



OFFICE OF STATE ATTORNEY
GINGER BOWDEN MADDEN
FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

July 15, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Ginger Bowden Madden, State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit of Florida, announces that on July 13th, 2021, Zachary Tyler Wester was sentenced to 12.5 years in State Prison for crimes of Racketeering, Official Misconduct, Perjury, Fabricating Evidence, Possession of Controlled Substances, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and False Imprisonment.

These convictions were the result of a two week jury trial in Jackson County, Florida, in May of this year. This case was prosecuted by the Office of the State Attorney for the First Circuit pursuant to an Executive Assignment from Governor DeSantis.

Mr. Wester is a former Jackson County Sheriff's Office Deputy who was convicted of planting methamphetamine on citizens during routine traffic stops. He then falsified arrest reports and submitted them to the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. These false records were later used and relied upon in the Court system to prosecute the innocent Victims. At the time of his suspension from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, it was discovered that he had a supply of methamphetamine and paraphernalia hidden in his patrol car.

At the Sentencing Hearing, Assistant State Attorney Thomas Williams stated "The Defendant's criminal conduct represents an egregious breach of the public trust. In democratic free societies, the people voluntarily grant their government with awesome powers which are deemed necessary for the protection and governance of the people. And with that power comes great responsibility. The Defendant chose to violate this trust and commit crimes against the very citizens that he had sworn to protect. His actions thus attack the very foundation of the criminal justice system and our system of government."

This case was investigated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Office of the State Attorney commends them for their exemplary work. Assistant State Attorney Thomas Williams prosecuted the case. For further information, he can be reached at (850) 595-4200.