

# The Washington Post

## Anti-Prostitution Sting Leads to Police Officer's Arrest at Hotel

By Paul Duggan  
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A D.C. police officer was arrested in a downtown hotel last month after he allegedly solicited sex from an undercover officer in an Internet sting run by the department's anti-prostitution unit, authorities said yesterday.

The misdemeanor charge against Officer Robert A. Schmidt was routinely dismissed last week after he completed a day-long education program called "john school," in which first-time offenders are instructed in the [risks of prostitution](#), according to his lawyer, Harold D. Martin. He said neither he nor Schmidt would comment on the sting.

Authorities alleged that Schmidt arranged to meet a woman he thought was a prostitute after responding to an advertisement investigators placed on Craigslist, an online classified service.

His meeting with Officer Madeline Collado, who was posing as a prostitute, took place Feb. 20, just after 5 p.m., in a fifth-floor room at the Embassy Suites hotel near 10th and K streets NW, according to an affidavit filed by police in D.C. Superior Court. The document quotes their conversation in a room wired for sound and video.

"So, what do you do for a living?" Collado asked him, after the two had exchanged pleasantries.

"I work with the government," Schmidt said, to which Collado replied, "How cool is that!"

After they set an \$80 price for a half-hour of sex, other officers entered the room and arrested Schmidt. He was released with a court summons, a standard procedure in such cases. Because he completed the john school, sponsored by the U.S. attorney's office, the charge of soliciting for prostitution was dismissed March 10 at his first court appearance.

Asked whether Schmidt faces departmental disciplinary action, police spokeswoman Traci Hughes would only say, "There's an administrative investigation underway."

Schmidt, an officer since 1994, worked for several years in a drug enforcement unit in the Narcotics and Special Investigations Division before leaving the division in 2007, said Inspector Brian Bray, head of the NSID. The sting that led to Schmidt's arrest was run by the division's prostitution enforcement unit, Bray said.

He said Schmidt was among eight men arrested in the sting that night.

"He was really one of the better officers in the department when he was working for me, a real hardworking guy," said Bray, who called Schmidt's arrest "sad."

At the time of the sting, Bray said, Schmidt was a youth crimes investigator, a job that often is a path to a

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promotion to detective. Yesterday, though, Schmidt was working in the 4th District, in the northern part of the city, assigned to a program in which officers walk foot beats to stay in close touch with residents, officials said.

*Staff writer Del Quentin Wilber contributed to this report.*

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