

Port St. Lucie officer accused of sexual relationship with underage girl

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- PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. —A 30-year-old police officer and criminal justice professor is behind bars for allegedly having sex with a 16-year-old high school student.

St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office investigators said the girl was dually-enrolled at Indian River State College and Port St. Lucie Police Officer Myron Pratt was her teacher.

At first the two began communicating by phone about homework, but it devolved into sexually explicit text messages and nude photos, according to the arrest affidavit.

The girl told investigators she had sex with Pratt twice in the back of his car.

The girl's mother contacted the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office after discovering suspicious texts and calls on her daughter's cell phone. Investigators interviewed the girl, and seized her phone and computer.

"They had a discussion on the dangers of what was going on and thought it was best they break off the relationship... that's when our investigation began because that's when the mother discovered the text messages that concerned her enough to call us," St. Lucie County chief deputy Garry Wilson said.

During the news conference, a sheriff's officer spokesman urged any other possible victims who may have had contact with Pratt to come forward.

At the media press conference announcing the arrest, Port St. Lucie Police Chief John Bolduc said Pratt's alleged actions were "embarrassing" and should not reflect on the 284 other employees in the department.

"This is unacceptable behavior and incomprehensible for a police officer to engage in this type of behavior," Bolduc added.

Bolduc said Pratt had been with Port St. Lucie Police for a year and three months. Prior to that, he was an officer in Vero Beach.

Bolduc said Pratt never had any disciplinary action taken against him during his short time with the department. There was a complaint filed by a man who said Pratt was inappropriately contacting his wife, but the complaint was withdrawn.

Pratt remains behind bars on \$320,000 bond. Pratt has been charged with 10 felony sex counts, including having sex with a minor and possession of child pornography.