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News



Miami Police Officer Joseph "Joe" Mendez  
Top Miami cop running police youth program arrested for child pornography and misconduct with minors  
Sep 30, 2015 4:30am PDT by Shaun King

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South Miami Police Department Officer Joe Mendez was an award-winning cop. Twice named Officer of the Month in his department, Mendez was also a finalist for his community policing efforts as the coordinator of the Miami Police Explorers Program.

Except Mendez also [had a child pornography fetish](#), regularly gave alcohol to teenage girls in his program, and attempted to fondle and kiss them whenever he had the chance.

[After receiving complaints from another officer](#) and the underage female cadets, an investigation was launched in June 2014. During that investigation, multiple young girls complained of his repeated grooming behaviors, his insistence that they drink alcohol, and let him touch them sexually. When his phone was seized, dozens of images of underage girls were found, including sexually explicit child pornography.

Authorities said a complaint of misconduct from a fellow officer in June 2014 triggered an investigation into allegations he had inappropriate interactions with a number of female cadets in the program and that the interactions may have been sexual in nature. He is also accused of buying alcohol for the girls.

His arrest affidavit said on more than one occasion with a minor female he would play a game of truth or dare or a game of chair-air. According to the affidavit, he would ask them to flash him (show their breasts). If they did not, he would tell them to drink and hand them alcohol. It allegedly didn't stop there.

FDLE Special Agent Donald Cannon said agents searched Mendez's home and they took several electronic devices.

"We found what we know to be child pornography on there," Cannon told CBS 4 News.

More charges are pending.

State agents believe there may be more alleged victims. They are urging anyone with information to call FDLE Miami Regional Operations Center at (800) 226-3023.

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