



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

2/14/17

**FORMER EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN CHARGED WITH POSSESSION
OF DRUGS, FIREARMS**

District Attorney Tim Ward has announced criminal charges against Gary Coffman, age 45, of Tulare.

Coffman is charged with three felony counts of possession of methamphetamine while in possession of a firearm, one felony count of possession of stolen property (firearms), three misdemeanor counts of possession of drug paraphernalia, and two misdemeanor counts of drug possession. Coffman was previously charged with five misdemeanor counts of engaging in prostitution in a separate criminal case on August 16, 2016.

In April of 2016 the Tulare County Sheriff's Department began an investigation on Coffman, who at the time was employed as an evidence technician with the Tulare Police Department. The investigation stemmed from the discovery of missing evidence, including narcotics, guns and money from the Tulare Police Department's evidence room. During the investigation, Coffman was found to be in possession of methamphetamine and numerous firearms that were taken from the police department's evidence room. As a result of the investigation three separate felony drug related cases were dismissed and in several other drug related cases, charges were unable to be filed due to missing evidence.

"Integrity within the justice system is of paramount importance," said District Attorney Tim Ward. "Our professional responsibility required dismissal due to the inability to prosecute some cases related to this matter."

Coffman will be arraigned on the charges Friday, February 17, 2017, in Tulare County Superior Court. If convicted on all counts, Coffman faces over 7 years in state prison.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
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