

Captain Lloyd Powell

2/7/2023

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at approximately 1:45 pm, I, Captain Lloyd Powell, was in my office when volunteer Frank Nowak knocked on my door. Frank advised that he was looking for Sgt. Steve Eilert (volunteer liaison), but could not find him and wanted to ask a question. Frank informed me that Sgt. Joe Merkley wanted him to list all the ATM machines in town. I found this puzzling because Sgt. Merkley is a school resource officer Sergeant and does not work patrol. As our conversation went on, Frank advised that Sgt. Merkley was sick (COVID) and was buying food for him. I told Frank that he did not have to buy for friends (I have cautioned him before about buying things for people).

As Frank and I talked, he confided in me that he had bought things for Sgt. Merkley for some time now and knew that Merkley was taking advantage of him. Frank advised that he paid an undisclosed amount of money to get Merkley out of credit card debt and bought Merkley a car (\$4,000). Frank advised Merkley told him he needed the car because his current vehicle was failing, and he needed to get his kids around. Frank advised that he later found out that Merkley was using the vehicle at his hunting lease. Frank advised Merkley called him another time and said he needed \$1,000 for his [REDACTED]. Frank advised that each time he gave Merkley money, it had to be in cash. Frank advised, "you don't want to know how much money I've given to Merkley over time." I told Frank not to give Merkley any more money, and he assured me that he was done after he dropped off the food that he already paid for. Frank pleaded with me not to speak with Merkley and repeatedly said he could handle it. Due to the amount of money, I had no choice but to inform my supervisor of Merkley's deceptive behavior.