

## Former ACPD officer pleas guilty to sex crimes (UPDATED) | The Alexander City Outlook

By Austin Nelson

alexcityoutlook.com

Former Alexander City police officer Michael Ford pleaded guilty to a slough of felony charges ranging from incest to sexual abuse and sodomy on Tuesday. Ford was arrested Feb. 1 of this year when allegations of sexual abuse first surfaced, after which he was immediately terminated by ACPD. Ford, 49, pleaded guilty to one count of incest, one count of second-degree sexual abuse, three counts of second-degree sodomy and five counts of sexual abuse of a child less than 12, according to Assistant District Attorney Jeremy Duerr. Ford also pleaded guilty to one count of second-degree theft of property and one count of tampering with evidence. Ford's attorney, Mark Allen Treadwell, offered a statement regarding the plea agreement. "Essentially, based upon the totality of all the facts and evidence, this was a best interest plea," Treadwell said. "Based upon the severity o

f the allegations and all facts which the District Attorney relied upon in support of a conviction, we considered this plea to be not only in Mr. Ford's best interest but also the concern and best interest of his family and the Alexander City Police Department." For the counts of second-degree sodomy and sexual abuse of a child, both Class B felonies, Ford could face two to 20 years

per count. On the one count of incest and second-degree theft of property, both classified as Class C felonies, the sentencing guidelines call

for a minimum of a year and one day to a maximum of 10 years.

For the class A misdemeanors – tampering with evidence and second-degree sexual abuse – the maximum sentence is up to one year.

Duerr said the sentencing hearing has been set for Nov. 1. It won't be until this hearing, Duerr said, that Ford will know how his time will be served. "Sometimes the sentences can run concurrently – at the same time – which means you serve all of the time for

the different counts at once," Duerr said. "He could also be sentenced to consecutive terms, in which he would do the time for one charge, then do the next and so on." Treadwell said the situation is complicated due to Ford's medical history, who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from military service and also has been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. "The difficulty with a case such as this presents this problematic issue: Where is the appropriate place for Mr. Ford, convicted of sexually related crimes, to serve a sentence and simultaneously received treatment for his mental and physical impairments? That place is certainly not on the streets but is also not in a jail cell," Treadwell said. "It is our plan, based upon these best-interest pleas, that the judge would enter such (a) sentencing order which will provide a secure placement in a mental and medical facility which will provide the necessary treatment for Mr. Ford." ACPD Chief Willie Robinson said this case serves as a reminder that no

one is above the law. "If you commit a crime, we will arrest you no matter who you are, whether you are a sworn officer or not," Robinson said. "The law applies to everybody."