

Bradenton police officer, 16 others busted in Internet prostitution sting | Crime | Bradenton Herald

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MANATEE -- Seventeen people -- including a Bradenton police officer -- were arrested during a recent undercover sting targeting Internet prostitution, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office said Wednesday.

The officer, Trenton Moore, was arrested June 4 and charged with solicitation. A patrolman, Moore resigned from the department on the same day, according to the city of Bradenton human resources office.

In all, seven women were charged with prostitution, and 10 men were charged with solicitation, according to a news release.

The sheriff's office said the operation had been underway for several months.

"Detectives working in an undercover capacity posed as prostitutes and 'johns' and engaged in online conversation with potential suspects," the release states. "Once the detective and suspect reached an agreement for a sex act in exchange for money, the two would meet at a predetermined location and the suspect was arrested."

The arrests were made on several dates, starting May 20 and ending June 25, according to the sheriff's office.

Bradenton Police Capt. William Fowler said it was unfortunate one of their officers was among the arrested.

"It kind of puts a black eye on all of us," Fowler said. "Police officers have to hold themselves to a higher standard, that's what we do."

Moore submitted a resignation letter to the department immediately after his arrest.

"We are trusted to protect and serve the community," Fowler said. "He got caught up in something he shouldn't be involved in."

Moore has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

A call to his defense attorney for comment was not returned Wednesday.

An arrest report details how the undercover operation busted the former patrol officer.

The sheriff's office tactical unit posted an ad on a website where prostitution is solicited June 4, according to the report. The undercover detective received a text message at 2:47 p.m. in response to the ad.

Moore reportedly expressed a desire to meet during the text message conversation, and the two agreed to meet at the Best Western at 2215 Cortez Road W. in Bradenton.

At 4:22 p.m., the undercover detective received a call from the same phone number, and the man said he was a couple minutes away and identified his vehicle.

Moore pulled into the parking lot of the hotel then and once again called the detective, the report states. He was told to get out of his car and into the front passenger seat of an undercover car.

"During the course of the conversation, I asked Moore what he wanted. Moore stated that it didn't matter and he had \$100," the detective wrote. "I said, sex for a \$100, and Moore nodded his head yes."

Moore was then arrested without incident.

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