

Local FOP chapter gives Headley the boot

Sheriff's attorney says group's president lobbied for ouster

By MITCHELL KLINE
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FRANKLIN — Williamson County Sheriff Ricky Headley has been kicked out of a Franklin-based chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police.

Headley's criminal defense attorney, David Raybin, said the sheriff was "expelled" after members of the FOP took a vote on Tuesday night. Adrian Breedlove, a Brentwood detective and president of Morris Heithcock Lodge No. 41, would not comment on the vote or even say if Headley was still a member.

Raybin said Headley's membership in the group has been terminated.

"My understanding is some folks at the meeting tried to get up and speak for the sheriff, but the president wouldn't let anyone speak for him," Raybin said. "The sheriff was there. I urged him to go. He got up and told everyone that he was unable to defend himself."

Raybin said he'd told Headley not to speak specifically about his case.

"The vote was just barely sufficient to vote him out," Raybin said.

Breedlove sent Headley a letter in October, stating that the FOP was charging him with violating the group's bylaws. Headley is charged with four counts of official misconduct in Williamson County, based on allegations that he was in uniform and used a county-owned vehicle to pick up fraudulent prescriptions at a Nashville pharmacy. In Davidson County, Headley faces 33 counts. He's charged with a total of 21 felonies and 16 misdemeanors. If convicted of a felony, Headley faces up to four years in prison. He is scheduled to go to trial in Williamson County on July 14. No trial date has been set in Davidson County.

Attorney seeks one trial

Raybin said he plans to file motions in both counties to combine the case and have one trial instead of two.

"The reason is (the charges) all arise out of the same facts," Raybin said. "I don't want the government to have two shots at him for the same set of allegations. I'll ask for a single trial and the judges will decide."

Raybin criticized the FOP's decision to expel Headley. He said he's represented FOP members throughout the state for 20 years and has never seen an officer treated the way Headley was. Raybin claims that Breedlove lobbied members to vote against Headley.

"My understanding is the president of the FOP sent an e-mail out to all the officers he thought would help him out, urging them to come to the meeting to vote the sheriff out," Raybin said.

Raybin said Breedlove did not conduct a fair hearing before the vote was taken.

"It's a private organization, and they can do what they want, but I'm sort of amazed this happened the way it did," Raybin said.

Headley's case in Davidson County is set for review on Jan. 17. Raybin said he would file a motion asking the cases to be combined on or before Jan. 4.