

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan

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Former Detroit Police Department Officer Sentenced to 80 Months in Federal Prison for Extortion

DETROIT - Former Detroit Police Department Officer, Deonne Dotson, was sentenced today to 80 months in federal prison following convictions for extortion announced Acting United States Attorney Saima Mohsin.

Joining Mohsin in the announcement were Timothy Waters, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Juan Vargas, Acting U.S. Postal Inspector in Charge, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Detroit Division and Chief James White, Detroit Police Department.

Dotson, age 49, was convicted after an 8-day jury trial before United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland. The trial was conducted in November 2019, but Dotson's sentencing was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Officer Dotson accepted bribes from owners and operators of automobile collision shops in exchange for referring stolen and abandoned vehicles recovered in the City of Detroit to their shops. The evidence also showed that Officer Dotson created false police reports in exchange for money from the owners and operators of the same collision shops. Owners of the vehicles were unaware that Officer Dotson was being paid by the collision shops when they agreed to have their cars fixed by the collision shops.

Five other Detroit Police Officers pleaded guilty and served time in federal prison for committing similar criminal activity while they were Officers with the Detroit Police Department. All six officers were actively employed with the Detroit Police Department at the time of the offenses. The other five officers were: Charles Wills, James Robertson, Jamil Martin, Martin Tutt, and Anthony Careathers. All of the Officers were charged with engaging in extortion for using their official positions as Police Officers to refer cars to certain collision shops in exchange for cash payments.

"The overwhelming majority of Detroit Police Officers are honest, hard-working, and superb public servants," said Mohsin. "Dotson's conviction and 80 months' sentence shows that no one is above the law, and when police officers commit crimes and violate their oath to protect and serve the public, they will be held accountable."

"Mr. Dotson abused his authority as a law enforcement officer by engaging in conduct designed to benefit him personally. His actions are in stark contrast to the professionalism and integrity shown by the Detroit Police Department on a daily basis," said Timothy Waters, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Detroit Division.

"The successful resolution of this case highlights the importance of interagency cooperation. What began as a mail fraud investigation into illicit insurance claims developed into a public corruption case resulting in the conviction of six police officers for extortion – all because of the joint investigative effort. I fully commend all agencies involved for the hard work and countless hours put forth to bring these corrupt officers to justice," said Juan Vargas, Acting US Postal Inspector in Charge.

The investigation was conducted by the FBI, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Detroit Police Department and the following agencies from the FBI Detroit Area Corruption Task Force: Michigan State Police and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Office of Professional Responsibility, Investigative Operation Division.

The FBI Detroit Area Corruption Task Force is comprised of personnel from the Detroit Division of the FBI; Michigan State Police; Michigan Department of Attorney General; Detroit Police Department; U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Office of Professional Responsibility, Investigative Operations Division; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of the Inspector General; U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the Inspector General; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General; U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Inspector General; and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of the Inspector General.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Sarah Resnick Cohen and Craig A. Weier.

Topic(s):
Public Corruption

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