Federal cop faces sex charge
The head of immigration and customs in Tampa is accused of exposing himself to a teenage girl.

Henry Pierson Curtis | Sentinel Staff Writer
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One of Florida's top federal law-enforcement officers was arrested late Tuesday after he was accused of exposing himself to a 16-year-old girl in the Mall at Millenia, according to Orlando police.

Frank Figueroa, head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Tampa office, began fondling himself after catching the teen's eye in the upscale mall's food court, an arrest report states.

"The nature of Figueroa's actions do corrupt the public morals and outrage the sense of public decency," the report states. "Due to the small children in the area ... Figueroa's actions did create a threat to the safety and well-being of others."

Figueroa, 49, was booked into the Orange County Jail on charges of exposure and disorderly conduct in a public food establishment. He posted bail within hours.

ICE suspended him Wednesday when it learned of the arrest. Figueroa supervised ICE operations at every port and airport between Fort Pierce and Fort Myers in South Florida north to the Georgia state line and west to Pensacola.

"Immigration and Customs Enforcement takes any allegation of wrongdoing by its employees seriously and thoroughly investigates such allegations," ICE spokeswoman Pam McCullough said Wednesday. "ICE has placed Mr. Figueroa on administrative leave and launched an internal investigation into his matter."

Figueroa could not be reached for comment at home in Hillsborough County.

Long regarded to be a rising star and by-the-book administrator, Figueroa took command of ICE's Tampa office six weeks ago after serving in top posts in Washington, Miami and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Last week, Figueroa promised to vigorously pursue sex crimes after his agents busted a prostitution ring exploiting illegal female immigrants in Hillsborough, Orange, Osceola and Polk counties.

His arrest placed Orlando police in an unenviable position, given the department's close working relationship with ICE at Orlando International Airport.

"These types of cases are very difficult for both agencies, but the law is the law," said Sgt. Barbara Jones, a police spokeswoman. "Laws apply to everybody, and the judicial system will have to proceed just like it would with anyone in the private sector. That's the way it is."

The jail and the Orange County Sheriff's Office declined to release Figueroa's mug shot taken when he was booked at the jail. Florida public-records law permits law-enforcement officers charged with a crime to withhold their booking photographs.

The arrest report states that mall security cameras filmed Figueroa as he sat across from the teen. Police did not identify the teen because she was considered the victim of a sex crime.

In the police report, the teen described the federal agent's actions as "the most disturbing thing I have ever seen." She said Figueroa, who was wearing shorts, exposed himself and masturbated for about 10 minutes before she left, found her mother and summoned security.