



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12/9/10

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan/>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

FEDERAL POLICE OFFICER SENT TO PRISON FOR MAKING ILLEGAL TRAFFIC STOPS

ROME, GA - STEPHEN G. HOUSE, 53, of Silver Creek, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Robert L. Vining, Jr. on charges that he violated the civil rights of Georgia motorists by making illegal traffic stops on eight occasions.

“This defendant abused his authority as a federal law enforcement officer by repeatedly using his official position to make illegal traffic stops and illegally detain motorists,” said United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates. “He also submitted false reports about these stops to cover up his illegal acts. By doing so, he intentionally violated the Constitutional rights of these Georgia citizens. The prison sentence handed down today demonstrates that law enforcement officers who are convicted of intentionally violating the civil rights of citizens may face prison themselves.”

“Today's sentencing reflects ICE's commitment to protect the integrity of the agency,” said David P. D'Amato, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility for the Southeast. “House's illicit actions tainted the hard work of the many men and women who serve our country with pride and dedication daily. Actions such as these will not go unchecked or unpunished.”

HOUSE was sentenced to one year, six months in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release, fined \$10,000, and ordered to perform 200 hours of community service. HOUSE was convicted of these charges on July 30, 2010, after a trial.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: HOUSE was employed as a Law Enforcement and Security Officer for the Federal Protective Service of the Department of Homeland Security. In that position, HOUSE was allowed to drive to and from work in a Federal Protective Service vehicle with emergency equipment, including blue lights and a siren. HOUSE knew that as a federal police officer he had no authority to enforce the traffic laws of Georgia. Nevertheless, HOUSE repeatedly activated the emergency blue lights on his federal

police vehicle and pulled over motorists whom HOUSE alleged were violating traffic laws. HOUSE then detained the motorists on the side of the road while he attempted to contact local law enforcement to respond and write the motorists a ticket or arrest them.

At trial, supervisors and managers from the Federal Protective Service testified that as a federal police officer HOUSE had no legal authority to stop and detain a motorist who was driving on roads or highways that were not federal property. At trial, witnesses testified that they were driving on public roads and highways in north Georgia, not on federal property, when HOUSE stopped them by using his emergency blue lights and/or by displaying his authority as a uniformed police officer. Based upon the facts that HOUSE wore a police uniform, displayed a badge on his shirt, carried a firearm, and drove a marked police vehicle, the motorists believed that HOUSE had the authority to stop them and detain them by the side of the road. The motorists believed that since they were being stopped by a police officer, they were not free to ignore HOUSE's commands or simply drive away.

The motorists testified that once they were stopped, HOUSE accused them of violating the traffic laws of Georgia. All the motorists denied that they had committed any traffic violations before they were stopped. The witnesses testified that HOUSE detained them by the roadside while he called for local police officers to respond. On two occasions, HOUSE made false statements to local law enforcement officers to the effect that the motorist HOUSE stopped was driving aggressively. Based upon HOUSE's false representations, these two motorists were arrested, their vehicles were impounded, and they were taken to jail. On two other occasions, HOUSE made false statements to local police officers which caused the officers to write tickets to the motorists for traffic violations they did not commit. On four other occasions, HOUSE detained the motorists for varying lengths of time, then let them go with a warning. On four occasions, HOUSE submitted reports to the Federal Protective Service in which he falsely represented that he stopped the motorists because they represented a danger on the roadways because of their aggressive driving.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Office of Professional Responsibility for the Federal Protective Service and the Office of Professional Responsibility for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Assistant United States Attorney William L. McKinnon, Jr. prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting 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.