

## Former WC Police Chief investigated for child sexual abuse, pornography

yoursoutheasttexas.com



#

WEST COLUMBIA, July 10, 2013--Former West Columbia Police Chief Michael Palmer is the subject of a new investigation relating to child sexual assault and child pornography, according to law enforcement officials.

Palmer was suspended by the West Columbia Police Department after being indicted in February, on charges of drug possession and tampering with evidence. Palmer was accused of removing

prescription medication from evidence in ongoing department investigations. The medications were allegedly removed from the evidence room and hospice death scene settings. The behavior was noted over the course of almost a year, beginning in March, 2012, as multiple incidents resulted in Palmer's incrimination. He was terminated in a subsequent Council meeting following his arrest.

Palmer was charged with tampering with evidence, six counts; and possession of drug paraphernalia, three counts. He was released on a \$100,000 bond on February 22.

Due to information which surfaced during the original investigation, police soon began another investigation into the activities of the former police chief. A box containing multiple sexual-related items was found on a shelf at the police department. In addition to the other items, the box contained an explicit picture of Palmer. This picture led police to begin looking for potential victims of sexual abuse.

Law enforcement officials confirmed that a search warrant was executed on Palmer's residence on Friday. Although calls to law enforcement officials were unreturned, police reportedly seized technological devices including computers and accessories, cameras, cell phones, and a video camera in addition to sexual-related items.

In addition, an affidavit filed by the district attorney's office cites an accusation of sexual abuse by a young man reportedly known to the family. The young man names Palmer as the perpetrator of sexual assault from 1998 – 2007. According to the young man, he was under the age of ten when the abuse began, and many of the sexual encounters were recorded by Palmer. He also alleges that some of the encounters took place on Roene Lane, in West Columbia, at Palmer's home.

On Tuesday morning, Palmer's family reported him missing. Since Palmer is an adult, is out on bail and his travel within the United States is unrestricted, his absence will have no repercussion unless he fails to show up at his scheduled court date on August 12.

No charges have been filed in relation to sexual abuse or child pornography, as the investigation is still ongoing.

*An arrest does not mean that the individual or individuals have been convicted of the alleged violation, unless otherwise noted. Individuals are innocent until proven guilty by a court of law.*