

Okaloosa sheriff's deputy arrested for unlawful sex with minor (REPORT)

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By LAUREN DELGADO / Daily News

An Okaloosa County sheriff's deputy was arrested Friday for unlawful sexual activity with a 17-year-old girl.

Deputy Christopher David Ball is suspended without pay pending termination, according to a sheriff's office news release. The 31-year-old from Fort Walton Beach has been with the sheriff's office for less than a year.

"There is no sweeping it under the rug," said Sheriff Larry Ashley. "If you are one of the bad guys, you are not going to be the bad guy here."

The victim told deputies she and Ball had sexual intercourse six times in three different locations, which included her own apartment and Ball's past and current homes.

A witness told deputies she found out about the relationship in March. She let the victim move into her home on May 3 and told her to no longer see Ball.

The witness looked through the victim's text messages from April 7 to May 3 and saw several suggestive messages between the victim and Ball.

None of the messages outright said the two were in a sexual relationship, she told deputies. Deputies searched the victim's cell phone and found a sexually suggestive photo.

In an interview with deputies on Friday, Ball admitted to being in an inappropriate relationship with the victim, but denied having sexual intercourse with her.

Ball said if she was over 18, he would have had sex with her.

"She would turn eighteen someday," Ball said as an explanation of why he continued the relationship, according to his arrest report.

He admitted to being alone with the victim at the three places the victim said sexual intercourse took place.

Ball allowed deputies to search his cell phone. The photo found on the victim's phone and several others were also found on Ball's phone.

Ball said the photos were taken of and by the victim and sent to him.

In addition to the criminal investigation, an internal investigation is also underway.

Investigators will look into whether the sexual encounters occurred while Ball was on duty, if he arrested others on this charge, and the rest of the "Who, What, When, Why," Ashley said.

The information gleaned from the investigation will be made public at its conclusion.

Ball was charged with unlawful sexual activity with a minor. He was taken to Okaloosa County Jail.

"We're going to police our own the same as we police anyone else," Ashley said.