


Police suspend Tulsa officer arrested on drug complaint

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Tulsa police arrested one of their fellow officers on a complaint of possession of a controlled drug with intent to distribute Tuesday night after cocaine reportedly was found in his police car.

Officer Travis K. Ludwig, 37, maintains his innocence and said he doesn't know where the drugs came from, according to his attorney, Scott Wood.

Wood said Ludwig thinks the drugs were dumped there by a suspect, and he said it is not uncommon for weapons or drugs to be dumped by criminals in officers' cars.

Ludwig was arrested Tuesday night and was booked into the Tulsa Jail just after 1 a.m. Wednesday, according to jail records. He has been suspended from his duties as a patrol officer at the Gilcrease Division pending the outcome of the investigation.

According to a prepared statement from the Tulsa Police Department, Internal Affairs initiated an administrative investigation of Ludwig. During the course of this investigation, it was determined that criminal activity had occurred, possibly involving controlled substances, the statement says.

Investigators obtained search warrants for various locations. Undetermined quantities of a white powder that tested positive for cocaine, as well as scales and money, were found during the searches, according to the department's statement.

Capt. Jonathan Brooks said the administrative investigation was suspended when the criminal investigation was started.

Wood said Ludwig was at an off-duty security job at a business at 65th Street and Yale Avenue about 3 p.m. Tuesday when two Internal Affairs investigators served him with a notice of the internal investigation and gave him a personnel order placing him on restricted duty.

The investigation was regarding timekeeping issues such as leave-of-absence slips and compensatory time, Wood said. Because he was placed on restricted duty, the officers seized his patrol car.

Ludwig said he wanted to get some papers and personal items out of the car's console and that the Internal Affairs officers were there as he placed the items in a duffle bag, Wood said. He put the bag into the car of another officer who was also working a security job at the same location.

Ludwig then left, and within an hour an Internal Affairs investigator returned and took Ludwig's belongings out of the other officer's car, Wood said.

Ludwig reported for duty at the Gilcrease Division later that afternoon and sensed that something was wrong. He tried to determine what was going on but couldn't, so he tried to put in a sick-leave slip but was denied by a supervisor, Wood said.

"I have never heard of anyone ever being denied a sick leave — ever — in the time that I have been associated with the Tulsa Police Department, and that goes back to 1980," Wood said.

Ludwig called a Fraternal Order of Police representative, and that person called Wood, the attorney said. Wood went to the Gilcrease Division and took Ludwig to St. John Medical Center for symptoms that included nausea and chest pain.

After the officer was treated and released, Wood took him to the Detective Division, where he was interviewed by an investigator about midnight. Ludwig was booked into jail after the interview.

Wood said he was told that a small plastic container of cocaine was found in the console of Ludwig's patrol car after it was seized. This led investigators to seize Ludwig's duffle bag, where two more small containers of cocaine reportedly were found along with the personal items he had taken from the console, Wood said.

Police received a search warrant for Ludwig's house based on the contraband that allegedly was found in his car, the attorney said.

"It was reported to me that no contraband was found during that search," Wood said, adding that officers did take money and guns from the residence.

Ludwig, who was a longtime narcotics investigator, has had the scales that were found in his duffle bag since he was a narcotics investigator, Wood said. He added that it not uncommon for suspects to dump things in officers' cars so they are not caught with contraband.

Ludwig "denies any knowledge of the drugs being there and denies any criminal act on his part," Wood said.

He said Ludwig offered to take a polygraph and drug test at any time.

Ludwig posted \$10,000 bond and was released at 2:47 a.m. Wednesday, according to jail records.

Hired in June 1995, Ludwig has had previous disciplinary action from the Police Department.

In January 2006, he was suspended without pay for 40 hours after supervisors found that he had violated rules against conduct unbecoming an officer due to his relationship with a married exotic dancer.

Ludwig was accused of telling the woman not to cooperate with an Internal Affairs investigation into the matter, according to documents that are part of a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by the woman's husband.

In 2005, Ludwig conducted a search of the husband's house that resulted in drug charges against the husband, Shannon Coyle. Those charges have since been dropped.

Associate Images:



Travis K. Ludwig

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