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UP FRONT: WORTH NOTING

UP FRONT: WORTH NOTING; This Isn't Dodge City, And She Wasn't Miss Kitty

You've heard about police who rifle through the evidence room.

Well, this isn't about that. This about the Arbors in Maple Shade, which looks like most middle-class suburban apartment complexes: low-rise, undistinguished and anonymous. But according to the Burlington County prosecutor's office, Apartment 105 was the site of a brothel. And what's more, in a raid last week officers arrested someone who they said was a repeat customer -- 105 times to be exact: the Runnemede police chief, James Martin Leason.

Officers from the state police and the Maple Shade department also arrested five others in the raid who they charged were the madam, two prostitutes and two other patrons. But most attention was focused on Chief Leason, 56, who has been the police chief in Runnemede since 1987.

Chief Leason, who was charged with misconduct in office and promoting prostitution, was suspended without pay after posting \$5,000 and being released on his own recognizance.

"The mayor and Council are shocked and deeply disappointed by Chief Leason's arrest," the Runnemede solicitor, Michael P. Albana, said in a written statement. "However, the safety of the residents will not be affected by this incident."

Mr. Leason faces up to 10 years in prison and up to \$150,000 in fines on the misconduct charge and up to 5 years in prison and a \$15,000 fine for promoting prostitution.

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If the safety of the residents was not affected by the police chief visiting the brothel 105 times, why would their safety have been affected if the brothel had been allowed to remain open to allow other members of the community to enjoy the same services he obviously enjoyed?