



Department of Justice

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ATLANTA POLICE OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO CIVIL RIGHTS CONSPIRACY

Defendant Was Sergeant Over Narcotics Team

Atlanta, GA - Atlanta Police Officer WILBERT STALLINGS, 44, of Conyers, Georgia, pleaded guilty today in federal district court to conspiring to violate civil rights by executing a search of a private residence without benefit of a search warrant. Late this afternoon, STALLINGS was expected to be released on \$25,000 bond set by a United States Magistrate Judge.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "The right to be secure in our homes is fundamental and protected by the Bill of Rights. If police officers want to search a home, they must comply with the Fourth Amendment. When Sergeant Stallings agreed to have the narcotics team he commanded simply break into a home without a search warrant, he blatantly violated the rights of the innocent person who lived there. Fortunately, on that occasion no one was physically hurt, but this criminal incident was part of a larger pattern of misconduct by the narcotics team that Sergeant Stallings was aware of but failed to control. Ultimately such bending and breaking of the rules led to the tragic shooting death of Kathryn Johnston. Our investigation of that death uncovered this offense and the underlying pattern of misconduct. The federal investigation is nearing an end, but we plan to report to Chief Pennington in the near future on other acts of misconduct by APD officers that do not rise to the level of federal criminal prosecution but do require attention for possible administrative sanctions. I want to commend the FBI for its excellent and diligent work on this case, and I also want to commend the great majority of Atlanta police officers who work bravely every day to protect the citizens in our community. Those many good officers will be disgusted when they hear about the lawless conduct of Sergeant Stallings, which stains the badge and makes the job of honest police officers that much harder."

FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge Greg Jones said of the case, "Today's guilty plea of APD Sgt. Stallings came about as we were following the leads from the tragic Neal Street investigation. Those leads resulted in the uncovering of Sgt. Stallings'

unconscionable criminal conduct.”

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: In October 2005, STALLINGS, a sergeant in the narcotics unit and a 23-year veteran of the Atlanta Police Department, joined several other APD officers in executing a search warrant at an apartment located at 1058 Dill Avenue in Atlanta. At the time, Gregg Junnier, one of the officers who would later be convicted for his involvement in the Kathryn Johnston shooting, was a member of the narcotics team under STALLINGS’ command. Junnier had obtained a search warrant for the apartment at 1058 Dill Avenue. The apartment was part of a duplex, and the adjacent apartment was 1056 Dill Avenue. No search warrant had been obtained for 1056 Dill Avenue.

The officers executed the warrant at 1058 Dill Avenue and recovered some marijuana in bushes behind the apartment, but found no drugs inside the apartment. Having not found what they expected to find at 1058 Dill Avenue, STALLINGS and Junnier discussed and agreed to make a forced entry into the adjoining apartment at 1056 Dill Avenue. Upon reaching that agreement, the officers used a ram to break into the apartment. STALLINGS, Junnier, and other members of the narcotics team then entered the apartment. No one was home. The officers found no evidence of any illegal activity. STALLINGS then instructed his team to leave the apartment and shut the door. He made a statement to the effect of: “Just shut the door. They’ll just think it was a break-in.”

This incident was part of a larger pattern of misconduct by STALLINGS and his team. Specifically, (1) STALLINGS permitted his team to work so-called “extra jobs” through which they were paid by business owners to provide services on duty that should have been free for all citizens -- and STALLINGS himself shared in the profits from that enterprise; (2) he knew and allowed his officers to “trade” search warrants with each other, by which one officer would swear in an affidavit to have witnessed events he never actually saw; (3) he let his officers use unregistered drug informants as sources for information, but allowed the officers to identify such informants falsely as “confidential and reliable” for the purposes of procuring search warrants; and (4) he permitted his officers to inflate or “pad” payment vouchers for informants so that the officers could use the extra money for their own purposes.

STALLINGS pleaded guilty today to a Criminal Information charging one count of conspiracy to violate civil rights. He could receive a maximum sentence of ten years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

A sentencing date has not yet been scheduled before United States District Judge Julie E. Carnes.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the FBI.

Assistant United States Attorneys Kurt Erskine and Jon-Peter Kelly are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.