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Corruption charges: Former Romulus Police Chief accused in scheme to use drug forfeiture money to buy more drugs, prostitutes

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Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy announced this afternoon that her office has filed charges against former Romulus Police Chief Michael St. Andre, his wife Sandra Vlaz-St. Andre, and five Romulus detectives (Det. Sargent Richard Balzer, Det. Richard Landy, Det. Donald Hopkins, Det. Jeremy Channells and Det. Larry Droege) for misconduct, corruption, embezzlement, and witness intimidation.

All seven are accused of participating in a scheme to improperly use drug forfeiture funds for personal benefit. Worthy says the allegations include purchasing a Westland tanning salon operated by Vlaz-St. Andre, hiring prostitutes and spending \$40,000 on marijuana and alcohol in a one-year period.



Fox 2 File Photo

The Romulus Police Department

Chief St. Andre and his wife are alleged to have had bank account balances in excess of their combined annual income.

The officers are also accused of "double-dipping" expense reports and making "fictitious payments to confidential sources."

Their alleged criminal activity, which began in January 2006 and continued up until this month, took place under the guise of a Romulus Police Special Investigation Unit investigation into allegations of Liquor Commission violations, prostitution and narcotics trafficking at Romulus' Landing Strip Bar

and Subi's Place in Southgate.

According to the Prosecutor's Office, this supposed investigation was hidden from the Special Investigations Unit supervisor and supervised only by St. Andre. No information from this case was ever turned over to prosecutors.

Worthy said the Michigan State Police began investigating allegations of police corruption in January 2009 at the request of someone she termed "a highly-placed Romulus Police official."

"It never ceases to amaze me...how so many people can read stories in the media about other public corruption that very day, and look up from their computers, iPads and newspapers and continue with their own misdeeds," said Worthy.

St. Andre faces the most charges, ten counts that include conducting a criminal enterprise, obstruction of justice, and tax evasion. If convicted on all counts, he could face a maximum of 119 years in prison. **Click here** to view a detailed listing of the charges against each defendant.

All seven defendants are scheduled to be arraigned in 34th District Court this afternoon.

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