

## Former SLTPD officer receives 18-month prison sentence

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John Gerald Poland, 45, a former South Lake Tahoe police officer, was sentenced Wednesday to 18 months in prison for one count of obstruction of an official proceeding, according to a U.S. Department of Justice news release.

Poland pleaded guilty in May to the one federal obstruction charge.

A federal complaint was issued Jan. 22 by Christopher Campion, a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, citing Poland with five federal obstruction charges.

Within Campion's complaint, the agent stated law enforcement received "uncorroborated information" that Poland, as a South Tahoe High School resource officer from 20-06, "made sexual advancements on minor students, failed to arrest high school students for illicit drug possession, had a sexual relationship with C1 (a minor at the time whose name was withheld from documents and alleged methamphetamine addict), disclosed law enforcement identities, and identified law enforcement (SLTPD) residence locations."

There also was another minor victim cited in the allegations, but was found to be of age when the acts may have occurred.

Campion stated the sexual allegations did not have enough probable cause evidence to issue a warrant or complaint against Poland.

However, during interviews with C1 in October and November 2011, Campion stated in his complaint that Poland had disclosed information in regard to a known gang member with connections to illicit drugs that were not controlled substances — in this case, methamphetamine.

"In October and November 2011, Poland tampered with this witness in an investigation into his own conduct as well as the conduct of the gang member," the news release Wednesday stated. "Poland instructed another witness to conceal and destroy evidence rather than provide it to federal authorities. Poland admitted that he corruptly attempted to alter, destroy, mutilate, and conceal evidence material to an official proceeding."

The document stated Poland contacted C1 in an effort to persuade her to destroy and tamper any evidence and to do anything "to keep me (Poland) out of harm's way."

On Wednesday, Poland was ordered to self-surrender to the Federal Bureau of Prisons on Nov. 6. The maximum sentence he faced was 20 years in prison and a fine of no more than \$250,00 and three years of "term of supervised release," court documents stated.

A grand jury in February charged Poland with three counts of tampering with a witness, victim or informant, as well as and obstruction of an official proceeding, according to federal court

documents.

A sentencing memorandum filed by Poland's attorney Mark Reichel urged the federal judge to place Poland on a 12-month house arrest due to the punitive and reputable damages he had sustained throughout the investigation and from his actions. Reichel also stated if sent to prison, Poland would be removed from his son and daughter.

Poland was placed on administrative leave by SLTPD in November 2011.