

# Henry officer accused of inappropriate act with juvenile

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By Shannon Jenkins

A Henry County police officer was arrested Friday afternoon and then fired from the force for engaging in an "inappropriate act" with a 16-year-old girl while he was on duty, police officials said.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) has charged Randolph Cobian, 28, with aggravated child molestation and child molestation, according to the Henry County Police Department.

Mike Turner, the Henry County Police public safety director, said Cobian was discovered at a private residence in the county when the girl's father came home at approximately 5:30 Friday morning.

"Because of her age the matter has been turned over to GBI," Turner said. "The Henry County Police has been working cooperatively with the Flint Judicial (Circuit) District Attorney's Office and GBI to make sure this case comes to a speedy and correct conclusion."

Turner said Cobian, who is single, has been with Henry County for two years and has no record of a citizen's complaint or inappropriate conduct. Prior to his employment within the county, Turner said the officer worked as a trainee with the Cobb County Police Department. Cobian was "immediately terminated" as an employee of the police department on Friday, Turner said.

No specific details were given to identify the nature of the "inappropriate act" in which Cobian and the girl were engaged in when the father found them. Whether or not the two had an ongoing relationship will be part of the investigation now under way, authorities said

According to reports, Cobian was outside his designated geographical zone and was on duty when the incident occurred. Turner said the father saw the police car in his driveway and called authorities after entering his home. Reportedly the father told Cobian to remain in the house until authorities arrived, and he complied.

When asked how the girl and Cobian were acquainted, Turner said, "That is the most distressing part of this for us."

Officials believe the two have known each other for more than a year when Cobian served as the girl's volunteer swimming coach at an area school, which has been unnamed due to the

open investigation. Turner said the officer had asked to volunteer at the school again this year, but school officials had yet to grant approval. The headmaster of that school has been notified of the incident.

"There may be other issues we may need to approach at this school," Turner said. "In this case we cannot discount anything. We have no evidence at this point that there is any other person involved. However, we cannot reasonably discount the fact that because of contacts with other young people that there may not be other issues that may be involved."

Officials also reported that the officer and the girl's family were acquaintances.

"This was a friend," he said. "This was someone who had been in their house and eaten dinner with them. (He) had been trusted to teach their daughter."

Turner said the parents are "understandably angry."

"They are hurt – as we all are," he said. "On behalf of the public safety division, we apologize to this community for the behavior of this officer. It does not reflect the standards of the officers ... that serve this community."

Chief Russell Abernathy said the incident is "an embarrassment to the county."

"All the officers are upset about this," he said. "They're stunned. This is a fellow officer that they trusted and worked with. It's shocking to them."

Despite their peer's alleged actions, Abernathy said the officers "can still hold their heads high."

"They're not the ones who did this," he said. "One officer – who's now a former officer – did the wrong thing. One stumbled ... and he's paying the price. This is something we will overcome. This is just a cancer that's happened, and we removed it."