

Former St. Joseph Police Detective Pleads Guilty To Withholding Information About Illegal Firearm

News

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Scott Thomas Coates, 42, of St. Joseph, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple to the felony charge of misprision of a felony.



Under the terms of today's plea agreement, Coates was forced to resign from the St. Joseph Police Department and may never be employed in any law enforcement-related job in the future.

By pleading guilty today, Coates admitted that between Oct. 24, 2007, and Sept. 7, 2010, he had knowledge that Corey Andrew Barr was in illegal possession of a firearm, but failed to inform his superior officers of that offense when they asked him about Barr's conduct.

Under federal law, Barr was prohibited from possessing a firearm due to his domestic violence conviction. Coates admitted that on multiple, separate occasions over a period of time, he failed to disclose to his superior officers that Barr illegally possessed the firearm. Coates's superior officers directly questioned him about Barr's conduct during a gang-related shooting on Oct. 18, 2007, near 22nd and Messanie in St. Joseph. Barr brandished a Smith and Wesson .40-caliber handgun and repeatedly fired at other persons during the shootout.

The handgun was returned to Barr on Sept. 1, 2010. Barr was arrested on Sept. 7, 2010, when St. Joseph police officers responded to a disturbance call involving people with firearms, including assault rifles. A witness told officers that one of the men involved in the disturbance was walking through a nearby park. Officers located Barr in the park; he was carrying the loaded handgun in a holster on his waist. Barr was indicted by a federal grand jury for illegally possessing a firearm. After pleading guilty, Barr was sentenced to 47 months in federal prison.

Under the terms of today's plea agreement, the government will recommend a sentence of probation. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a pre-sentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.