



Department of Justice

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District of Oregon

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FORMER COTTAGE GROVE POLICE OFFICER ACCUSED OF STEALING METH FROM EVIDENCE LOCKER

EUGENE, Ore. – A criminal complaint was unsealed today alleging Phillip Allan Beach, 48, of Cottage Grove, Oregon, knowingly and intentionally took possession of a controlled substance by misrepresentation, fraud, forgery, deception, or subterfuge.

As alleged in the criminal complaint, in May 2015, an evidence coordinator at the Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) reported to their supervisor that Beach accessed the department's evidence locker more frequently than other officers and seemed to do so for no apparent purpose. The coordinator said that Beach would repeatedly access the same evidence bag. A CGPD commander later examined the bag and observed that it was open and two plastic bags inside containing several ounces of methamphetamine crystals had been sliced open.

In June 2015, CGPD began an investigation of Beach's conduct and placed two hidden cameras inside the evidence locker. On June 11, 2015, Beach was recorded on video entering the locker without signing the evidence log and accessing the evidence bag previously examined by the commander. The video shows Beach taking a small plastic baggie from his pants pocket and using it to take a small portion of meth from the evidence bag. Investigators later weighed the evidence bag and found a 7.3 gram reduction in weight.

CGPD's investigation revealed that between March 2010 and June 2015, Beach accessed numerous pieces of drug evidence from multiple cases. For example, Beach would indicate at times that he was taking drugs from the secured evidence locker to send to the crime lab for testing, but no drugs were sent. On at least one occasion, Beach is alleged to have replaced methamphetamine he had taken from an evidence bag with salt to conceal his actions.

Beach made an initial appearance today in federal court before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jolie A. Russo. He entered a not-guilty plea and was released pending trial.

A criminal complaint is only an accusation of a crime, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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