

DETROIT POLICE TO FACE NEW TRIAL AUDIO, VIDEOTAPES SHOW OFFICERS GUARDED DRUGS, CASH

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For the third time this year, federal prosecutors are ready to march into court to lay out a major corruption case involving the Detroit Police Department.

This time, police officers face charges of guarding shipments of drugs and money for FBI agents posing as dope dealers in a sting operation that ended last spring.

At a trial scheduled to begin Tuesday before U.S. District Court Judge Barbara Hackett, prosecutors will introduce secretly made audio and videotapes in an attempt to show the officers jumped at a chance to make money outside the law, and were not illegally entrapped into participating.

The trial follows the June 3 conviction of former police pilot Gene (Moon) Mullins for obstructing an FBI investigation of Detroit police aviation, and the May 8 conviction of former Chief William Hart for stealing more than \$2.5 million from the police secret service fund.

The defendants include current or former police officers from Detroit, Highland Park and Royal Oak Township, plus two civilians.

According to a pretrial brief filed by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit:

The investigation began in 1990 when the FBI learned that Cathy Volsan Curry, a niece of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, had used unidentified contacts in the Detroit Police Department to warn her former husband, convicted Detroit drug dealer **Johnny Curry**, that he was being investigated.

In an attempt to learn whether Cathy Curry had corrupt friends on the force, an FBI agent posing as a drug dealer told her he needed police help.

Through Curry and her father, Willie Volsan, the agent arranged to have Detroit police officers escort him several times from Detroit City Airport to banks with what he told them was drug money. Officers also stood guard while 200 kilos of fake cocaine, plus one kilo of real cocaine, were unloaded at the airport, and then escorted the shipment to Monroe.

One officer, Sgt. James Harris, allegedly gave one of the undercover agents a police radio to monitor any pursuit. Another, former Highland Park officer Michael Gardenhire, allegedly smuggled a machine gun past security at Metro Airport for the agent.

One of the civilians, attorney Robert Smith, a federal public defender from Cleveland, allegedly took \$2,000 from the agents, promising he could get information on drug probes.

Two other Detroit police officers originally charged in the case, Cleopatria Forris and Martrice Hurrah, have pleaded guilty to corruption charges. Under their plea agreements, Forris faces a maximum prison sentence of 10 months, and Hurrah 15 months.

Charges were dropped against Curry.

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