

STATE OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 16-129

(Executive Order of Suspension)

WHEREAS, Chris Blair is presently serving as Sheriff of Marion County, Florida; and

WHEREAS, on May 20, 2016, Chris Blair was arrested and charged by Indictment with two counts of Perjury in an Official Proceeding, a third-degree felony in violation of section 837.02, Florida Statutes, and one count of Official Misconduct, a third-degree felony in violation of section 838.022(1), Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, Article IV, Section 7 of the Florida Constitution authorizes the Governor to suspend from office any county officer for the commission of a felony; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the residents of Marion County, and the citizens of the State of Florida, that Chris Blair be immediately suspended from the public office, which he now holds, upon the grounds set forth in this executive order.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICK SCOTT, Governor of Florida, pursuant to Article IV, Section 7 of the Florida Constitution, find as follows:

- A. Chris Blair is, and at all times material hereto was, serving as Sheriff of Marion County, Florida.
- B. The office of Sheriff of Marion County is within the purview of the suspension power of the Governor, pursuant to Article IV, Section 7 of the Florida Constitution.

FILED
2016 MAY 20 PM 4:06
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

C. The attached Indictment, which is incorporated as if fully set forth herein, alleges Chris Blair committed felony offenses in violation of the Laws of the State of Florida.

BEING FULLY ADVISED in the premises, and in accordance with the Constitution and the Laws of the State of Florida, this Executive Order is issued, effective immediately:

Section 1. Chris Blair is suspended from the public office, which he now holds, to wit: Sheriff of Marion County, Florida.

Section 2. Chris Blair is prohibited from performing any official act, duty, or function of public office; from receiving any pay or allowance; and from being entitled to any of the emoluments or privileges of public office during the period of this suspension, which period shall be from today, until further Executive Order is issued, or as otherwise provided by law.

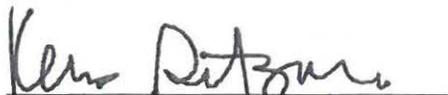


IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at The Capitol, Tallahassee, Florida, this 20th day of May, 2016.



RICK SCOTT, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:



SECRETARY OF STATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR MARION COUNTY, IN THE SPRING TERM THEREOF, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, TWO THOUSAND-SIXTEEN

THE STATE OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 16-CF-1265 W

vs

CHRIS BLAIR

FILED
CRIMINAL INTAKE
2016 MAY 19 P 1:08
DAVID R. ELLSPERMAN
CLERK CIRCUIT COURT
MARION COUNTY, FL

INDICTMENT

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA:

THE GRAND JURORS OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA, impaneled and sworn to inquire and true presentment make, in and for the body of the County of Marion, upon their oaths do present that:

CHRIS BLAIR (R/G: W/M DOB: 12/25/1953) in the County of Marion, and the State of Florida, on or about the 21st day of April in the year of Our Lord, twenty-sixteen through the 19th day of May in the year of Our Lord; twenty-sixteen:

COUNT I

PERJURY IN AN OFFICIAL PROCEEDING § 837.02, Fla. Stat.

CHRIS BLAIR (R/G: W/M DOB: 12/25/1953) in the County of Marion, and the State of Florida, on the 19th day of May in the year of Our Lord, twenty-sixteen, in the County and State aforesaid, did knowingly make a false statement, which he did not believe to be true, under oath in an official proceeding in regard to a material matter. This Grand Jury had been investigating the conduct of deputies of the Marion County Sheriff's office for using excessive force in making arrests. To determine if these events were systemic in nature the Grand Jury investigated the policies and actual practices of the Sheriff's office, and actions or inactions of the Sheriff and his subordinates which may have created an atmosphere in the agency of ignoring or tolerating improper use of force. Chris Blair was subpoenaed to testify before this body concerning this investigation. While testifying before this body Chris Blair did knowingly testify falsely in that while testifying in regard to Dustin Heathman was asked following question:

Q: Okay. So you saw him coming out of the patrol car while he was being treated by the medics?

A: I saw the back of him.

Q: You saw his back. So you didn't have an opportunity to see his face or any injuries he might have had?

A: No, absolutely did not. He was surrounded by numerous people.

Chris Blair knew said statement was false because while Dustin Heathman was handcuffed, dressed in his underwear, escorted by two deputy sheriffs and with apparent injuries to his face, he was led in

front of Chris Blair so close that Chris Blair had to step back to let Dustin Heathman and the deputies pass by.

Said false statement was made in violation of Florida Statute 837.02.

COUNT II
PERJURY IN AN OFFICIAL PROCEEDING § 837.02, Fla. Stat.

and the Grand Jury upon their oath aforesaid, further information makes that CHRIS BLAIR (R/G: W/M DOB: 12/25/1953) in the County of Marion, and the State of Florida, between the 21st and 22nd days of April inclusive, in the year of Our Lord, twenty-sixteen, in the County and State aforesaid, did knowingly make a false statement, which he did not believe to be true, under oath in an official proceeding in regard to a material matter. In that Chris Blair signed an affidavit, that was notarized and sworn to under oath as true, knowing that the affidavit would be filed in a civil case wherein he was being sued personally or in his official capacity as Sheriff of Marion County by Dustin Heathman for violations of Dustin Heathman's civil rights. The affidavit was filed in case number 5:14-cv-0061-WTH-PRL, in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Ocala Division, as part of Chris Blair's Motion for Summary Judgment. In the affidavit Chris Blair stated specifically in paragraph labeled number 4:

“While in the area of the command center, I observed a patrol car with deputies getting someone out of the back seat of the patrol car, and paramedics were also there. I only caught a glimpse of the back of a person, but I assumed it was Mr. Heathman. I was not in close proximity to him and did not have any physical or verbal contact with him.”

Chris Blair knew said statement was false because while Dustin Heathman was handcuffed, dressed in his underwear, escorted by two deputy sheriffs and with apparent injuries to his face, he was led in front of Chris Blair so close that Chris Blair had to step back to let Dustin Heathman and the deputies pass by.

Said false statement was made in violation of Florida Statute 837.02.

COUNT III
OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT § 838.022(1)a, Fla. Stat.

Did with corrupt intent, falsify, or cause another person to falsify, an official record or official document for the benefit of himself or another, or to harm another. In that Chris Blair signed an affidavit, that was notarized and sworn to under oath as true, knowing that the affidavit would be filed in a civil case wherein he was being sued personally and in his official capacity as Sheriff of Marion County by Dustin Heathman for violations of Heathman's civil rights. The affidavit was filed in case number 5:14-cv-0061-WTH-PRL, in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Ocala Division, as part of Chris Blair's Motion for Summary Judgment. In the affidavit Chris Blair stated specifically in paragraph labeled number 4:

“While in the area of the command center, I observed a patrol car with

deputies getting someone out of the back seat of the patrol car, and paramedics were also there. I only caught a glimpse of the back of a person, but I assumed it was Mr. Heathman. I was not in close proximity to him and did not have any physical or verbal contact with him."

Chris Blair knew said statement was false because while Dustin Heathman was handcuffed, dressed in his underwear, escorted by two deputy sheriffs and with apparent injuries to his face, he was led in front of Chris Blair so close that Chris Blair had to step back to let Dustin Heathman and the deputies pass by.

Said affidavit was made in violation of § 838.022(1)a, Fla. Stat.

Contrary to the form of the statutes in such cases made and provided and against the peace and dignity of the State of Florida.

A TRUE BILL

James D. Thomas
VICE FOREPERSON OF THE GRAND JURY

CERTIFY that as authorized and required by law, I have advised the GRAND JURY returning this indictment.

Brad King

Brad King, State Attorney
5th Judicial Circuit of Florida
Florida Bar No. 341045

Presented and filed in the Circuit Court this 19 day of May, 2016.

David Ellsperman
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

BY: *M. Swain* D.C.

Clerk / Deputy Clerk