

# Secretary testifies against former boss, colleagues in Romulus Police scandal

Preliminary hearing in corruption case

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VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP, Mich. (WXYZ) - A secretary took the stand as a witness for the prosecution against her former boss and colleagues on day one of the Romulus Police corruption scandal preliminary exam.

Joyce Clay, a long-time administrative assistant at the Romulus Police Department, for years handled the cash that came in from the Special Investigation Unit or SIU.

She says she started to notice suspicious expense reports and paperwork around 2005.

"One of the things that stood out to me was a lot of money spent on food," Clay testified.

The preliminary exam is held to determine if there is enough evidence to take the case to trial.

Several members of the Special Investigation Unit, including Michael St. Andre, who would go on to become the chief of police, are charged with mishandling tens of thousands of dollars.

St. Andre's wife Sandra is also charged in the case.

Joyce Clay says around 2005 and 2006, she noticed much larger amounts of cash being requested from members of the Special Investigation Unit. Typical checks once cut for \$2,500 had become \$10,000.

"I asked at one point because it just seemed like it really went up," Clay said. "It didn't make sense to me that \$2,500 would last months at first."

Questionable expenses Clay thought included about \$70,000 on food over a period of several years.

"A lot of Subway, Fishbones, fast food places, some Merriman Street Grill,' Clay testified.

St. Andre and five detectives face a variety of charges, from embezzlement to misconduct in office. Some are accused of using drug forfeiture money on prostitutes, marijuana and alcohol.

The detectives charged are Richard Balzer, Richard Landry, Donald Hopkins, Jeremy Channells, and Larry Droege.

The former chief is also accused of using thousands of dollars to help his wife open up a tanning salon.

Clay testified after years of handling the cash she was eventually cut out of the process and St. Andre, who had then become deputy police chief, was in charge of all the money.

There are so many defendants and attorneys that the preliminary hearing is being held at the Van Buren Township Hall.

It is expected to last three weeks.

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