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Illinois prosecutor arrested in bar fracas

MARK KIESLING Feb 23, 1994

MERRILLVILLE - Police have charged an Illinois prosecuting attorney with several criminal counts relating to a weekend fracas at the Star Plaza hotel complex.

Knox County Assistant State's Attorney J. Michael Swart, 29, of Galesburg, Ill., is free on bond after being charged with public intoxication and disorderly conduct.

Swart was allegedly with several people in the Khaki Club, a lounge overlooking the indoor pool at the resort complex, about 1:20 a.m. Saturday when he began shouting obscenities at another man in the lounge.

Hotel security officers asked Swart to quiet down, and he allegedly shouted that the police did not know who he was and that they were "going to be in big trouble" for accosting him.

Security chief Edward Davies, a Lake County Sheriff's Police detective, told Swart he could either calm down or leave. Davies said he refused and was

arrested.

He was taken from the lounge, repeating "remarks like this officer did not know who I was messing with ... that he was a prosecutor and had friends who were prosecutors," according to a police report filed by Davies.

Swart was taken to the jail and booked.

Knox County State's Attorney Ray Kimbell said Tuesday he was unaware that Swart had been arrested in Indiana.

"I have no knowledge of this incident," he said. "I can't comment until I see something in detail, but we are, of course, concerned about something like this."

Kimbell said the Knox County office is "pretty small," with four full-time prosecutors including him working in Galesburg, a town of 35,300 located northwest of Peoria.

Kimbell said Swart, who is from Indiana and is a graduate of Valparaiso University School of law, joined the Knox County staff about a year ago.