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Investigation into Boston police overtime fraud focused on three officers in evidence unit

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) and [Shelley Murphy](#) Globe Staff, Updated November 15, 2019, 9:41 p.m.



FILE PHOTO

A federal grand jury is investigating accusations of overtime fraud in the Boston Police Department, according to two sources familiar with the matter — an inquiry that comes on the heels of the sprawling State Police pay abuse scandal.

The investigation is focused on three officers who worked in the department's evidence unit, the sources said, and centers on allegations that the officers in some cases did not work their full four-hour overtime shifts.

The US attorney's office said it does not confirm or deny investigations.

The three officers reported to be of interest in the federal investigation all collected significant overtime in 2018, records show. An attorney for one of the officers said Friday that he has not been advised of any criminal investigation. An attorney for a second said his client is a decorated officer. An attorney for the third said he expected the officer to be cleared of any wrongdoing.

The three officers are on paid administrative leave, Sergeant Detective John Boyle, a police department spokesman, said Friday night. An internal investigation is ongoing, the spokesman said.

Mayor Martin Walsh's office referred questions to the police department.

In February, five Boston police officials — two supervisors from the evidence unit and three officers assigned to provide security at the front desk of department headquarters — were placed on administrative leave after an investigation into alleged payroll abuse.

At the time that inquiry surfaced, an attorney for the police union said the front desk is under constant video surveillance and questioned how officers under such scrutiny could do anything wrong.

The police department did not identify the two supervisors, but referred the matter to the Suffolk district attorney's office. At the time, a department spokesman said the investigation centered on an administrative issue and that officials were confident that evidence had not been compromised.

The Suffolk district attorney's office declined to comment Friday.

In response to the supervisors' suspensions, Police Commissioner William Gross ordered a review of payroll data for every district in the department and instructed commanders to "make abundantly clear the rules and expectations surrounding time attendance, and reporting for duty at the department."

The ongoing investigations into the Boston Police Department follow federal and state investigations into overtime abuses by dozens of State Police troopers including supervisors. Ten troopers have been charged, eight have pleaded guilty.

It's also not the first time the city agency has faced theft and fraud allegations.

In 2017, BPD officer Joseph Nee was [indicted](#) on charges he stole money from the evidence unit — about \$2,000 from a closed bank robbery case file — and tried to launder it at the Plainridge Park Casino. In February 2018, the charges against Nee were continued without a finding but a judge ordered Nee to resign from the department, serve five years of probation, and perform 1,000 hours of community service, court records show.

That same year, the Globe [reported](#) how Boston Detective Waiman Lee managed to take home about \$403,000 in pay the previous year, increasing his income through a contract provision that allowed him to receive roughly four months of overtime for hours he didn't work.

In a separate case, Sergeant Detective William J. Woodley faced a [larceny charge](#) after BPD accused him of fraudulently collecting nearly \$13,000 in overtime he never worked between June and October 2016. Woodley, 57, earned a total of more than \$219,000 in 2016. A judge agreed to dismiss the charges after 18 months, so long as he paid back the money and avoided trouble.

In 2015, Lieutenant Robert A. Dwan was accused by BPD of fraudulently collecting nearly \$6,800 for hours he never worked between March and August of 2015. Dwan's total pay topped \$260,000 that year. Dwan's case was ultimately tossed in a closed-door magistrate hearing after he agreed to pay the department back and retire, allowing him to keep his pension and avoid jail time. That case's dismissal was only revealed by a Globe Spotlight team [report](#) last year.

And a 2012 [Globe review](#) of officers in the drug unit found a pattern of overtime abuse by officers who were showing up to court when they were not needed. Ten officers were disciplined that year for collecting undeserved overtime pay.

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