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Undercover Newark officer's contact with alleged prostitute forces review

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By [James Queally/The Star-Ledger](#)

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NEWARK — When the Newark undercover vice officer entered the massage parlor on Bloomfield Avenue, he was supposed to be setting up a sting to bust a suspected prostitution ring.

The woman inside asked him if he wanted a massage. When the officer said yes, she asked him to take off his clothes. He complied, stripping down to his underwear, according to a police report.

But when she asked him if he wanted a "full massage," what happened next set off series of events that has forced a change in the way the department handles undercover operations.



Patti Sapone/The Star-Ledger

Newark Police Director Samuel DeMaio is shown in this file photo. After an undercover prostitution bust went wrong last month, DeMaio said the department will review how such operations are handled in the future.

According to the police report, obtained Thursday by *The Star-Ledger*, the undercover officer — who was wired for sound — pleased himself as he fondled the 22-year-old woman who was later arrested on prostitution charges.

In the wake of the Sept. 28 incident, Police Director Samuel DeMaio said he will now review and approve all future sting operations before they are launched and has ordered additional training for vice cops.

"There is no department protocol in place for what to do in an undercover vice operation. And that's

what we're going to change," DeMaio said in an interview Thursday. "Looking at it, certainly, there's no bad intentions here on (the officer's) part. I just don't think he was prepped properly."

DeMaio would not say what the six veteran detectives involved in the Sept. 28 operation — all veteran officers but new to the vice squad — should have done differently. However, he said, even though Newark trains its officers for narcotics stings, there is no protocol in place for undercover vice operations, including prostitution stings.

DeMaio said the six officers — the undercover officer, three arresting detectives and two supervisors — have been placed on administrative duty. In addition, the Essex County Prosecutor's Professional Standards Bureau is expected to review the incident, authorities said.

Union leaders defended the detectives, saying they were new transfers to the vice squad who hadn't received proper training.

"I would gladly work in a radio car with any one of them. They have dedicated their lives to this city," said James Stewart Jr., vice president of Newark's Fraternal Order of Police. "Unfortunately, as is often the case with departmental transfers, these officers were thrust into a situation without any outside training to prepare them on the textbook method of preparing a case for a successful conclusion through the judicial process."

According to the police report, the woman offered the undercover officer various sexual favors, but then he declined her advances, repeatedly saying he was "new to this." Eventually, he told her he would like to pleasure himself while touching her breast, the report said.

The woman asked for money "up front" for the massage, and the officer paid her \$40, according to the report. Once he began pleasuring himself, the officer asked "how much more for the breast touch." She replied "whatever," and the officer gave her another \$40, the report said.

Vice detectives swooped in moments later and arrested two women, charging them with promoting prostitution and several narcotics offenses, the report said.

DeMaio said the officer likely believed he was doing what he could to preserve the sting operation while trying to "avoid her having physical contact ..."

Stewart said the incident is not indicative of a larger departmental problem, but shows the need for more realistic training of officers before they are placed in compromising scenarios.

"I have no doubt that once this investigation is concluded it will show proper training by the department could have avoided this situation," he said.

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njvet

October 07, 2011 at 7:40AM

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Yeah, the LAYOFFS are the reason for the crime spike. Hahahahaha. Oh, and here's another good one - having cops walk a beat in Trenton is a BAD idea. Hahahahahaaha. At least if they're walking a beat, they can't be "pleasuring themselves".

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sussexguy

October 07, 2011 at 7:41AM


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did not receive the proper training? are you flipping kidding me?????!!!!!!

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PrivateCitizen

October 07, 2011 at 7:47AM

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No kidding!

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sara07042

October 07, 2011 at 7:49AM

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What a crock of crap

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Ruela9

October 07, 2011 at 7:56AM

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Give me a break. The PD is under-manned, so you have to prioritize. I can't believe that a massage parlor in the North Ward is the most pressing problem in Newark. Put street cops on Pennsylvania Ave., Sherman, Frelinghuesan.

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doctorphil1


October 07, 2011 at 8:10AM

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Ruela9 - It took six police officers to arrest two women when NPD cannot get police cars to respond to calls? While the last few weeks have seen a tremendous spike in carjackings, street muggings, armed robberies, etc. in the northern part of Newark? The criminals - when caught - have been found to be wearing bullet-proof vests and in one case the call came in that a machine gun was being used!


NPD has to reorder its priorities - as the dead bodies continue to mount and civilians are

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terrified to venture out of their homes, at night and even during the day.

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anewarker October 07, 2011 at 10:57AM
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"Citizens are afraid to come out of their homes",stop being so dramatic,speak for yourself.

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oldtimer October 07, 2011 at 11:19AM
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PD did some undercover work busting SW's and johns at East Kinney and Mt Pleasant a few months ago. Not sure if it's still an issue at those locales.

The streets you mentioned above are more of a hot bed for that activity and has been going on for decades. Not sure if PD has the resources to give much focus there.

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matrixnj October 07, 2011 at 7:58AM
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So, basically, the cop--in the course of his duties--broke the law before enforcing the law.

He should have his picture taken and put in the paper like is done with "johns" soliciting prostitutes.

I wasn't aware that you needed training for ethical, professional behavior.

As a cop, he should have known better!!

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 **TMoor** October 07, 2011 at 7:58AM
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I support law enforcement generally and recognize specialized training may sometimes prove inadequate or ineffective, but come on, this is a common sense issue that six veteran officers who have "dedicated their lives" to the city couldn't figure out? Gimme a break.

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 **MoCoTommy** October 07, 2011 at 8:08AM
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Like they don't teach entrapment in the Academy.

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 **starboy300** October 07, 2011 at 8:21AM
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It's high time the world's oldest profession becomes legitimized. It shouldn't be a crime and it needs to be taxed and regulated. I would make the same argument for drugs. What's your pleasure?

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 **I_M_Forman** October 07, 2011 at 8:34AM
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Knock it off! The police are not the enemy. If they need extra training for the unit then train them and that's that. It still is a quality of life issue.

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October 07, 2011 at 10:47AM

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Quality of life issue! Please tell us what quality of life these women have after they get PTST for LE kicking in the door like they are major criminals, and while we keep cutting all social programs even though we have such a high unemployment rate. I guess quality of life is letting these women become homeless and live in the street while we just let the PREDATORS and REAL SEX OFFENDERS GO FREE.

What quality of life does any women have when she can not dial 911 to report a crime against herself and this is how the caught the craigslist killer, after he killed the girl in Boston he went to RI where indoor prostitutio was legal, so when he robbed the RI escort she dialed 911 and they caught him.

What about women who pick up strangers and bring them home and have unprotected sex with their kids in the next room, this seems to be legal and acceptable.

Who I have sex with in my home whether I am GIVING IT AWAY LIKE A SLUT or selling it like a WHORE is my business if I am an adult , so lets talk about morals. Hookers have more morals than most women.

No public nuisance equals allowing women to be arrested, murder, harassed and once they are convicted THEY NEVER CAN GET A REAL JOB AGAIN. Seems to be more of a HATECRIME and form of discrimination to me.

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October 07, 2011 at 8:39AM

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How about a law to stop these annoying businesses from opening in the first place. Over the past 20 years there have been thousands of investigations regarding these types of businesses. It's a virtual "same-old same old" . This is a prime example of how things can get totally out of control.

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