," said. "I don't think it would be unreasonable to think the department may have a discipline problem."

The rash of bad cop behavior comes at a time when police have asked citizens to help fight a violent crime wave. Some say residents could lose faith in the police force when they need it most.

Pat Andrews, vice president of the Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations, told the Star the community needs officers who obey the law and can protect them.

"If you're going to put a burden on the public, the public has got to trust you," said. "It's a violation of virtually everything they're supposed to be fighting."

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