

VIRGINIA: Hanover pastor arrested for embezzling from church

Written by Bill McKelway
Friday, 24 May 2013 17:05

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An ongoing investigation into an alleged online sex-for-money and extortion scheme has led to the arrest of a Hanover County church pastor who allegedly paid a Henrico County woman \$100,000 to keep quiet about a sexual encounter he had with her last year.

A felony warrant shows that Chris Allen Phillips, 50, was arrested Thursday night and charged with embezzling \$80,000 from his church, the Mechanicsville Advent Christian Church.

Phillips was released on a \$6,000 personal recognizance bond and was ordered to return for a court appearance June 5.

Phillips, who lives in a home across the street from the church on Studley Road, near U.S. 301, declined repeated requests for comment.

He was named in court documents linked to the arrest earlier this month of Tonya Farnsworth, 33. She was arrested in Florida after fleeing Henrico, where she faced a prostitution charge. In Hanover, she has been charged with extorting as much as \$100,000 from Phillips who cooperated in an investigation of Farnsworth sometime after court documents allege he paid her

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\$200 for oral sex in December last year.

A church elder said this week that Phillips has been placed on leave without pay as the church's youth minister but declined further comment about why Phillips was relieved. Phillips told Hanover investigators that he paid Farnsworth as much as \$100,000, according to a search warrant. His arrest Thursday night on the embezzlement charge indicates some portion of that money came from his church.

Hanover authorities declined comment except to say that a broad and ongoing investigation is continuing into Farnsworth's dealings; search warrants show that investigators are tracking funds paid to the woman as well as other contacts she may have had.

Farnsworth operated from a home on West Club Drive in Henrico's West End and advertised her services on [Backpage.com](#) using the name Tiffany.

bmckelway@timesdispatch.com

(804) 649-6601

http://www.timesdispatch.com/news/latest-news/article_a176481e-c4b5-11e2-ac2a-001a4bcf6878.html

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