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# Newark cop is charged with trying to cover up alleged sex with minors

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By **Joe Ryan/The Star-Ledger**  
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NEWARK -- A 20-year Newark police veteran, under investigation for shaking down drug dealers, was charged today with pressuring a man to lie to the FBI about sexual encounters they allegedly had when he was a minor. The FBI began investigating Sgt. Michael J. Lalley, 42, a former narcotics detective, as early as spring of last year on suspicions he had been stealing money and drugs from dealers, according to a complaint filed in federal court in Newark. Investigators were also probing allegations Lalley was paying boys for sex, including with one minor between 1991 and 1999, authorities said.



Newark Police  
Sgt. Michael Lalley of the Newark Police Department.

In some cases, authorities said, the encounters occurred at the police station where Lally worked.

Prosecutors have not filed drug or sex assault charges against Lalley, who is married with children. An FBI spokesman said the investigation is continuing.

"The things for which Sergeant Lalley stands accused undermine the most basic values of law enforcement," said Kevin Cruise, head of the FBI's Newark office.

Last month, a second alleged victim told agents he met Lalley in about 1994, when he was 17, and was paid between \$25 and \$60 to have sex with the officer about twice a week, authorities said. In some cases, the alleged victim also had sex with a woman at the officer's behest, according to the complaint. She is identified in the complaint only as "Individual 1."

The day after the alleged victim spoke to the FBI, agents recorded a telephone conversation between him and Lalley.

"They don't know nothing about me and you ... but you gotta back that up if they do ask you," Lalley said, according to a partial transcript of the conversation.

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During another recorded conversation, Lalley allegedly coached the man to say the officer never gave him money for sex, authorities said.

"And I never paid you for sex. You never said, 'Gimme \$200 and gimme this or gimme that,'" the officer said, according to the complaint.

Lalley was arrested at his home in Ocean County this morning and appeared in federal court wearing blue jeans, a gray sweat shirt and shackles. Before the judge entered, he winked at a group of supporters in the courtroom.

Magistrate Judge Mark Falk released Lalley on \$100,000 bail, secured with equity from the house he and his wife own in Jackson. Under conditions of his release, the judge forbid Lalley from attending Boy Scout functions or youth sporting events unless they involved his own children. If convicted of obstructing justice, Lalley faces up to 20 years in prison, said Christopher J. Gramiccioni, an assistant U.S. attorney.

His lawyer, Anthony Fusco Jr., said Lalley, who was placed on administrative duty last month, has a good reputation among police officers and called the charges "surprising."

Detective Todd McClendon, a Newark police spokesman, said the allegations were not a reflection on the department as a whole.

"The men and women of the Newark Police Department proudly uphold their oath to protect and serve the public as they risk their lives daily in the interest of justice and public safety," McClendon said.

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to someone who "served 27 years" how could you state that he is not innocent until proven guilty? You above all should know this. If you know that he was raised in a well mannered home, how could you second guess this case? I hope all the dirty cops are turned in...i do, but you do not know anything until everything is said and done!! For someone who worked with him, it's a shame to even see you said those things. The person

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