



August 7, 2023

Two East Cleveland Police Officers Pleaded Guilty to Multiple Robbery Charges and Theft in Office for Stealing from Multiple Individuals While on Duty

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that East Cleveland Police Officers Alfonzo Cole, 35, and Willie Sims, 32, each pleaded guilty to four counts of robbery and one count of theft in office for stealing from multiple individuals while on duty from July 2020 to July 2021.

"It is an honor and a privilege to serve the public," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "These officers took an oath to serve and protect the public and with their actions they violated that oath. The citizens of East Cleveland deserve better and today demonstrates that public corruption of any kind will not be tolerated in Cuyahoga County."

On July 7, 2020, the victim, 52, was engaged in a verbal altercation with a female in the parking lot of a gas station located near Euclid Avenue and Shaw Avenue in East Cleveland. East Cleveland Police Officer Willie Sims responded to the scene. Sims saw a gun in the victim's car and searched the vehicle. He removed \$3,850 from the victim's vehicle.

On September 22, 2020, East Cleveland Police Officer Alfonzo Cole executed a traffic stop on the victim, 43, near Euclid Avenue and Marloes Avenue in East Cleveland. While stopped, Cole removed \$850 and approximately \$400 worth of suspected marijuana from the car. He then issued a traffic citation to the victim containing his signature and an East Cleveland Police sergeant's signature.

On November 8, 2020, Willie Sims executed a traffic stop on Paige Avenue in East Cleveland. The individual stopped was driving the 34-year-old victim's vehicle. While stopped, Sims found and removed \$1,300 of the victim's money from the trunk of the vehicle.

On June 22, 2021, Alfonzo Cole executed a traffic stop on the victim, 26, on Bender Avenue in East Cleveland. Cole removed from the vehicle \$4,000, suspected marijuana, and a firearm.

Also, on June 22, 2021, Alfonzo Cole executed a traffic stop on the victim, 18, on Noble Road in East Cleveland. Cole asked the victim if a gun was in the vehicle and then searched the vehicle. Cole removed the victim's mother's firearm, located under the seat, and bullets, located in the glove box, from the vehicle.

On July 8, 2021, Willie Sims executed a traffic stop on the same victim from the November 8, 2020, incident at a gas station located near Euclid Avenue and Superior Road in East Cleveland. Sims removed \$781 and suspected marijuana edibles from the vehicle.

On July 8, 2021, Willie Sims and Alfonzo Cole executed a traffic stop on the victim, 21, at a gas station located near Euclid Avenue and Superior Road in East Cleveland. Cole and Sims removed \$4,000 from the



victim's vehicle. The victim reported the theft to the East Cleveland Police Department (ECPD) and the ECPD contacted the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department (CCSD).

CCSD executed a search warrant at Alfonzo Cole's residence on July 13, 2021, and recovered the guns from both June 22, 2021, traffic stops, along with suspected marijuana edibles.

The investigation further revealed that Cole forged an East Cleveland Police sergeant's signature on the traffic citation issued on September 22, 2020, and that the sergeant was not on the scene at the time of the traffic stop. The investigation also revealed that a total of \$14,781 was stolen along with two firearms from six total victims.

Alfonzo Cole pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- **Four counts of Robbery** (a felony of the third degree)
- **One count of Theft In Office** (a felony of the fifth degree)

Cole additionally pleaded guilty to the following charges on an unrelated case:

- **One count of Having Weapons Under Disability** (a felony of the third degree)
- **One count of Carrying Concealed Weapons** (a felony of the fourth degree)

Willie Sims pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- **Four counts of Robbery** (a felony of the third degree)
- **One count of Theft In Office** (a felony of the fifth degree)

The investigation was conducted by the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Cole will be sentenced on both cases on September 11. Sims will also be sentenced on September 11.