



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
District of Maryland

Rod J. Rosenstein
United States Attorney
Baltimore, MD 21201

36 South Charles Street
Fourth Floor

MAIN: 410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
FAX: 410-962-0693

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or

MARCIA MURPHY at 410-209-4885

September 24, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/md>

**BALTIMORE CITY POLICE DETECTIVE CHARGED WITH MAKING FALSE
CLAIMS, FALSE STATEMENTS, AND THEFT**

Corruption Charges Follow Sensitive Three-Month Undercover Investigation

Baltimore, Maryland - A criminal complaint was unsealed today charging Baltimore City Police Detective Mark J. Lunsford, age 39, of Sykesville, with submitting a false claim to the United States, making a false statement in a matter within the jurisdiction of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and theft of property by an officer or employee of the United States, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

“FBI agents and federal prosecutors successfully maintained the confidentiality of this sensitive investigation while working with remarkable speed to gather evidence,” said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. “The facts alleged in the criminal complaint represent an egregious breach of trust, but it should be noted that thousands of honorable police officers who work to promote public safety and confidence share our dismay when a law enforcement officer violates that trust.”

According to the affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, Lunsford, a Task Force Officer with DEA’s High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), was handling a DEA confidential source. In June 2009, the source reported to FBI agents that Lunsford had taken kickbacks of money paid to the source and had given the source items that Lunsford had stolen from crime scenes. The source alleged that Lunsford arranged for DEA to pay a \$10,000 award to the source for assistance in a wiretap case, when in fact, the source had no involvement in the case. The award was paid in 10 installments of \$1,000, and Lunsford kept \$500 for himself and gave the source the other \$500 from each installment.

The affidavit states that the FBI initiated an undercover investigation during which the source held a series of recorded conversations with Lunsford.

During the investigation, Lunsford allegedly submitted a false investigative report to DEA stating that the source had provided key information in another case, in order to establish a justification for DEA to pay the source a monetary award upon the arrest of the suspect, when in fact the source had not provided any such information.

Lunsford also allegedly submitted a false claim to DEA for the source to receive an award equal to 20 percent of a cash seizure of \$17,490, when in fact the source had not provided any information that led to the seizure. On September 9, a DEA supervisor who was cooperating with the investigation made a monitored telephone call to Lunsford, during which Lunsford is alleged to have falsely stated that the source had helped with the case.

On September 21, as part of the FBI undercover investigation, DEA gave Lunsford a check for \$3,498 payable to the source. The affidavit alleges that Lunsford told the source that he would give the check to the source in the presence of a DEA agent, and that Lunsford and the source would divide the proceeds later.

According to the affidavit, Lunsford met with the source and gave the source the check at 10:00 a.m. on September 22, in the presence of a DEA agent. At 3:45 pm on September 22, Lunsford allegedly met with the source and the source gave him \$1,700 in cash.

The affidavit also alleges that Lunsford stole items, such as clothing and jewelry from crime scenes, including searches and arrests. The complaint charges that Lunsford stole a valuable diamond watch from an alleged drug dealer during an arrest. The watch was subsequently appraised at approximately \$18,000 (retail) and \$4,200 (liquidation). Lunsford allegedly gave the watch to the source after he stole it. According to the affidavit, on July 14, 2009, the source gave Lunsford \$1,500, which the source told Lunsford was half of the proceeds of the sale of the watch.

Lunsford faces a total maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for the three offenses with which he is charged. Lunsford made his initial appearance today in federal district court in Baltimore. At the conclusion of the proceeding, United States Magistrate Judge Beth P. Gesner released Lunsford on the conditions that he be placed in home confinement with electronic monitoring; that he have no further contact with the source or the source's family; and that he have no contact with DEA or Baltimore City Police Department personnel except to notify his employer of the pending charges and, if summoned, to appear at any official proceedings. A preliminary hearing in this case has been scheduled for October 14, 2009, at 12:00 p.m.

A criminal complaint is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by criminal complaint is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their investigative work and thanked the Drug Enforcement Administration and its Office of Professional Responsibility for their assistance in the investigation. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorney Jonathan Biran and First Assistant United States Attorney Stuart M. Goldberg, who are prosecuting the case.