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Delta police officer decertified for alleged “untruthfulness” under new state law

Ex-officer speaks out against accusations

By Lucas Vader Staff Writer

Dec 21, 2020



Delta Police Department.

Submitted photo

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Following the Dec. 11 meeting of the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) division of the Department of Law, it was revealed in a press release that former officer of the Delta Police Department (DPD) Jeremy Gay has been decertified for alleged "untruthfulness."

Gay's certification allowing him to be a law enforcement officer in the state of Colorado was removed alongside the certification of five other Colorado officers.

Shortly after initial publication of this DCI article, Gay reached out to the press with a rebuttal on the incident.

"I don't think it's fair to be called a liar," Gay said. He explained that, from his standpoint, the incident was not one of him knowingly lying as POST suggested, but was instead an error on his part.

"After a consented search on a vehicle was completed, I made the mistake of adding a few more items to the consented search warrant after it was already signed, not thinking about what I was doing," Gay said. He explained that he added extra items before it occurred to him that it was an official document.

"On April 22, 2020, Delta Police Department notified Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training that the Respondent knowingly made an untruthful statement concerning a material fact or knowingly omitted a material fact on an official criminal justice record on March 19, 2020," the POST meeting's agenda notes. It states that the Delta Police Department's date of separation with Gay was April 2, and his decertification was voted into effect at the state level on Dec. 11.

Delta Police Chief Luke Fedler declined to comment on the incident, claiming confidentiality in the "untruthful" circumstances that led to Gay's termination.

"I unfortunately cannot give any comments on that," Fedler said.

Gay indicated he was disgruntled with Fedler's lack of a comment, claiming that the chief had recently agreed with him that POST's claim of untruthfulness was unfair and inaccurate.

"I just spoke to Chief Fedler about it last week and he was like, 'Yeah, you're right, you didn't lie about anything,' so why he can't give a comment on it, I'm sure it's probably [confidentiality]."

Gay said that, at the time of the incident, he brought the error to the attention of department administration, at which point he was put on administrative leave so that the incident could be investigated under the state statute with which his certification was removed.

"I didn't lie about it, I was truthful," Gay said. "There was nothing to lie about. I did what I did, I owned it, and you know, I wound up losing my job over it."

Gay said that his name was added to the list of six claimed "untruthful" officers due to the fact that he never challenged POST on the accusation after the incident. His reasoning for that was that he was determined to leave law enforcement by that point in the investigation and he was hoping to make a quiet exit from the career.

"They're automatically accusing me of being a liar," Gay said. "Well, I didn't challenge it because basically, I was done with law enforcement. I was tired of dealing with the ugly side of life. I don't have any plans to go back into law enforcement."

As Fedler declined to comment on the incident, the only comments at this time are those of Gay, which are reported directly here with no agreement or opposition to go along with them.

According to the press release from Attorney General Phil Weiser, this is the first time Colorado police officers have been decertified for untruthfulness under a relatively new senate bill which was passed in May of 2019. SB 19-166, which it states accordingly, "CONCERNING THE P.O.S.T. BOARD REVOKING

THE CERTIFICATION OF A PEACE OFFICER WHO IS FOUND TO HAVE MADE AN UNTRUTHFUL STATEMENT, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION."

Having been decertified under the senate bill, Gay, along with the other five Colorado officers, are blacklisted for life from serving in law enforcement in the state of Colorado.

"Public trust is achieved when law enforcement officers act with honesty and accountability," Weiser said in his press release. "While the vast majority of peace officers honor this trust each and every day they put on their badge, unfortunately, there are some officers that do not belong in this profession."

In addition to the six officers who were decertified for untruthfulness, there were another two officers decertified at the same meeting for criminal infractions, making for a total of eight Colorado peace officer decertifications on Dec. 11.

Former Park County Sheriff Deputy Sara Strickland had her certification removed after being charged with second degree burglary; a felony.

Former Durango Police Department Officer Justin Moore was decertified after being charged with third degree assault and harassment, both misdemeanors.

The other officers who were decertified for untruthfulness in the state of Colorado were Christopher Goble of the Lone Tree Police Department, Richard Jones of the Pueblo Police Department, Christopher Tonge of the Bayfield Marshal's Office, Russell Smith of the El Paso Sheriff's Office and Lara Dreiling of the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office.

This article was updated at 6:20 p.m. on Dec. 21 to add comments from Jeremy Gay.

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