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For Immediate Release

Former Romulus Police Chief St. Andre, Wife and Five Detectives Charged in Police Corruption Probe

In December, 2008, a highly placed City of Romulus police official requested that the Michigan State Police (MSP) investigate allegations of misconduct, corruption, and embezzlement of drug forfeiture funds by select members of the Romulus Police Department Special Investigation Unit (RPD – SIU) and highly-placed command personnel. In January, 2009, MSP began an investigation into the allegations.

As a result of the complex and wide-ranging investigation, Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy has charged former Romulus Police Chief Michael Charles St. Andre, 50, his wife Sandra Kay Vlaz-St. Andre, 50, Detective/Sergeant Richard Allan Balzer, 50, Detective Richard Bruce Landry, 39, and Detective Donald Ralph Hopkins, 38. All face felony racketeering charges that carry a maximum penalty of up to 20 years in prison. Also charged are Detective Jeremy James Channells, 35, and Detective Larry Droege, 32, who face felony charges that carry a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison.

Between January, 2006 through September, 2011, it is alleged that defendants repeatedly made, or assisted others in making, material misrepresentations of fact in connection with expense reports they submitted in an effort to seek improper reimbursement; created fraudulent documents to support improper expenditures of drug forfeiture funds; obstructed justice; made false statements in police reports; and ultimately misused City of Romulus funds for their own personal gain.

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The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office (WCPO) received the case from MSP and the Michigan Attorney General's Office in April 2010. The collaborative effort by MSP and WCPO represents hundreds of hours of work by the Michigan State Police, headed by the Officer in Charge of the case, Detective/Sgt. James Bundshuh, with assistance from Detective/Sgt. Dale Smith, Detective/Sgt. Tawana Powell and Detective/Sgt. Denise Powell, among others. Special Agents Michael Fitzgerald and Byron Fox of the Federal Bureau of Investigation also participated in the investigation.

"The charges filed today are the result of a collaborative effort among these agencies and they underscore the importance of protecting public trust in law enforcement by ensuring public corruption is found and brought to justice," stated MSP Director, Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue. "The Romulus Police Department's request of the Michigan State Police to conduct this investigation is a credit to the integrity of their agency."

"The FBI is pleased to have provided assistance to the Michigan State Police in this investigation. Working with our law enforcement partners, the FBI is committed to fighting corruption at all levels," said Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge, Andrew G. Arena.

Staff members of the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office who worked on the case were James Gonzales, Chief of Special Operations Division, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Lori Dawson, Special Assignment Prosecutor, who will be the lead trial attorney on the case, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Robert Miller, of the Public Integrity Unit, and Investigators Don Couturier and Timothy Matouk of the Criminal Investigations Division.

"The alleged conduct of the former Romulus police chief, his wife and the 5 detectives in this case defines a culture of corruption and greed at its core. This is not an indictment of the entire Romulus Police Department that has honest, hard working officers who put their lives on the line to protect us each day," said Prosecutor Worthy. "Although an investigation of this nature takes hundreds of hours of time, it is crucial that we charge defendants where we find them, even when it is in a police department. I am extremely proud of the work that my staff, MSP and the FBI have completed to bring these defendants to justice."

Chief Michael St. Andre - Allegations

From January, 2010 until January, 2011, Chief St. Andre directed an RPD-SIU investigation of Michigan Liquor Control Commission violations, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi's Place in Southgate, Michigan. The investigation was hidden from the RPD-SIU Supervisor and, as a result, the supervisor was unaware of criminal activity engaged in by RPD detectives. Chief St. Andre directly supervised and had direct knowledge of the alleged criminal activities of Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer, Det. Richard Landry, Det. Donald Hopkins, Det. Jeremy Channells, and Det. Larry Droege. It is alleged that, unknown to the RPD-SIU Supervisor, they engaged in solicitation of prostitutes for personal gratification,

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embezzlement, false police reporting, neglect of duty and misconduct in office. The results of this “investigation” were never turned over for review by the WCPO.

In addition, from January, 2006, through September, 2011, Chief St. Andre is also alleged to have perpetrated a fraudulent scheme to improperly and, in direct contravention of his duty as a public official, enrich himself by siphoning City of Romulus-owned assets that were earmarked for law enforcement purposes for his and his wife’s personal gain. Chief St. Andre repeatedly submitted, and supervised the submission by his subordinates, false expense reports and corresponding false support documentation, and false RPD-SIU reports of investigative work. The fraudulent requests for reimbursement were for a variety of alleged expenses that were either never incurred or were falsely inflated as to actual costs.

Between January, 2006 and September, 2011, Chief St. Andre and his wife, Sandra Vlaz-St. Andre, are alleged to have made numerous unexplained cash deposits into their personal bank accounts that were well-beyond their respective incomes. These deposits are alleged to be RPD forfeiture funds that were improperly used for personal expenses, including trips for a female friend and her family member, as well as to purchase a tanning salon for Mrs. St. Andre in Westland, Michigan.

Chief St. Andre has also been charged with using his position to obstruct the MSP investigation and attempting to bribe or intimidate witnesses. The investigation has also uncovered evidence that over \$49,000 in cash that was seized by RPD-SIU went missing while under the direct control of Chief St. Andre. None of these illegally gained proceeds were included in the St. Andre’s tax returns as required by law.

Charges Filed Against Chief Michael St. Andre
Date of Hire: 9/22/85

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
1	Conducting Criminal Enterprise	20 Years
2	Acquire/Maintaining Criminal Enterprise	20 Years
3	Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy	20 Years
4	Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00	10 Years
8	Uttering and Publishing	14 Years
12	Misconduct in Office	5 Years
16	Taxes - Failure to file/False Return	5 Years
17	Obstruction of Justice	5 Years
18	Witness-Bribery/Intimidating/ Interfering in a case with over 10 year penalty	10 Years
19	Receiving and Concealing Stolen Property over \$20,000.00	10 Years

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Sandra Kay Vlaz-St. Andre – Allegations

From January, 2006 through September, 2011, Mrs. St. Andre is alleged to have conspired with and had knowledge of certain criminal activities of Chief St. Andre, Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer, Det. Richard Landry and Det. Donald Hopkins. Mrs. St. Andre is also alleged to have knowingly received and concealed stolen property in the form of embezzled forfeiture proceeds that were deposited into her joint personal bank account that far exceeded that of her and Chief St. Andre's combined incomes. These funds are alleged to have been used to both purchase and operate a tanning salon in Westland, Michigan, as well as for personal expenses. None of these illegally gained proceeds were included in the St. Andre's tax returns as required by law.

Charges Filed Against Sandra Vlaz-St. Andre - Spouse

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
2	Acquire/Maintaining Criminal Enterprise	20 Years
3	Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy	20 Years
16	Taxes - Failure to file/False Return	5 Years
19	Receiving and Concealing Stolen Property over \$20,000.00	10 Years

Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer – Allegations

Between January, 2006, through September, 2011, Det./Sgt. Balzer is alleged to have submitted, along with Chief St. Andre, Det. Richard Landry, Det. Donald Hopkins, Det. Jeremy Channells, and Det. Larry Droege: false expense reports and corresponding support documentation, and false RPD-SIU reports detailing fraudulent investigative work. The fraudulent requests for reimbursement were for a variety of alleged expenses that were either never incurred or were falsely inflated as to actual costs. Moreover, Det./Sgt. Balzer is alleged to have used City of Romulus-owned forfeiture funds for personal gain and pleasure through payment of personal expenses or bills.

From January, 2010 until January, 2011, Chief St. Andre directed an RPD-SIU investigation of Michigan Liquor Control Commission violations, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi's Place in Southgate, Michigan. The results of this "investigation" were never turned over for review by WCPO. Moreover, the investigation was hidden from the RPD-SIU Supervisor and, as a result, he was unaware of criminal activity engaged in by RPD detectives. Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer, along with the other named detectives, engaged in

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solicitation of prostitutes for personal gratification, embezzlement of City of Romulus funds, false police reporting, neglect of duty and misconduct in office. Further, it is alleged that Det./Sgt. Balzer assisted Det. Jeremy Channells in authoring a false police report detailing certain facts and circumstances surrounding the undercover operation at Subi's Place.

Charges Filed Against Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer
Date of Hire: 10/28/86

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
1	Conducting Criminal Enterprise	20 Years
3	Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy	20 Years
5	Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00	10 Years
9	Uttering and Publishing	14 Years
13	Misconduct in Office	5 Years
20	Misconduct in Office (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, "Subi's and L. Strip")	5 Years
21	Neglect of Duty (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, "Subi's and L. Strip")	1 Year

Det. Richard Landry - Allegations

Between January, 2006, through September, 2011, Det. Landry is alleged to have submitted, along with Chief St. Andre, Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer, Det. Donald Hopkins, Det. Jeremy Channells and Det. Larry Droege: false expense reports and corresponding support documentation, and false RPD-SIU reports detailing fraudulent investigative work. The fraudulent requests for reimbursement were for a variety for alleged expenses that were either never incurred or were falsely inflated as to actual costs. Moreover, Det. Landry is alleged to have used City of Romulus-owned forfeiture funds for personal gain and pleasure through payment of personal expenses or bills.

From January, 2010 until January, 2011, Chief St. Andre directed an RPD-SIU investigation of Michigan Liquor Control Commission violations, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi's Place in Southgate. The results of this "investigation" were never turned over for review by WCPO. Moreover, the investigation was hidden from the RPD-SIU Supervisor and, as a result, he was unaware of criminal activity engaged in by RPD detectives. Det. Richard Landry, along with the other named detectives, engaged in

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solicitation of prostitutes for personal gratification, embezzlement of City of Romulus funds, false police reporting, neglect of duty and misconduct in office.

**Charges Filed Against Det. Richard Landry
Date of Hire: 3/4/02**

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
1	Conducting Criminal Enterprise	20 Years
3	Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy	20 Years
6	Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00	10 Years
10	Uttering and Publishing	14 Years
14	Misconduct in Office	5 Years
20	Misconduct in Office (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, “Subi’s and L. Strip”)	5 Years
21	Neglect of Duty (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, “Subi’s and L. Strip”)	1 Year

Det. Donald Hopkins - Allegations

Between January, 2006, through September, 2011, Det. Hopkins is alleged to have submitted, along with Chief St. Andre, Det. Richard Landry, Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer, Det. Jeremy Channells, and Det. Larry Droege: false expense reports and corresponding support documentation, and false RPD-SIU reports detailing fraudulent investigative work. The fraudulent requests for reimbursement were for a variety of alleged expenses that were either never incurred or were falsely inflated as to actual costs. Moreover, Det. Hopkins is alleged to have used City of Romulus-owned forfeiture funds for personal gain and pleasure through payment of personal expenses or bills.

From January, 2010 until January, 2011, Chief St. Andre directed an RPD-SIU investigation of Michigan Liquor Control Commission violations, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi’s Place in Southgate, Michigan. The results of this “investigation” were never turned over for review by WCPO. Moreover, the investigation was hidden from the RPD-SIU Supervisor and, as a result, he was unaware of criminal activity engaged in by RPD detectives. Det. Donald Hopkins, along with the other named detectives, engaged in solicitation of prostitutes for personal gratification, embezzlement of City of Romulus funds, false police reporting, neglect of duty and misconduct in office.

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**Charges Filed Against Det. Donald Hopkins
Date of Hire: 3/29/99**

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
1	Conducting Criminal Enterprise	20 Years
3	Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy	20 Years
7	Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00	10 Years
11	Uttering and Publishing	14 Years
15	Misconduct in Office	5 Years
20	Misconduct in Office (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, “Subi’s and L. Strip”)	5 Years
21	Neglect of Duty (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, “Subi’s and L. Strip”)	1 Year

Det. Jeremy Channells - Allegations

From January, 2010 until January, 2011, Chief St. Andre directed an RPD-SIU investigation of Michigan Liquor Control Commission violations, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi’s Place in Southgate, Michigan. The results of this “investigation” were never turned over for review by WCPO. Moreover, the investigation was hidden from the RPD-SIU Supervisor and, as a result, he was unaware of criminal activity engaged in by RPD detectives. In connection with this fraudulent “investigation,” Det. Jeremy Channells, along with the other named detectives, engaged in solicitation of prostitutes for personal gratification, embezzlement of City of Romulus funds, false police reporting, neglect of duty and misconduct in office.

It is also alleged that Det. Jeremy Channells, assisted by Det./Sgt. Richard Balzer, authored and submitted a false police report detailing certain facts and circumstances surrounding the undercover operation at Subi’s Place.

**Charges Filed Against Det. Jeremy Channells
Date of Hire: 1/23/06**

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
20	Misconduct in Office (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, “Subi’s and L. Strip”)	5 Years
21	Neglect of Duty (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, “Subi’s and L. Strip”)	1 Year
22	Misconduct in Office (5/26/10 False Police Report)	5 Years

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Det. Larry Droege - Allegations

From January, 2010 until January, 2011, Chief St. Andre directed an RPD-SIU investigation of Michigan Liquor Control Commission violations, prostitution, and narcotics trafficking at the Landing Strip Bar in Romulus and Subi's Place in Southgate, Michigan. The results of this "investigation" were never turned over for review by WCPO. Moreover, the investigation was hidden from the RPD-SIU Supervisor and, as a result, he was unaware of criminal activity engaged in by RPD detectives. In connection with this fraudulent "investigation," Det. Larry Droege, along with the other named detectives, engaged in solicitation of prostitutes for personal gratification, embezzlement of City of Romulus funds, false police reporting, neglect of duty and misconduct in office.

Charges Filed Against Det. Larry Droege Date of Hire: 7/16/01

Count	Charge	Maximum Penalty
20	Misconduct in Office (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, "Subi's and L. Strip")	5 Years
21	Neglect of Duty (Jan. 2010 – Feb. 2011, "Subi's and L. Strip")	1 Year

Defendants Michael and Sandra St. Andre submitted themselves for processing on September 26, 2011. Defendants Balzer, Landry, Hopkins, Droege and Channells were taken into custody on September 26, 2011. All defendants will be arraigned in 34th District Court in Romulus on September 27, 2011 at 3:30 p.m.

See Charging Summary for Romulus Police and Spouse on Page 9.

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CHARGE SUMMARY FOR ROMULUS OFFICERS AND SPOUSE

Defendant Name	Counts	Maximum Penalty
<p>Chief Michael Charles St. Andre, 50 Date of Hire: 09/22/1985</p>	<p>Ct. 1 Conducting Criminal Enterprise Ct. 2 Acquire/Maintaining Criminal Enterprise Ct. 3 Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy Ct. 4 Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00 Ct. 8 Uttering and Publishing Ct. 12 Misconduct in Office Ct. 16 Taxes - Failure to file/False Return Ct. 17 Obstruction of Justice Ct. 18 Witness-Bribery/Intimidating/Interfering in a case with over 10 year penalty Ct. 19 Receiving and Concealing Stolen Property over \$20,000.00</p>	<p>Ct. 1 – 20 years Ct. 2 – 20 years Ct. 3 – 20 years Ct. 4 – 10 years Ct. 8 – 14 years Ct. 12 – 5 years Ct. 16 – 5 years Ct. 17 – 5 years Ct. 18 – 10 years Ct. 19 – 10 years</p>
<p>Mrs. Sandra Kay Vlaz - St. Andre, 50 - Spouse</p>	<p>Ct. 2 Acquiring/Maintaining Criminal Enterprise Ct. 3 Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy Ct. 16 Taxes - Failure to file/False Return Ct. 19 Receiving and Concealing Stolen Property over \$20,000.00</p>	<p>Ct. 2 – 20 years Ct. 3 – 20 years Ct. 16 – 5 years Ct. 19 – 10 years</p>

<p>Det./Sgt. Richard Allan Balzer, 50 Date of Hire: 10/28/1996</p>	<p>Ct. 1 Conducting Criminal Enterprise Ct. 3 Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy Ct. 5 Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00 Ct. 9 Uttering and Publishing Ct. 13 Misconduct in Office Ct. 20 Misconduct in Office (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”) Ct. 21 Neglect of Duty (01/2010 – 02/2011 - “Subi’s & L. Strip”)</p>	<p>Ct. 1 – 20 years Ct. 3 – 20 years Ct. 5 – 10 years Ct. 9 – 14 years Ct. 13 – 5 years Ct. 20 – 5 years Ct. 21 – 1 year</p>
<p>Det. Richard Bruce Landry, 39 Date of Hire: 03/04/2002</p>	<p>Ct. 1 Conducting Criminal Enterprise Ct. 3 Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy Ct. 6 Embezzlement by Public Official Over \$50.00 Ct. 10 Uttering and Publishing Ct. 14 Misconduct in Office Ct. 20 Misconduct in Office (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”) Ct. 21 Neglect of Duty (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”)</p>	<p>Ct. 1 – 20 years Ct. 3 – 20 years Ct. 6 – 10 years Ct. 10 – 14 years Ct. 14 – 5 years Ct. 20 – 5 years Ct. 21 – 1 year</p>
<p>Det. Donald Ralph Hopkins, 38 Date of Hire: 03/29/1999</p>	<p>Ct. 1 Conducting Criminal Enterprise Ct. 3 Criminal Enterprise - Conspiracy Ct. 7 Embezzlement by Public Official over \$50.00 Ct. 11 Uttering and Publishing Ct. 15 Misconduct in Office Ct. 20 Misconduct in Office (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”) Ct. 21 Neglect of Duty (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”)</p>	<p>Ct. 1 – 20 years Ct. 3 – 20 years Ct. 7 – 10 years Ct. 11 – 14 years Ct. 15 – 5 years Ct. 20 – 5 years Ct. 21 – 1 year</p>

<p>Det. Jeremy James Channells, 35 Date of Hire: 01/23/2006</p>	<p>Ct. 20 Misconduct in Office (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”) Ct. 21 Neglect of Duty (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”) Ct. 22 Misconduct in Office (5/6/2010 - False Police Report)</p>	<p>Ct. 20 – 5 years Ct. 21 – 1 year Ct. 22 – 5 years</p>
<p>Det. Larry Robert Droege, 32 Date of Hire: 07/16/2001</p>	<p>Ct. 20 Misconduct in Office (01/2010 – 02/2011 – “Subi’s & L. Strip”) Ct. 21 Neglect of Duty (01/2010 – 02/2011 - “Subi’s & L. Strip”)</p>	<p>Ct. 20 – 5 years Ct. 21 – 1 year</p>

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