

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 13, 2021

Former Boston Police Sergeant Charged With Overtime Fraud Scheme

Defendant agrees to plead guilty

BOSTON – Former Boston Police Sergeant George Finch has been charged and has agreed to plead guilty in connection with an ongoing investigation of overtime fraud at the Boston Police Department's evidence warehouse.

Finch, 59, of Franklin, has been charged with one count of conspiracy to commit theft concerning programs receiving federal funds and one count of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds. Finch will make an appearance via videoconference in federal court in Boston at a date to be set by the Court.

According to charging documents, members of Boston Police Department's Evidence Control Unit (ECU), were responsible for, among other things, storing, cataloging and retrieving evidence at the warehouse. ECU officers were eligible to earn overtime pay of 1.5 times their regular hourly pay rate for overtime assignments. It is alleged that, beginning in at least March 2015, members of the ECU routinely departed overtime shifts two or more hours early, but submitted false and fraudulent overtime slips claiming to have worked the entirety of each shift.

One such shift, called "purge" overtime, was focused on reducing the inventory of the evidence warehouse. The shift was supposed to be performed from 4-8 p.m. on weekdays. According to charging documents, on days during which Finch and other members of the ECU claimed to have worked until 8:00 p.m., the warehouse was closed, locked and alarmed well before 8:00 p.m., and often at 6:00 p.m. or earlier. Despite this, Finch and, allegedly, other members of the ECU routinely submitted false and fraudulent overtime slips, claiming to have actually worked until 8:00 p.m. It is alleged that supervisors such as Finch, who also left early from this shift, submitted their own false and fraudulent slips and knowingly endorsed the fraudulent overtime slips of their subordinates.

Another shift, called "kiosk" overtime, occurred once a month on Saturdays and involved collecting materials from kiosks located in each of the city's police districts and transporting it to an incinerator in Saugus. It is alleged that Finch and other officers performing this overtime shift routinely submitted overtime slips claiming to work eight-and-one-half hours. However, officers frequently completed the necessary work early, often within four hours, and falsely and fraudulently claimed to actually work eight-and-one-half hours.

According to charging document, between March 2015 and September 2016, Finch personally collected approximately \$11,310 for overtime hours he did not work. In sum, the loss to BPD as a result of the criminal conspiracy is alleged to be in excess of \$150,000.

From 2015 through 2019, BPD received annual benefits from the U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Department of Justice in excess of \$10,000, which were funded pursuant to numerous federal grants.

Finch is the 11th officer to be charged as a result of the investigation of overtime at the evidence warehouse. Three, including Finch, have now pleaded guilty or have agreed to do so.

The charge of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss. The charge of conspiracy provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Russell W. Cunningham, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, Washington Field Office; and Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Assistance was provided by the Boston Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Grady of Mendell's Public Corruption & Special Prosecutions Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.