

State Police investigator charged with aiding fentanyl dealer

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A State Police narcotics investigator has been charged with obstructing an investigation into fentanyl trafficking in Dutchess County.

Will Waldron/Times Union

POUGHKEEPSIE — A State Police narcotics investigator faces federal criminal charges after allegedly revealing information about a covert operation and advising a drug dealer to destroy evidence.

Michael O’Flaherty, 42, was accused of obstructing an official proceeding and lying to federal investigators, according to a joint announcement from U.S. Attorney Damian Williams of the Southern District of New York and State Police Superintendent Steven G. James.

The charges stem from a 2022 state and federal investigation of fentanyl pill distribution linked to multiple overdose deaths in Dutchess County. O’Flaherty had remained on restricted duty for the past two years during the investigation. It’s expected that he will be suspended — initially for 30 days without pay — until his criminal case is adjudicated.

Under the guise of assisting the investigation, O’Flaherty allegedly told the dealer it was ongoing and advised him to destroy evidence. He also tried to glean details such as the identity of the investigation’s confidential source within the dealer’s network.

O’Flaherty, who served in Troop K and lived in Poughkeepsie, also allegedly tried to prevent the investigation from discovering the nature and extent of his interactions with the dealer via telephone calls, text messages and one-on-one meetings. Confronted about the relationship, he allegedly lied to federal investigators.

O’Flaherty was arrested Thursday morning and appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Victoria Reznik in White Plains. He faces two counts of obstructing an official proceeding, each of which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, and two counts of making false statements, each of which carries a maximum sentence of five years.

Mid Hudson News [reported in August](#) that Dutchess County prosecutors had dropped several charges against alleged drug trafficker Marc Coleman after the investigation of O’Flaherty came to light. The trooper had revealed his intention to invoke his Fifth Amendment right to not testify if called as a witness at Coleman’s trial.

Williams said in the release that O’Flaherty “exploited his position of public trust in an effort to help his former confidential informant — who was responsible for distributing tens of thousands of potentially deadly fentanyl pills — evade law enforcement. ... The defendant’s alleged conduct betrayed the oath he swore to protect New Yorkers and jeopardized the safety of fellow law enforcement officers.”

“Law enforcement officers hold a profound responsibility to serve and protect our communities, which requires the highest standards of accountability and integrity,” James said. “The State Police will continue to work cooperatively with the U.S. Attorney’s Office of the Southern District regarding this criminal case, and I appreciate Gov. Hochul’s ongoing support of our longstanding culture of accountable policing.”

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