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Former prosecutor to be tried on perjury charge

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In 2005, Karen Plants was Wayne County's top drug prosecutor, trying to put away Alex Aceval for trying to move 47 kilos of cocaine in one of the state's biggest ever dope cases.

On Tuesday, Plants was moved a giant step closer to a possible life sentence for using perjury and secret deals with the trial judge to win that case.

Ordering Plants to stand trial, Detroit 36th District Judge David Robinson Jr. said that a prosecutor's duty is to "more than merely convict, but to do justice" as well.

Plants, 47, faces trial on a charge of conspiracy to commit perjury -- a potential life felony -- and five counts of misconduct in office.

"We're looking forward to getting this case tried and Karen exonerated," said her lawyer Ben Gonek.

Robinson put off decisions on Plants' codefendants, retired Wayne County Circuit Judge Mary Waterstone and former Inkster cops Robert McArthur and Scott Rehtzigel, until this morning.

The 2005 case was upended when it was learned that Waterstone allowed perjured testimony that the prosecution's key witness, Chad Povish, didn't know the cops involved in the bust. In fact, Povish was a paid police informant who hoped to get \$100,000 or more for setting up the bust.

Waterstone, in private meetings with Plants, said she let the false testimony stand because she feared Povish's life would be in danger if he were

unmasked as an informant. She is charged with four counts of misconduct.

Rehtzigel and McArthur are charged with perjury, conspiracy and misconduct.

Povish testified Tuesday that he's still scared. He told state investigators he feared that Aceval "would get out of jail and kill my kid."

Assistant Attorney General William Rollstin told Robinson that the lies began when the police doctored incident and interrogation reports.

The phony testimony was "designed, essentially, to corrupt the system," and Waterstone allowed it to happen, Rollstin told Robinson.

Plants faces professional charges, as well. A professional misconduct trial is scheduled for early next year.

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