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Officer arrested on suspicion of engaging in sex acts with prostitutes

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Images



Alex Horvath / The Californian

Chief Greg Williamson spoke about a former Bakersfield police officer arrested Friday morning for allegedly participating in sex acts with prostitutes both while he was on and off duty. An investigation revealed Albert Smith Jr. engaged in sex acts with at least three local prostitutes, according to Bakersfield police. The District Attorney's office reviewed the investigation and a warrant was obtained for seven counts of engaging in an act of prostitution.

A former Bakersfield police officer was arrested Friday morning for allegedly participating in sex acts with prostitutes both while he was on and off duty.

An investigation revealed Albert Smith Jr. paid for and engaged in sex acts with at least three local prostitutes, according to Bakersfield police. The District Attorney's office reviewed the investigation and a warrant was obtained for seven counts of engaging in an act of prostitution, a misdemeanor offense.

The acts took place in residences and even in Smith's patrol vehicle, Police Chief Greg Williamson said. Smith was working by himself when he committed these offenses, the chief said.

Smith, 42, declined an interview request from jail Friday morning. He was no longer listed as being in custody as of late Friday afternoon, according to the Kern County Sheriff's Department website.

Williamson called Smith's actions disappointing and disturbing. He said it affects the trust the public has in law enforcement.

Smith patrolled areas including Union Avenue and had become interested in prostitution enforcement, Williamson said at a press conference held at BPD headquarters.

"He has a record of conducting enforcement on prostitutes, and obviously he stepped out of bounds on several occasions here and got immersed in something that I guess he couldn't get out of," Williamson said.

Police received word of what Smith was doing on Sunday, according to Williamson. A woman with no known previous instances of prostitution engaged in sex acts for money with Smith and then contacted the department, Williamson said.

None of the three women who have come forward are being charged with prostitution, Williamson said. They are witnesses in the case.

Police wanted to add charges of committing a crime under color of authority against Smith, Williamson said, but the District Attorney's office didn't believe they could prosecute Smith on those charges based on the evidence.

Williamson said he believes this is an isolated incident. It's unclear whether Smith didn't respond to dispatched calls while he was engaging in these acts. An investigation is ongoing.

"The 357 other men and women that work at the Bakersfield Police Department are here and dedicated to public safety," he said. "They're dedicated to serving our community. They are committed to going out every day, day in and day out, and putting their lives on the line to keep our citizens safe."

Smith resigned Tuesday. He had been with the BPD since July 2007.

Any other witnesses or anyone with information regarding this case is asked to call Detective Keli Reed at 326-3544.

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