

U.S. Capitol Police set up sting in theft case; arrest Bachmann staffer

By [Peter Hermann](#), Published: July 16, 2013

Facing a string of thefts from offices throughout the Rayburn House Office Building, police decided to set up a sting. Authorities placed two envelopes — one marked “birthday money,” the other “petty cash” — and put them in desk drawers of Rep. Michele Bachmann’s (R-Minn.) chief of staff and scheduler.

U.S. Capitol Police said a hidden camera caught a man picking up one of the envelopes from the chief of staff’s desk, counting the money and taking it. Three minutes later, police said the same man was seen sitting at the scheduler’s desk. Both envelopes were reporting missing, according to court documents.

Police [arrested Bachmann’s legislative assistant](#), Javier Sanchez, 37, of Arlington, Va., and charged him with one count of misdemeanor theft. A D. C. Superior Court judge released him from commitment, and he is scheduled for a status hearing on Aug. 26. His attorney said Sanchez was fired on Monday, when the incident became public, and that his client denies the charges.

Shennell S. Antrobus, a spokesman for the U.S. Capitol Police, said only that authorities have been investigating a series of thefts from offices throughout the House office building on Independence Avenue. He declined to say how many thefts have occurred or whether the incident in Bachmann’s office fits the pattern. Antrobus would not describe the other thefts.

Sanchez’s attorney, David Benowitz, said that his client “denies the charge” and “denies any link to anything else.” He would not comment further. A spokesman for Bachmann confirmed that Sanchez, who was arrested Thursday and had worked for the congresswoman since January, is “no longer with the office.”

According to the court charging document, U.S. Capitol Police said that Bachmann’s office reported two thefts of money between February and March. On March 4, police said in the documents that they put a camera in Room 2417 and placed the envelopes in the two desks. The one labeled “birthday money” had \$120; the one labeled “petty cash” had \$80.

On June 14, police said the camera taped a man opening the chief of staff’s drawer at 6:34 p.m. “He removed the envelope, counted the money and took both the cash and envelope,” the court papers say. At 6:37 p.m., police said the man “was observed sitting in the chair of the scheduler’s desk and then exited the office.”

On July 9, police said a witness identified the man seen in the video. Two days later, the court documents say that Sanchez told police that he did not take the money. “I may have taken a quarter once and a while, but I would pay it back,” he said, according to the court document. When shown a surveillance photo, Sanchez told police, “I’m familiar with that desk, but I didn’t take the money,” the court documents say.

Source: http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/us-capitol-police-set-up-sting-in-theft-case-arrest-bachmann-staffer/2013/07/16/471e6fca-ee10-11e2-bed3-b9b6fe264871_story.html