

# Former Chicago cop gets 22 months for stealing from FBI informant

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A federal judge had harsh word words today for a former Chicago police sergeant as she sentenced him to 22 months in prison for stealing thousands of dollars from a purported drug courier who turned out to be an informant for the FBI in an undercover sting.



The sentence for Ronald Watts, a 19-year police veteran who resigned before pleading guilty last summer, exceeded the 10-to-16-month range called for under federal sentencing guidelines but fell short of the three years in prison sought by prosecutors.

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U.S. District Judge Sharon Coleman called the African-American officer's actions an unconscionable betrayal to his community and fellow police officers. She said the misconduct by Watts, who worked in the Ida B. Wells public housing development, was particularly egregious because he picked on a vulnerable population already wracked by poverty and crime.

an example,” the judge said. “You needed to protect those people, and you didn’t.”

Watts, at the time a Wentworth District tactical sergeant, and Officer Kallatt Mohammed were arrested in early 2012 after they were caught stealing drug proceeds with the help of a courier who was secretly working for the FBI.

Mohammed pleaded guilty last summer and said he and Watts had demanded protection payoffs from drug dealers at the now-shuttered Ida B. Wells complex on the South Side in 2007 and 2008. Mohammed, who did not agree to testify against Watts, was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

On the eve of his trial in July, Watts instead pleaded guilty to one count of theft of government funds.

Watts had no comment moments before the judge imposed the 22-month prison term.

jmeisner@tribune.com (mailto:jmeisner@tribune.com)

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