

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

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Former Boston Police Sergeant Pleads Guilty to Overtime Fraud Scheme

BOSTON – A former Boston Police Sergeant pleaded guilty today in connection with an ongoing investigation of overtime fraud at the Boston Police Department's (BPD) evidence warehouse.

George Finch, 59, of Franklin, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit theft concerning programs receiving federal funds and one count of embezzlement from an agency receiving federal funds. U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin scheduled sentencing for Sept. 16, 2021. Finch was charged on May 13, 2021.

As stated during the plea hearing, members of BPD'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. Finch admitted that between July 2016 and February 2019, he submitted false and fraudulent overtime slips for overtime hours that he did not work for two overtime shifts at the evidence warehouse. The first, called "purge" overtime, was a 4 – 8 p.m. weekday shift intended to dispose of old, unneeded evidence. The second shift, called "kiosk" overtime, involved driving to each police district in Boston one Saturday a month to collect old prescription drugs to be burned.

For the "purge" shift, Finch admitted that while he had claimed to have worked from 4 – 8 p.m., he and, allegedly, the other members of his unit routinely left at 6 p.m., or earlier. Additionally, Finch knowingly endorsed the fraudulent overtime slips of his subordinates who, allegedly, also left early from this shift. For the "kiosk" shift, Finch and others submitted overtime slips claiming to have worked eight-and-one-half hours, when in fact he and, allegedly, other members of the unit only worked three to four hours of those shifts.

Between March 2015 and September 2016, Finch submitted false and fraudulent slips for overtime hours that he did not work at the evidence warehouse. As a result, Finch personally collected approximately \$11,310 for overtime hours he did not work.

In September 2020, nine Boston Police officers were arrested and charged for their roles in an overtime fraud scheme that is alleged to have collectively embezzled over \$250,000 between May 2016 and February 2019. As part of the ongoing investigation, three additional officers were charged: former Sergeant Finch, former Captain Richard Evans and former Sergeant William Baxter, who has agreed to plead guilty.

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.

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 remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.