

## Former Manatee sheriff's lieutenant charged with child molestation pleads to lesser charge

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### 2013 Cop Pedophile

BRADENTON -- A former Manatee County Sheriff's Office lieutenant accused of child molestation pleaded to a lesser charge Tuesday morning in a case in which he faced multiple counts of lewd and lascivious molestation.

Dale Couch, 53, pleaded no contest to one charge simple battery and was sentenced to time already served after his arrest in May 2013.

Couch will also serve 12 months probation, complete an anger management program, 50 hours of community service and a psychological evaluation along with any treatment deemed necessary. He was also ordered to pay court costs totaling \$450.

He pleaded no contest to touching a victim against her will during an argument in her room. He later angrily knocked a door off its hinges, according to court records.

Circuit Judge Diana Moreland granted Couch permission to continue residing in Hillsborough County and complete his probation there. Couch will report to a probation officer once a month in Manatee County.

Moreland also granted a request made by defense attorney Gregory Hagopian that Couch be allowed to travel for two weeks to Ohio to visit family and two weeks to North Carolina to visit his wife's family.

Couch, a 20-year veteran with the sheriff's office, resigned after his arrest and suspension without pay.

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