

EVENING OUTLOOK
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Scoutmaster Accused Of Child Molesting

A 40-year-old Santa Monica scoutmaster has been booked on suspicion of child molesting in connection with alleged sexual misconduct involving three Santa Monica boys, one of whom attended the man's scout meeting at Franklin Elementary School, police reported.

Michael Allen Ross of 1519 26th Street was arrested Tuesday at a Marina del Rey employment agency, where he works as a counselor. He was being held today on \$25,000 bail.

Ross, who is the leader of Boy Scout Troop 222, was taken into custody following an investigation by Santa Monica and Los Angeles police.

Police said their investigation began in March after an informant gave them slides showing men engaging in lewd acts with children. The slides allegedly came from Ross's home in Venice. He later moved to Santa Monica.

Venice police reportedly have linked Ross to a child-molesting incident involving two of the boys, ages 11 and 14. That incident allegedly occurred in Venice last July. Ross reportedly met one of the boys through scouting, Santa Monica police said.

A Santa Monica police representative said investigators are interviewing several members of Troop 222. The representative added that one boy, who was not a member of the troop but who attended Monday night meetings at Franklin School, said Ross molested him during a recent meeting.

The spokesman said a complaint was to be sought from the district attorney's office against Ross in connection with that incident.

Venice and Santa Monica police, armed with a search warrant signed by Santa Monica Municipal Judge Robert Thomas, went to Ross's home Tuesday and confiscated camera equipment and numerous undeveloped rolls of film. Police were unable to say if there were any lewd pictures in any of the material confiscated.

A spokesman for the Boy Scouts Great Western Council said Ross has been leader of Troop 222 for the past 1 1/2 years and has served as a volunteer with the organization for the past 2 1/2 years.