

Tucson PD releases names of people possibly connected to prostitutes — after removing those who happen to be cops

By Radley Balko

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2015 Cops Hypocrites

The Tucson police department is publicizing hundreds of names and phone numbers that appeared in some cellphones confiscated from several massage parlors around the city. Of course, there could be any number of reasons someone's number might appear in the phone of a woman working for a massage business that has been accused of prostitution. She might have her handyman or dentist in her phone. Perhaps her friends are in there. Wrong numbers, too. There may even be a city councilman in there, for completely innocuous reasons.

So far, no one whose information was found in the phones has been charged with a crime. That's why at least some local media are refusing to publish the names.

Bizarrely, Tucson Police Chief Roberto Villaseñor confirmed as much when he told the Arizona Daily Star, "The inclusion of information in this list is in no way indicative of involvement in criminal activity."

So why release the information? Well, to embarrass these people, of course. It's a form of extra-judicial punishment for what an as-yet unproven, nonviolent, consensual crime.

Don't agree? Consider this:

Two Tucson police officers have resigned and five more are still under investigation by internal affairs in connection with their possible involvement in a long-running prostitution ring.

The number of officers believed to be involved has almost doubled since April, when interim City Manager Martha Durkin sent a memo to the mayor and council saying four Tucson police officers had been placed on paid administrative leave for "allegations related to criminal activities."

The two officers who resigned did so while on administrative leave, and it's likely they'll still be part of an ongoing Arizona Department of Public Safety criminal investigation, said Tucson City Attorney Mike Rankin.

The DPS investigation could be completed within 30 days, a department spokeswoman said.

The names of any officers found to be involved won't be released until after the

investigation and the appeal process are completed, said Tucson Police Chief Roberto Villaseñor.

Emphasis mine. So, before releasing the names of hundreds of people who appeared in the phones, the city police checked the names against the city's roster of police officers. They then redacted those names, and released all the others. The police officers' information won't be released until they've had a chance to clear their names through an internal investigation. As for everyone else, well, good luck explaining to your spouse, your kids, your boss and anyone else who might want to know why your name or number appeared in an accused prostitute's cellphone. Sure seems like two-tiered justice to me.

You also have to wonder how much law enforcement money and manpower has been wasted on the initial investigation, the investigation of the investigation, the PR nightmare and the accompanying fallout. And it was all to stop consenting adults from paying other consenting adults for sex.