

## Top cop accused of selling seized guns

New Chicago police chief stole weapons from investigations to pawn them, authorities say

By Carole Carlson  
FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

In charges filed Sunday, New Chicago Police Chief Earl D. Mayo is accused of stealing guns confiscated in town police investigations and selling them to a Hobart pawn shop as well as possessing anabolic steroids.

Tanika Roshawn Borders, 47, also faces charges for allegedly assisting Mayo.

Mayo, 45, of Merrillville, faces seven felonies including two theft

counts, two official misconduct counts, one attempted obstruction of justice count and two counts of unlawful possession of anabolic steroids. He also faces a misdemeanor theft count.

Lake County Prosecutor's office spokesperson Myrna Maldonado said Mayo was still housed in the Clark County Jail in Springfield, Ohio on Sunday. Authorities arrested him Friday in Clark County. No time was announced for his return to Lake County.

Mayo is the son of Indiana State

Police Maj. Jerry Williams, the Democratic nominee for Lake County sheriff.

The charges stem from an investigation by Lake County police that began in late April and continued into May.

The alleged thefts came to light after police tracked a firearms trace from a deputy prosecutor for a Ruger C3 9 mm handgun. Police said it had been seized as evidence by New Chicago police in a pending criminal case.

The trace showed the gun had been sold April 29 at Mega Cash Pawn, 1035 37th Ave. in Hobart. Police learned Mayo sold the firearm and he was also the arresting

officer in the case.

Police said Mayo contacted another New Chicago officer and asked him to buy the gun back from the pawn shop. Mayo also asked him to retrieve suppressors or suppressed firearms from a safe in Mayo's residence.

The officer told police Mayo told him he has things inside his house the "feds" would never find.

Police alleged Borders, also of Merrillville, attempted to purchase a gun previously sold by Mayo at

the pawn shop on May 22. She's also accused of attempting to remove anabolic steroids belonging to Mayo by damaging the vials. Police said Borders answered the door at Mayo's house on May 22 and attempted to remove the glass vials. She told police Mayo told her to go to his house and collect the testosterone and steroids. Police said two of the vials of steroids were veterinary grade and not for human consumption.

Borders is also accused of trying to buy back a firearm at the Hobart pawn shop with \$600 from Mayo.

The manager of the pawn shop

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Janet Plant, 68, raises her arms Thursday after being introduced as the oldest graduate during the Gary Middle College graduation ceremony at the Hammond Civic Center. The Gary resident said she quit high school in 1978 and raised five kids before going back to school in 2021. ANDY LAVALLEY/FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

## For Gary Middle College grads, a time to celebrate

Members of 2026 class savor success

By Carole Carlson  
FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

The 97 graduates from Gary Middle College had a right to exuberance as they picked up hard-earned high school diplomas Thursday.

Most were high school dropouts and journeyed non-traditional paths to their diplomas. Their friends and families didn't hold back their joy and pride as they cheered on the graduates at the Hammond Civic Center, kick-

ing off the commencement season in Northwest Indiana.

"That's my baby, that's my baby," shouted Carolyn Harris, of Gary. Harris stood with pride as the name of her daughter Elizabeth Session, 19, was called.

The longest road to a diploma belonged to Janet Plant, of Gary. She dropped out her junior year at Chicago's Marshall High, pregnant with her first daughter. She raised five children on her own, moving from job to job with no time to go back to school.

At 68, she walked across the stage. Plant held her diploma with both hands high over her head searching for her family in the overhead bleachers.

"I'm so proud of her," said daughter Tuwana Plant, 50. Tuwana and her sister, Felicia Plant, 27, drove together from Richmond, Indiana, to Hammond for the ceremony.

"I've been working since I've been like 14," said Janet Plant who bounced around from daycare centers to factories to her current job cooking for a Gary catering service. Tuwana said her mom always made sure her kids received love and nurturing despite her struggles as a sole provider.

For Plant, navigating math courses decades after she left high school served as her biggest challenge.

"My teachers helped me with all I didn't know," she said. "I was like a big crybaby, and I'd be like forget this, I don't want to do this."

She needed five years to get through Gary Middle College. Along the way, the death of her son rocked her and the family.

"I was just frustrated and my siblings started passing away," she said.

Her kids and Gary Middle School teachers encouraged her to cross the finish line.

"I'm glad I'm done with this," she said. "Now I can focus on something else."

Heavenly Strong, 21, dropped

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### MICHIGAN CITY

## Man, 22, charged in hospital shooting

Suspect from Chicago; after surgery, deputy still in critical condition

POST-TRIBUNE

A Chicago man accused of shooting a La Porte County sheriff's deputy on Friday at a Michigan City hospital was formally charged Saturday with three felonies, including attempted murder.

In addition to that Level 1 felony, Sharod Grafton Jr., 22, is charged with battery against a public safety official, a Level 5 felony, and auto theft, a Level 6 felony, according to a release from Sgt. Glen Fifield, public information officer for the Indiana State Police Lowell Post.

Sheriff's Deputy Jon Samuelson, 33, was in critical but stable condition in the intensive care unit at Memorial Hospital after undergoing eight hours of surgery, according to a Facebook post from La Porte County Sheriff Ron Heeg.

Officials have said that Grafton reportedly shot Samuelson three times in the emergency room of Franciscan Health Michigan City around 6:45 a.m. Friday.

Samuelson was airlifted to South Bend Memorial Hospital where, according to Heeg, "he underwent approximately eight hours of surgery, which surgeons later described as successful. Medical staff remain optimistic regarding his recovery."

He remained in critical but stable condition in the intensive care unit at Memorial Hospital.

Samuelson is a 12-year veteran of the La Porte County Sheriff's Office. He currently serves as a member of the agency's Highway Interdiction Unit, is the handler for K-9 Bosco, and is designated as a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force officer out of the Merrillville District Office.

"Thank you to the surgeons and the entire medical staff at Memorial Hospital for the exceptional care being provided to Deputy Samuelson," Heeg said in his post. "Please continue to pray for Jon, his family

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## Presentation details Porter County's role in Civil War

By Jim Woods  
FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

At the cusp of the Civil War in 1860, Porter County had only 10,313 residents but participated in a large way, sending 1,200 of its sons to fight for the Union cause.

There were at least 171 who never returned, losing their life on the battlefield or to a just as

deadly adversary — illnesses and infections that had no antidotes in those days.

Those who did come home left their lasting mark on the local community.

David Canright, the former managing editor of the Chesterton Tribune daily newspaper, for years has studied Porter County's participation in the Civil

War. In connection with Memorial Day, he gave his presentation, "North Porter County in the War of Rebellion," on Thursday for the Duneland Historical Society, which met at the Hawthorne Park Community Building in Porter.

"They went just about everywhere and did just about

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## 283 immigrant truckers stopped over 90 days, aide to Gov. Braun says

By Doug Ross  
FOR THE POST-TRIBUNE

Over 90 days, 283 undocumented immigrants driving trucks were stopped in Northwest Indiana, Tony Ferraro told the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission executive board Thursday.

"That's over three a day that we pulled out of trucks," said Ferraro, an aide to Gov. Mike Braun and a member of NIRPC.

Many of them had commercial driver's licenses issued in states like California and New York that

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