



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
TODD SPITZER

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PRESS RELEASE

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**Orange County District Attorney's Office Recovers \$95,870 in Restitution from former Santa Ana Police Officer Convicted of Committing Workers' Compensation Fraud**

**Jonathan Ridge's conviction prevents him from working as a police officer and bars him from any pension benefits**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 39-year old Santa Ana police officer convicted of committing workers' compensation insurance fraud for continuing to accept his full pay without working even though he was physically capable of returning to work has repaid the City all of the stolen wages as a result of efforts by the Orange County District Attorney's Insurance Fraud unit. The total amount repaid in restitution was \$95,870.

On October 5, 2017, Santa Ana Police Officer Jonathan Ridge was injured on duty while in pursuit of a suspect driving a stolen vehicle. On that day, October 5, 2017, Ridge went out on disability leave due to his injuries. On May 2, 2018, while still on leave, Ridge had surgery on his left wrist, and his doctor continued to keep him off work while he was recovering from the surgery.

In November 2018, Ridge was released by a doctor to return to work with restrictions. The work restrictions were too severe for the City of Santa to accommodate, despite the City of Santa Ana having an extensive return-to-work program for injured employees. This resulted in the City of Santa Ana being required to continue to pay Ridge Total Temporary Disability and for Ridge to receive disability payments through an insurance policy, resulting in Ridge receiving 100% of his pay without working.

From March 2019 to May 2019 the City of Santa Ana authorized surveillance on Ridge because he did not seem to improve despite having had surgery on his wrist in May 2018 for injuries sustained in the on-duty collision 18 months earlier.

The surveillance and subsequent investigation found that Ridge was engaging in activities well beyond what the doctor had imposed. Ridge began attending college classes nearly full-time beginning in June 2018 – just weeks after his surgery. Additionally, he packed up his car and drove to Utah, went to the beach, and drove his motorcycle. Ridge failed to disclose to his doctor or to the City of Santa Ana what he was actually capable of doing. This deprived the doctor of the opportunity to impose realistic work restrictions that the City of Santa Ana could

accommodate. Instead, Ridge continued to receive 100% of his pay without working even though he was capable of returning to work in a modified position.

Ridge pleaded guilty on April 16, 2021 to three felony counts of insurance fraud and one felony count of making a fraudulent statement to obtain compensation. He had faced a maximum sentence of eight years in state prison if convicted on all counts. Ridge was sentenced to 180 days in the Orange County Jail with the sentenced stayed if he paid back the stolen wages in a timely manner.

“Workers’ compensation fraud costs honest, hardworking businesses and government entities more than \$30 billion a year,” said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “We will not allow those who commit workers’ compensation fraud to go unpunished because the financial cost to government and private business makes the cost of doing business more and more difficult. Thankfully, our Insurance Fraud Unit ensured the taxpayers of Santa Ana were fully reimbursed for the money stolen by this officer.”

Senior Deputy District Attorney Pamela Leitao of the Insurance Fraud Unit prosecuted this case.

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