

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

MAY 25, 2016 3:14 PM

Prostitution ring allegedly served Kentucky lawmakers and police

HIGHLIGHTS

Allegation found in voluminous court documents involving former constable Thomas Banta

No names of clients mentioned in court records

Banta has pleaded not guilty to prostitution-related charges



Thomas S. Banta

BY JACK BRAMMER

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FRANKFORT — A woman who allegedly was hired to participate in a Frankfort prostitution ring in late January told Kentucky State Police that she was told her clients would be “legislators and police officers.”

The woman said her boss, a former Franklin County constable, told her she would meet “upscale men who were married but wanted some excitement on the side. He described them as legislators and police officers.”

The allegation is on one page in voluminous court documents involving Thomas S. Banta, the former constable, who, with an associate, was indicted this month in Franklin Circuit Court on prostitution-related charges, including kidnapping and impersonating a police officer.

Banta’s attorney, J. Guthrie True of Frankfort, said Banta, 67, has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Asked about the reference in court documents regarding state legislators and police officers, True said he got the documents “a short time ago and this is the first I’ve heard about this. I cannot comment.”

The court records do not identify any state lawmaker or police officer by name.

The allegation that lawmakers were clients of the alleged prostitution ring was first reported by the Kentucky Center for Investigative

Reporting.

Banta ran a private security business called Banta's Security and Investigation on Louisville Road in Frankfort.

In early February 2015, police received information that Banta was allegedly running a prostitution ring from his office.

In early January of this year, a woman told authorities that she first met Banta when she was a cheerleader in the eighth grade and he was a football coach.

The woman said she had operated as a prostitute for him since that time until Dec. 22, 2015. She said she called him "Boss" and he would "tell her when and where to go." She said she would either be paid by Banta or one of the clients to perform sexual acts.

Many of the sexual encounters, she said, occurred at Banta's residence.

She said Banta had at least one laptop computer that he used with his iPhone to download videos and pictures.

The woman said Banta would give her \$20 for cigarettes if he had sex with her and she would be paid \$50 if Banta arranged for her to have sex with somebody else.

Banta also reportedly introduced her to a prostitute social website, where sexual encounters are arranged. The woman said she made between \$100 and \$500 for each encounter.

Another woman who had applied for a job at Banta Security told police about Banta's statement regarding legislators and police officers.

She said Banta once accompanied her to a residence on U.S. 127 North to meet a client but she refused to have sex with him because he was "physically repulsive."

One woman said she had sex with a client in the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort for \$500 and later saw the same man on television.

A different woman claimed Banta had a client who wanted her to have sex with a dog for \$500.

Some women in the investigative documents said they had to have sex with Banta, and he often threatened them if they went to the police.

The documents allege that one of Banta's prostitutes was a female student at Western Hills High School and some others were students at Kentucky State University.

Banta's former co-worker and now co-defendant, Hendra "Dre" Chanault Valentine, told the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting that he was not personally involved in any alleged prostitution ring and did not know about any legislators or police officers who may have been clients. He declined further comment.

Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester, said “the story I read from the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting is the only knowledge I have of this matter.”

Brian Wilkerson, a spokesman for House Speaker Greg Stumbo, D-Prestonsburg, said “we have no knowledge of anything beyond the media accounts and therefore don’t have any comment.”

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University of Georgia

'Prostitution ring allegedly served Kentucky lawmakers and police.' And why is this considered news? Politicians have been prostituting themselves to lobbyist for a very long time and the people getting really screwed are the people.

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