

# Senior Mountie's 'slap on the wrist' sparks anger

## RCMP staff sergeant has sex with subordinates and hosted drinking parties

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The RCMP is under fire for its handling of a senior Edmonton officer who had sex with subordinates and hosted drinking parties in police offices.



*RCMP officer Don Ray posed for this photo while training civilian police in Sierra Leone in 2003-2004. (Our Canada Magazine)*

Former Staff Sgt. Don Ray was demoted to sergeant, docked 10 days pay and transferred to British Columbia after a pattern of [inappropriate behaviour over several years](#).

[An internal review](#) found that over a three year period, Ray had sex with subordinates, drank with them at work and sexually harassed them.

Ray also used his position to favour potential female employees.

"He should be encouraged to retire or forcibly removed," said Krista Carle, a former B.C. constable who is involved in a class action lawsuit against the RCMP as a victim of sexual harassment.

"To give simply another transfer to another province is shameful," she said. "They have — right now — a public relations nightmare."

**'They have — right now — a public relations nightmare'**

*— Krista Carle, former RCMP officer*

"They can say that they're going to treat harassment seriously, but the proof is in the pudding that they have not acted appropriately."

## **Board considered dismissal**

The RCMP Adjudication Board delivered its decision in January.

The board said it considered dismissal, but relied heavily on a joint submission to reach its decision.

Ray's punishment sends the wrong message, said Arthur Schafer, an ethics professor at the University of Manitoba.

"The victims lose their careers, suffer sometimes terrible psychological harm," he said. "The perpetrators suffer either not at all or in a minor way. The punishment was little more than a slap on the wrist."

Ray's disciplinary hearing came amid widespread complaints from female RCMP officers who say they experienced sexual harassment in the force.

The handling of Ray's case will not help in improving relations between senior RCMP staff and employees, said Mike Webster, a police psychologist on Vancouver Island.

"Female members within the RCMP are not going to feel safe working in that environment as a result of this decision," he said. "The organization is riddled with a toxic environment, high levels of employee stress and a culture of fear."

Webster believes Mounties need a union to help turn around their troubled environment.

Ray was the head of the polygraph unit at the RCMP's Edmonton headquarters from 2006 to 2009 when the complaints took place.