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Deputy charged, fired in Dickson child sex sting

By RIC BOHY
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A Maury County sheriff's deputy and father of one has been fired after his arrest for Internet solicitation of sex with a minor.

The Wednesday arrest of Deputy Jackie Sands followed a sting operation conducted by the Dickson County Sheriff's Department. Sands, who worked the night shift for the Maury County department, was released from jail Thursday on \$15,000 bond.

Maury County Sheriff Enoch George said the 38-year-old Sands, who was hired in November of 2009, was fired immediately after he was charged.

"I was privy to the investigation before the decision was made," George said.

Asked if he was satisfied the charge against Sands was based on a thorough investigation, he responded, "The investigation is pretty much concluded. No question."

Sands was divorced in 2010 and awarded custody of his daughter, now 14, according to Giles County Chancery Court records.

His arrest resulted from an investigation that began Dec. 3 by Dickson County Sheriff's Detective Scott Levasseur, the department's representative on the nationwide Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force who is assigned full time to computer forensics, mostly concerned with child pornography. He is also a sworn special deputy U.S. Marshall and part of the FBI's Child Exploitation Office in Nashville.

Sands, a patrol deputy who was scheduled to work the night shift Wednesday, was called into the Maury County Sheriff's Office about 2:30 p.m. and taken into custody without incident, Levasseur said.



Jackie Sands



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"I work mostly undercover operations on child pornography and undercover online chatting, which is what got the deputy here," Levasseur said. "He solicited an undercover police officer — which is me — who he believed was an underage female for sex."

He declined to discuss further details of the investigation but expressed personal feelings about Sands' arrest.

"We really feel — me personally and my sheriff — for the Maury County Sheriff's Office, because they are really an outstanding department and getting hit with one of their own has to be rough. It really hurts that one of our own would do something like this and violate his oath.

"Having to do what I had to do with the deputy was stressful," he added.

George described Sands as a good deputy.

"He was not a major problem person," George said. "He was to come to work last night, and I had a meeting with my shift and told them about how unhappy and hurt I am that we've got a problem like this. Hurt and disappointed."

The charge against Sands is a Class E felony and carries a penalty of at least one year in jail and a maximum of six years. A jury may also assess a fine of up to \$3,000.

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