



Madison police officer accused of exposing himself online to detective posing as 13 year old

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Jim Lockwood/The Star-Ledger

By



James N. Haspel

Mugshot of James Haspel, veteran Madison Borough police officer. **MADISON** -- A veteran Madison Borough police officer was arrested today on charges of exposing himself via webcam to an undercover detective posing as a 13-year-old girl, the state Attorney General's Office said.

Madison Police Detective James N. Haspel, 49, of Chatham, was arrested by the New Jersey State Police today morning as he was on his way to work, authorities said.

A 25-year member of the Madison police department, Haspel is accused of second-degree official misconduct, and third-degree charges of attempting to endanger the welfare of a child and attempting to transmit obscene materials to a person under 16 years old, authorities said.

The incidents are alleged to have occurred between December 2009 and May 2010, when Haspel exposed himself more than once via webcam to a person he believed to be a 13-year-old girl, but who really was an undercover

detective, authorities said.

"This police officer took an oath to uphold the law and protect people," Attorney General Paula Dow said. "We charge that he betrayed that oath in a shocking manner by exposing himself to someone he believed to be a young girl."

Official misconduct involved Haspel allegedly sending webcam images from a hotel in Columbus, Ohio, where he was attending a training conference for the police department; and communicating with the "girl" while on duty at Madison police headquarters using a computer supplied by the borough for official police business, authorities said. He did not send webcam videos from police headquarters, authorities said.

If convicted of official misconduct, which is punishable by up to 10 years in state prison with no possibility of parole until the fifth year, Haspel would have to forfeit his police job. He earned an annual salary of \$92,268 last year, according to public records.

And if convicted of the third-degree endangerment charge, which is punishable by up to five years in prison, Haspel would be subject to registration as a sex offender under Megan's Law.

Haspel, who was held at the Hunterdon County Jail and released after posting \$75,000 bail, could not be reached for comment.

Madison Police Chief John Trevena declined to comment.

Madison Mayor Mary-Anna Holden was saddened to hear the news, saying, "He's a terrific detective. I'm really shocked. Last person you would expect" to be arrested on such charges.

New Jersey Local News Service reporter **Sarah Schillaci** contributed to this report.

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