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FIREDEPUTY PLEADS GUILTY FOR FALSIFYING SEATBELT CITATIONS

Sheriff Greg Champagne applauds the guilty plea of William S. Marciante, Jr. on various charges related to the forgery of seatbelt citations while working grant funded overtime. Marciante, a former deputy, was terminated by the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office in November 2011 upon his arrest. Tuesday afternoon before Judge Emile St. Pierre, he pleaded guilty to **five counts of forgery, five counts of malfeasance in office, five counts of injuring public records, and six counts of payroll fraud. He was immediately sentenced to five years in prison -four years suspended- and five years on active probation upon his release from prison.**

"I would like to thank Attorney General James "Buddy" Caldwell and the Louisiana Attorney General's Office for their assistance and diligent prosecution", said Sheriff Champagne. "My office initiated the investigation after complaints were filed by unsuspecting motorists surprised to learn of attachments in their name for failure to pay fines. Marciante's actions were a disgrace to his co-workers, the badge and the public he swore to protect," Champagne added.

During the investigation, detectives discovered that between February and May 2011, a total of twenty-one citations were issued by Marciante for seatbelt violations in the names of unsuspecting individuals who were never stopped for these violations. In each instance, Marciante worked overtime made possible through grant funds from the Louisiana Highway Safety Administration to promote seatbelt safety and enforcement.

Evidence discovered during a search warrant of Marciante's patrol vehicle and from reviewing his computer and dash camera video activity shows that traffic stops for the twenty-one victims did not take place and in some instances, Marciante did not work during the times he issued the citations and submitted overtime.

"To say I am disgusted is an understatement," said Sheriff Champagne. "Our job in law enforcement is already difficult enough. Because of Marciante's actions, that job of maintaining the public trust has gotten a little harder. It is mind-

boggling to understand how someone would be so irresponsible and think it would not eventually be detected. We have checks and balances in place. Once we discovered discrepancies, we immediately investigated and took swift actions. Marciante's arrest should serve as an example to anyone who chooses to victimize the very people we take an oath to protect," Champagne added.



William S. Marciante, Jr.