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## Former Mass. State Police trooper pleads guilty in overtime fraud case



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

### Massachusetts State Police headquarters.

By [Travis Andersen](#) and [Andrea Estes](#)

GLOBE STAFF JULY 03, 2018

A retired Massachusetts State Police veteran has admitted writing phony traffic tickets and falsifying hundreds of hours of overtime, becoming the first trooper convicted in the burgeoning fraud scandal, according to documents unsealed Tuesday in federal court.

As part of his plea deal with the federal government, Gregory Raftery, 47, will serve time in prison and help prosecutors investigating rampant overtime abuse in the state's largest law enforcement agency.

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Raferty's plea agreement was signed last Wednesday, the same day FBI agents arrested three other troopers at their homes.

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Raferty's willingness to serve between 12 and 18 months in prison — despite his cooperation — sent a jolt through State Police ranks, with at least 40 current and former troopers under scrutiny related to overtime schemes.

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Raferty, a member of the now disbanded Troop E from 2012 to 2017, collected \$54,000 for overtime

hours he did not work, according to his plea agreement.

He earned \$202,769 in 2015, including \$82,514 in overtime. In 2016, prosecutors said, he made \$219,669, including \$87,607 in overtime.

Raftery's attorney, Thomas J. Butters, declined to comment Tuesday afternoon.

Raftery, of Westwood, worked 22 years for the police force and retired in late March, according to the state retirement board. He began collecting an annual pension of \$72,204 last week, and received a payout of \$25,392 for unused sick or vacation time.

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He is scheduled to appear in court for sentencing on Sept. 25.

Under the plea deal, prosecutors agreed to recommend a prison sentence of 12 to 18 months, though a federal judge can ignore that recommendation. Raftery will also be required to pay back \$51,337.

Following news of the guilty plea, Colonel Kerry A. Gilpin said the department "played a lead role in uncovering the overtime abuse that led to this conviction" and said the agency will continue to turn over results of internal audits to federal and state criminal authorities.

She also said the agency plans to notify the retirement board of Raftery's guilty plea. The board can halt pension payments when public employees are convicted of crimes related to their jobs.

"Anyone within our ranks who breaks the law does not represent who we are and the values we hold dear," Gilpin said in a written statement. "Rest assured that no one is more disheartened by this illegal

conduct than am I and the overwhelming majority of troopers who exhibit integrity and bravery every day.”

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Governor Charlie Baker has said he wants the retirement board to be aggressive in going after the pensions of convicted troopers.

In 2015 and 2016, Raftery signed up for 290 overtime shifts as part of a program called the Accident and Injury Reduction Effort. He regularly left these four-hour shifts one to three hours early or failed to show up for them at all, but still collected the extra pay, according to federal prosecutors.

As part of the scheme, he submitted phony traffic citations for traffic stops that didn't take place, using driver information he obtained from the State Police computer database. It's unclear if motorists received bogus tickets from Raftery.

Earlier Wednesday, prosecutors had asked US District Court Judge William Young to shield Raftery's plea deal from public view until mid-August, arguing that the "disclosure of these materials might jeopardize the ongoing investigation of this case and the safety of potential witnesses."

Prosecutors had outlined their argument for shielding the case in a separate, sealed filing. Young unsealed the plea deal, but kept the related documents hidden.

Three other veteran troopers were arrested last week and accused of pocketing thousands of dollars for overtime they didn't work.

Former lieutenant David W. Wilson, 57, of Charlton, former trooper Paul E. Cesan, 50, of Southwick, and Trooper Gary S. Herman, 45, of Chester, were led in and out of the federal courtroom in handcuffs.

They were accused of bilking taxpayers out of tens of thousands of dollars in 2016, submitting "ghost" tickets, filing for no-show shifts, and taking steps to hide their crimes. One was accused of putting in for overtime on the same day he was on bereavement leave.

At the time, Hank Shaw, FBI special agent in charge of the Boston office, said the steps the troopers took to conceal the schemes were as "equally disturbing" as the fraud itself.

"We believe they broke the law for their own personal gain," said Shaw. "There is no excuse for this type

of behavior. The Massachusetts taxpayers deserve honesty from those who serve them.”

Attorney General Maura Healey is also investigating the alleged overtime abuse. Prosecutors from her office have been conducting interviews over the past few weeks, according to someone with direct knowledge.

A spokeswoman for Healey would not comment Tuesday on Raftery’s plea, citing the “ongoing investigation.”

State and federal investigators became involved after the State Police conducted a series of audits that turned up discrepancies in the pay records of dozens of current and former Troop E members. That led to an internal investigation, a referral to Healey’s office, and the disbanding this spring of the entire unit.

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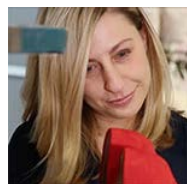
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