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We fabricated drug charges against innocent people to meet arrest quotas, former detective testifies

By JOHN MARZULLI
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER | OCT 13, 2011





Former Detective Stephen Anderson, seen here in 2009, is testifying under a cooperation agreement with prosecutors. (Willie Anderson/News)

A former [NYPD](#) narcotics detective snared in a corruption scandal testified it was common practice to fabricate drug charges against innocent people to meet arrest quotas.

The bombshell testimony from [Stephen Anderson](#) is the first public account of the twisted culture behind the false arrests in the [Brooklyn](#) South and Queens narc squads, which led to the arrests of eight cops and a massive shakeup.

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Anderson, testifying under a cooperation agreement with prosecutors, was busted for planting cocaine, a practice known as "flaking," on four men in a Queens bar in 2008 to help out fellow cop [Henry Tavaréz](#), whose buy-and-bust activity had been low.

"Tavaréz was ... was worried about getting sent back [to patrol] and, you know, the supervisors getting on his case," he recounted at the corruption trial of Brooklyn South narcotics [Detective Jason Arbeeney](#).

"I had decided to give him [Tavaréz] the drugs to help him out so that he could say he had a buy," Anderson testified last week in [Brooklyn Supreme Court](#).

He made clear he wasn't about to pass off the two legit arrests he had made in the bar to Tavaréz.

"As a detective, you still have a number to reach while you are in the narcotics division," he said.

NYPD officials did not respond to a request for comment.

Anderson worked in the Queens and Brooklyn South narcotics squads and was called to the stand at Arbeeney's bench trial to show the illegal conduct wasn't limited to a single

squad.

"Did you observe with some frequency this ... practice which is taking someone who was seemingly not guilty of a crime and laying the drugs on them?" [Justice Gustin Reichbach](#) asked Anderson.

"Yes, multiple times," he replied.

The judge pressed Anderson on whether he ever gave a thought to the damage he was inflicting on the innocent.

"It was something I was seeing a lot of, whether it was from supervisors or undercovers and even investigators," he said.

"It's almost like you have no emotion with it, that they attach the bodies to it, they're going to be out of jail tomorrow anyway; nothing is going to happen to them anyway."

The city paid \$300,000 to settle a false arrest suit by [Jose Colon](#) and his brother Maximo, who were falsely arrested by Anderson and Tavaréz. A surveillance tape inside the bar showed they had been framed.

A federal judge presiding over the suit said the NYPD's plagued by "widespread falsification" by arresting officers.

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ABC News and the journalism community are mourning ABC News producer Alexa Valiente, who passed away over the weekend at age 27 of undisclosed causes.

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