



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

January 29, 2018

MEDIA OUTLET: New York Times

HEADLINE: Officers in Florida Shootings Say They Can Stand Their Ground, Too

BYLINE: Frances Robles

LINK: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/28/us/florida-police-shootings-defense.html>

STORY: MIAMI — Florida’s Stand Your Ground law was meant to make sure that average residents could defend themselves without fear of arrest or trial.

Now, police officers accused of using excessive force are trying to claim the law’s protection.

They have sought to use the law to avoid trial in cases in which a 63-year-old man was stomped, a man in a wheelchair was beaten, and two men were shot dead in separate incidents.

In some instances, judges have granted their request.

“The law says it applies to ‘any person,’” said Eric Schwartzreich, a lawyer representing a Broward County sheriff’s deputy who made a successful Stand Your Ground claim in the 2013 killing of a computer engineer. “Law enforcement is any person. Why would there be a law that applies to one person in the criminal justice system and not another?”

The law has a contentious history and was opposed by prosecutors as soon as it was passed in 2005. It eliminates a person’s duty to retreat from a dangerous situation and frees them to use deadly force “if he or she reasonably believes it is necessary” to prevent harm or death. It shields people from both criminal trials and civil lawsuits.

Stand Your Ground became widely known in 2012, when the police in Sanford, Fla., cited it as the reason that they declined to arrest the killer of an unarmed black teenager, Trayvon Martin. Critics say the law makes it too easy to claim self-defense when violence could have been avoided, and that white people’s fears are more likely to be deemed “reasonable” than black people’s.

At the risk of being shocking, it is the essential duty of a sworn police officer to put up with rather more--ah, nonsense--than a plain old...

Nearly two dozen states around the nation have such laws, but experts believe Florida is the only place where police officers have used it.

Civil rights lawyers say letting police officers invoke the law stretches its intent, and creates another avenue for them to get away with unjustified shootings. The state senator who sponsored the law, Dennis K. Baxley, said he was surprised to see officers invoke it, and even a lawyer for one of the officers who claimed Stand Your Ground said the law should be changed.

The police are already authorized to use force when they perceive danger, and even in highly disputed cases they usually avoid facing charges.

Stand Your Ground gives them an additional chance to do so, if they can persuade a judge. “A police officer has full immunity under the law if he uses deadly force appropriately,” said David I. Schoen, a lawyer for the family of one of the police shooting victims. “You can’t also give him Stand Your Ground.”

Last week, lawyers notified the court that Nouman K. Raja, a former Palm Beach Gardens police officer, intended to seek Stand Your Ground protection in the 2015 killing of Corey Jones, a 31-year-old musician and housing inspector. Mr. Jones was waiting on the side of the road in a broken-down car when Mr. Raja, in plain clothes and an unmarked vehicle, approached him in the middle of the night without identifying himself.

Mr. Jones had a new gun which he bought because he frequently carried cash on his way home from gigs. The officer claimed Mr. Jones pointed it at him, but prosecutors say Mr. Raja fired at Mr. Jones six times even as he fled, hitting him three times.

The encounter was recorded by the roadside assistance service Mr. Jones had called for help.

Mr. Raja, a rookie in the department, was fired. His Stand Your Ground hearing has been scheduled for March, when prosecutors must present a mini-trial before the judge, who will decide whether to dismiss the charges.

The hearing gives defendants a chance to beat the charges before trial. Prosecutors have argued that officers already have immunity for lawful shootings under a different law that specifically addresses law enforcement.

In a court motion, the Florida attorney general's office said police officers should not be allowed to get protection from both laws. Victims' families have also objected.

"I think it's very sad that police officers are taking advantage of that law, especially when they are in the wrong," said Mr. Jones's father, Clinton Jones Sr. "I think it's a disgrace to the police department."

Benjamin L. Crump, the family's lawyer, said the case "risks a terrible precedent."

"To extend it to police officers on the street gives them a license to kill just by saying they felt fear — no standards, no objective check and balance," Mr. Crump said.

Mr. Raja's lawyer, Richard Lubin, declined to comment while the case is pending.

He was not the first to try the defense. A judge granted the Stand Your Ground claim of Mr. Schwartzreich's client, Broward Sheriff's Deputy Peter Peraza, in the 2013 killing of Jermaine McBean. Mr. McBean, 33, was walking down the street, wearing earbuds and with an air rifle propped on his shoulders, when Mr. Peraza ordered him from behind to drop it.

The officer claimed that Mr. McBean pointed the air rifle at him, although witnesses disputed his account. After a hearing, a judge ruled in Mr. Peraza's favor and dismissed the case.

The Fourth District Court of Appeal upheld the ruling, but because the decision was in direct conflict with another appeals court ruling, the case is headed to the Florida Supreme Court.

In 2012, the Second District Court of Appeal rejected an officer's use of the law to avoid trial for stomping on a 63-year-old man. Juan Caamano, a former police officer in Haines City, south of Orlando, instead went to trial and was acquitted.

Last summer, two Miami police officers successfully invoked Stand Your Ground immunity when they were sued for damages in the beating of a man in a wheelchair.

Even Mr. Caamano's lawyer said police officers should not be allowed to invoke Stand Your Ground.

Local judges often have ties to law enforcement or are reluctant to rule against police officers for political reasons, the lawyer, Lawrence H. Collins, said.

"What it does in the case of police officers is it puts a decision of whether an action was justified in the hands of a judge rather than a jury," he said. "The law needs to be changed. You don't want that decision in the hands of a judge."

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Mayor sought illegal funds for political allies, records allege

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/hallandale/fl-sb-joy-cooper-arrest-reaction-20180125-story.html>

STORY: Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper, who was removed from office Friday after being snared in an FBI sting, solicited illegal campaign contributions not only for herself but for two political allies, court documents say.

Gov. Rick Scott suspended Cooper on Friday, a day after she was arrested and accused of accepting contributions funneled through Alan Koslow, a once prominent attorney who has since been disbarred after a conviction on federal charges.

In August 2012, undercover agents handed Koslow a Dunkin' Donuts bag filled with \$8,000 in cash – all in \$100 bills, investigators said in court records.

Former commissioner Bill Julian received two \$500 checks for his campaign, but there was no indication he knew they were illegal, according to the arrest affidavit.

“People stop me and ask what’s going on,” Julian said Friday of Cooper’s arrest. “I tell them I only know what I read in the news.”

Cooper also solicited funds for former commissioner Anthony Sanders, court records show, but they do not say whether Sanders received illegal checks.

Sanders resigned in August after being accused by the Broward Inspector General of using his elected position for financial gain. He was accused of voting to award nearly \$1 million to a nonprofit that made monthly payments to his church and family.

Sanders told the South Florida Sun Sentinel he was not aware of any backroom dealings involving Cooper. He and Julian often voted in tandem with Cooper, leaving their political foes Keith London and Michele Lazarow on the losing side of many decisions.

Cooper, 57, has been charged with money laundering, official misconduct and exceeding the limit on campaign finance contributions -- felony charges that each carry a maximum five-year sentence. She also has been charged with soliciting contributions in a government building, a first-degree misdemeanor with a one-year maximum sentence.

Cooper, mayor since 2005, said Thursday in a prepared statement, “I can assure you that I will vigorously fight these allegations in court.”

She could not be reached Friday for further comment despite calls to her cellphone and to her husband.

According to a high-ranking official at City Hall, Cooper cleared out her office the night before reporting to the Main Jail in downtown Fort Lauderdale on Thursday morning. She was released Thursday night.

Developer Eric Fordin said he was shocked by Cooper's arrest because she "has always been so aboveboard. I recall her writing a check for \$2.45 for a soda at the grand opening of one of our hotels because she could not accept a drink."

Fordin, who left The Related Group for Mast Capital last year, said he has never been pressured by Cooper or any other Hallandale Beach politician for campaign contributions.

But court records paint a different picture of Cooper.

The mayor met with people she thought were wealthy developers from California, court documents say. They were actually undercover FBI agents pretending to seek political favor for a project in Hallandale Beach.

Koslow told the undercover agents he had influence with the city commission and "had the vote of the mayor," court documents show.

Koslow declined to comment Friday.

The agents met with Cooper and Koslow over several months in 2012 and secretly recorded their meetings, court records say. Koslow did not become aware his developer pals were FBI agents until August 2013, when they confronted him in a Fort Lauderdale hotel room, records show.

During a meeting in July 2012 between Cooper, the undercover agents and Koslow, Cooper was recorded saying she and two other commissioners were a "team of three" and could ensure a favorable result for their project, according to the arrest affidavit. The meeting took place in City Hall.

"Alan Koslow showed Mayor Cooper a number representing a proposed contribution and asked her if it was a good number. She replied 'No. Add a zero.'" Koslow confirmed 'Three zeros, is that fine?' and Mayor Cooper replied 'Yes,'" according to the arrest affidavit.

Later that month, Koslow told Cooper she would receive \$10,000 in the form of two \$5,000 contributions – one before the August 2012 primary and one after, the records state.

Koslow told them he'd arrange for individuals to write personal checks to Cooper and Julian in the amount of \$500 each, the records show.

Two of seven people who wrote checks said they got cash back for writing the checks, records say. Five claimed they did not recall.

In September, Koslow told one of the agents he'd personally handed 20 checks totaling \$5,000 to Cooper at a Hallandale Beach Chamber of Commerce fashion show, court records say. "That's fantastic," Cooper told Koslow when he turned over the checks, according to what he told the undercover agents.

Cooper's campaign reported nine contributions from eight teachers and a retired person in the amount of \$500 each, matching names on a list of donors Koslow had given the so-called developers, the affidavit said.

“You guys have been great,” Cooper told the undercover agents during a meeting with Koslow at the Flashback Diner on Oct. 3, 2012, court documents state. She told them one of the checks had bounced.

Koslow gave a sworn statement in November 2017 confirming he participated in the events disclosed in the arrest affidavit.

With Cooper suspended, Vice Mayor Keith London will serve as the acting mayor on a five-member commission that now has two vacancies.

London was out of town Friday and could not be reached for comment.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Public defender says his office is shortchanged on fee collections

BYLINE: Rafael Olmeda

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-public-defender-contests-fees-20180125-story.html>

STORY: Broward County is getting shortchanged on the fees that are supposed to be collected from criminal defendants who cannot afford to hire private lawyers, according to Public Defender Howard Finkelstein. He wants Clerk of Courts Brenda Forman to explain why.

In a series of letters between their offices, Finkelstein noted a disparity between what his office pulls in and what the public defenders of similarly sized court circuits collect.

In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, the 17th judicial circuit, which covers Broward, collected \$623,050.79 from the state's "Indigent Criminal Defense Trust Fund." The 15th circuit (Palm Beach) collected \$1,053,193.43, while the 11th circuit (Miami-Dade) took in \$932,887.80. Orange County's 9th circuit collected the most in the state, at \$1,397,427.53.

"Something is off somewhere," Finkelstein said, suspecting the clerk's office collections process is "structurally flawed."

"When you look at the amount of collections in other areas of the state, it is very clear that we are not collecting what should be collected," he said.

When criminal defendants who cannot afford a lawyer are assigned to the public defender's office, they are charged a \$50 application fee, \$49 of which is earmarked for the office. The remaining dollar goes back to the clerk of courts. Fees are also assessed when defendants are convicted, plead out their cases, appeal or violate probation.

Many never pay the fee — Orange County showed a payment rate of just 13.6 percent of application fees from Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017.

Broward's most recent figures were not immediately available.

But Orange County routinely collects \$750,000 to \$950,000 more per year than Broward for its public defender's office.

"The public defenders take it upon themselves to reach out to their clients to get them to pay the amounts due," said Dain Weister, spokesman for the Orange County Clerk of Courts. "The majority of criminal defendants who owe us money are on payments plans and know they must keep paying or their account will go to a collection agency."

There is no such arrangement, formal or informal, between Broward's public defender and clerk of courts, though the clerk does contract with collection agencies to go after delinquent accounts.

Finkelstein said his office is probably losing out on somewhere between \$100,000 and \$900,000 a year. Any amount in that range would have a significant impact on his office's budget.

“This is money that can hire another lawyer, another investigator,” he said. “It can provide raises for employees so you have less turnover and better services for our clients.”

Finkelstein and his chief assistant, Gordon Weekes, say the clerk’s office is their first stop in trying to answer why Broward’s collections routinely trail its neighbors’. They are asking Forman to conduct an audit that looks specifically at its collections. Finkelstein said he is willing to take the issue to court if needed.

But the clerk’s office says it gets audited every year, and no problem has been found.

“The external auditors take a statistical sampling of cases and trace the flow of any payments on those cases,” said Forman’s chief operating officer, Dian Diaz. “There were no material weaknesses identified or any significant deficiencies identified in our financial reporting in the most recent audit. Our financial reporting was also found to be in compliance with the standards.”

The discrepancy has been an issue for years, and Finkelstein said he raised it several times with Howard Forman, the current clerk’s husband and predecessor in office.

He raised it again with Brenda Forman in a letter last September.

Her response a month later was to express confidence in her office’s process, documenting collections and payments in a handful of cases cited by Finkelstein. She also invited Finkelstein to meet with her and her office staff to discuss the matter.

No meeting has taken place.

“They want to explain to us how the collection process works,” Weekes said. “We already know how the collection process works! What we want is an audit that looks specifically at the question of how much we should be getting compared to how much we are.”

Numerous factors can explain why Broward collects less, according to the clerk’s office. Ironically, the more successful the public defender’s office is in representing its clients, the less money it will receive — acquittals and dropped cases result in no fees assessed and no money coming in.

“There are other examples of non-clerk related issues that drive how much the public defender receives,” Diaz said. “These items and others are all things that we had hoped to discuss with the public defender to increase their awareness of the big picture.”

Weekes and Finkelstein say Forman’s office is concentrating on the big picture at the expense of identifying a more specific problem.

“Having that merry-go-roundtable talk is not going to resolve the issue,” Weekes said. “Bring in an auditor. If the clerk’s office is right, they’re right, and an audit will show that. The problem would lie elsewhere. But if they’re wrong, we’re the ones losing out.”

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Ex-cop in Corey Jones shooting death bases 'stand your ground' claim on Broward deputy's successful case

BYLINE: Marc Freeman

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/palm-beach/fl-pn-raja-police-stand-your-ground-20180124-story.html>

STORY: Have police officers really joined the ranks of the general public when it comes to avoiding criminal charges by invoking Florida's "stand your ground" self-defense law?

Ex-Palm Beach Gardens cop Nouman Raja, who shot and killed stranded motorist Corey Jones in 2015, is getting a chance to make such a claim following court rulings in another high-profile officer shooting case from Broward.

Sheriff's Deputy Peter Peraza last summer won an appeal over the dismissal of a manslaughter charge in a 2013 shooting. He argued cops are protected by the law that permits ordinary citizens to use lethal force and not retreat if faced with a deadly threat.

Jones' family, already frustrated by their wait for justice, calls it "an absolute insult" for Raja to seek the dismissal of the charges before going to a jury.

Benjamin Crump, a national civil rights attorney who represents Jones' father, noted that Raja's lawyers filed the "stand your ground" claim on the 27-month anniversary of Jones' "slaughter."

"At a minimum, Corey's life should be valued enough and his memory honored enough to insist that Officer Raja stands trial," Crump wrote in a statement.

Former federal prosecutor and current Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber — a longtime "stand your ground" opponent — said cops have always been held to different standards than the public concerning the use of deadly force.

"Stand your ground is not consistent with the training for police officers, who are supposed to use the least force necessary," he said. "You don't want to take away their rights as citizens, but can they be a police officer if they are not going to follow their rules of engagement? It's a fascinating question."

Raja's attorneys says their request for immunity from prosecution can proceed because the Peraza case set a precedent for it.

Charged in the killing of a man toting an air rifle in Oakland Park, Peraza argued cops, like everyone else, can be covered by "stand your ground."

The law holds that "a person" does not have to back off and can legally use deadly force if he or she reasonably believes doing so is necessary "to prevent imminent death."

The appellate court upheld a Broward judge's ruling that Peraza, as a law enforcement officer, had a right as any person would to assert a "stand your ground" defense — and, based on the facts of the case, also deserved to have the charge dismissed before a trial.

The decision clashed with a 2012 opinion from another appeals court. That ruling, in the case of a Southwest Florida police officer, said cops are only covered by a different state law specific to officers that addresses justifiable use of force during an arrest.

Under that law, an officer facing charges has no choice but to wait for a trial and sweat out a verdict.

The Florida Supreme Court is expected to settle the conflict and decide whether police officers everywhere in the state can pursue claims under “stand your ground,” a law that has stoked controversy since it was adopted in 2005.

But for now, because of the Peraza ruling, officers charged criminally in a region that includes Palm Beach and Broward counties may seek such protection under the same law for the general public. Raja claims Jones pointed a handgun at him first, so he fired in self-defense.

Eric Schwartzreich, one of the police union lawyers who defended Peraza, says the appellate court ruling is a big deal because under “stand your ground,” cops can argue for charges to be tossed by the judge.

“It’s a hot button topic,” Schwartzreich said, stressing that police officers who risk their lives should get the same legal benefits as anyone else in society.

Piggybacking on Peraza, Raja’s legal team requested a mini-trial of sorts before the judge only, where prosecutors will have the burden of proving why Raja is not entitled to have his charges thrown out.

“Officer Raja faced a man who pointed a gun at him, and did what any citizen is entitled to do: he defended himself,” argued defense attorney Richard Lubin. “No ordinary citizen would be prosecuted for Officer Raja’s conduct.”

Lubin called the shooting of Jones, a 31-year-old Delray Beach city housing inspector and a part-time musician, “wholly justifiable.”

Prosecutors won’t comment on their strategy moving forward, and they have not yet filed a written response to the “stand your ground” claim.

But in previous court filings, they’ve leaned on the recording of a phone call between Jones and a roadside assistance operator that captured sounds just before and during the shooting at 3:15 a.m. Oct. 18, 2015 along an Interstate 95 off-ramp.

Prosecutors say the evidence shows Raja was “grossly negligent” because he pulled up to Jones’ disabled SUV in an unmarked cargo van, stepped out in jeans, a T-shirt and a ball cap, and failed to identify himself as a police officer. Raja has insisted he announced he was a cop.

A prosecutors’ report says the recording also proves Raja fired some shots after he had to have realized that Jones had dropped his weapon in the grass near the rear of his SUV. Jones was hit by three bullets.

In 2016, a grand jury found Raja’s “use of force” was unjustified, and Chief Assistant State Attorney Brian Fernandes later wrote Raja “violated the public’s trust and confidence by unlawfully killing a young man who was in need of assistance.”

Jones' death sparked public protests, amid a national uproar over police use of force directed at young black men, from Ferguson, Missouri, to Baltimore.

The charges against Raja — manslaughter by culpable negligence while armed, and attempted first-degree murder with a firearm — marked the first time since 1993 that a cop in Palm Beach County was charged in an on-duty killing.

Similarly, the charge against Peraza was a first in Broward involving a law enforcement officer in 35 years.

Palm Beach County Judge Samantha Schosberg Feuer postponed an April trial for Raja, and scheduled daylong “stand your ground” hearings on March 28 and March 29.

After that, her ruling will be appealed by either the defense or the prosecutors to the Fourth District Court of Appeal, the same court that cleared Peraza.

Assuming the appeals court keeps the charges against Raja in play, the trial would begin with jury selection July 16.

Attorney Barry Silver, speaking for relatives on Jones' maternal side, said he expects the courts will ensure Raja's case goes to trial.

“The Stand Your Ground law will not protect Nouman Raja,” Silver said. “The law does not protect people that are aggressive and violent.”

Jones' aunt, Sheila Banks, said her nephew had a peaceful nature and did not instigate the shooting.

“If Nouman Raja needed help that night, Corey would have helped him,” she said. “That's the kind of person Corey was.”

MEDIA OUTLET: Miami Herald

HEADLINE: Hallandale Beach mayor accepted illegal checks from Russians, prosecutors say

BYLINE: Martin Vassolo and Jay Weaver

LINK: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/broward/article196985709.html>

STORY: Joy Cooper knew the value of her political power.

On a summer day in 2012, the Hallandale Beach mayor met in her City Hall office with two men she thought were wealthy landowners from California as well as a close acquaintance, South Florida attorney and lobbyist Alan Koslow.

The landowners — FBI agents working undercover — would help finance Cooper’s re-election run. In return, she would push their construction project through the city commission.

Koslow showed the mayor a proposed donation and asked if it was a “good number.”

“No,” Cooper said. “Add a zero.”

“Three zeros. Is that fine?” Koslow responded. “Yes,” she said.

Cooper, a Democrat, went on to win re-election in November 2012, after soliciting and receiving thousands of dollars that state prosecutors now say were illegal campaign contributions. Cooper, 57, who had served as mayor since 2005, was suspended by Gov. Rick Scott on Friday after she was charged with campaign finance violations, official misconduct and money laundering.

Cooper was released on a \$12,000 bond Thursday as she awaits trial. Her defense attorney said the state’s case — turned over by the FBI to Broward prosecutors last year — was flawed because it was ultimately built upon the cooperation of Koslow. He’s now a fallen attorney who pleaded guilty to an unrelated federal money-laundering charge in 2016 and helped investigators make the case against Cooper.

Cooper’s attorney, Larry Davis, said he was “extremely disappointed” that the Broward State Attorney’s Office relied upon Koslow, whom he described as “a disgraced and disbarred convicted felon.”

In a statement, Cooper promised to “vigorously fight these allegations in court.”

A day after her high-profile arrest, details of Cooper’s alleged corruption have emerged in an arrest affidavit filed by state prosecutors in Broward County Circuit Court. Many of her words and actions were documented with undercover audio and video recordings.

The document outlines a chapter of the FBI’s 2012 probe of political corruption in South Florida, and how undercover agents posing as developers hired Koslow as their attorney to target Cooper. It also reveals a seemingly improbable tale of how \$8,000 stuffed into a Dunkin’ Donuts bag was converted into campaign checks written by several Russian donors.

The tale started in May 2012 when undercover agents created a fictitious real estate company and hired Koslow to represent them and reach out to Cooper to find a development site in Hallandale Beach.

Koslow, who worked for the prominent Broward law firm Becker & Poliakoff, was unaware that his new clients were FBI agents.

In July, Koslow introduced the agents to Cooper in the mayor's office at city hall. They discussed a development project and her upcoming re-election campaign, as Cooper boasted she could ensure two other votes on the five-member city commission.

But, according to the affidavit, Cooper wanted a substantial campaign donation for her support — a figure with three zeros.

Later that month, the mayor met with Koslow and they agreed on a \$10,000 contribution from the developers in two installment payments.

In August, the developers, Koslow and Cooper met at her Hallandale Beach home to discuss the arrangement. Then, Koslow met alone with the developers to receive the first payment.

The undercover agents posing as the developers gave Koslow — still unaware of their true identities — a Dunkin' Donuts bag filled with \$100 bills totaling \$8,000. They agreed that Koslow "would channel these funds" to Cooper and two of her allies on the city commission, according to the affidavit.

Koslow, aware of the \$500 limit on local campaign contributions, told the agents that he would use their funds and his connections to two Russian organizations to have them write checks to Cooper's campaign.

In September, the mayor met Koslow at a fashion show organized by the Hallandale Beach Chamber of Commerce. There, she collected 20 campaign checks totaling \$5,000.

"That's fantastic," Cooper told Koslow, acknowledging that the donations came from a bunch of Russians living in the United States.

In her campaign treasury report, Cooper listed the donors as "teachers" and one "retiree."

A month after her 2012 victory, Cooper met with the undercover agents and Koslow, according to the affidavit.

"You guys have been great," Cooper said at the Flashback Diner in Hallandale Beach, unaware that the developers were FBI agents. She pointed out, however, that one of the donor's checks bounced.

According to the affidavit, two of the check donations — totaling \$1,000 — were made to the campaign of then-Commissioner William Julian. There is no evidence that Julian knew the source of the money.

At the end of the investigation, in October 2012, Cooper was still unaware she was targeted by the FBI. And it took more than five years for her to be arrested.

The reason for the long delay: After the November election, the undercover agents began targeting Koslow, who agreed to launder hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal gambling and drug proceeds. Koslow collaborated with a South Florida woman in writing checks to the agents in exchange for the cash. The agents gave Koslow and the woman a small cut of the dirty money.

After a series of transactions, the agents revealed their identities to Koslow in August 2013 — but didn't arrest him. The longtime Broward attorney began working undercover himself, assisting the FBI agents in their investigation of other politicians and lobbyists.

Koslow, however, would finally cut his plea deal in August 2016. He was sentenced to a year in prison on the money-laundering conspiracy conviction. The following year, Koslow, 63, gave a critical statement in the investigation into Cooper's alleged misconduct, according to the affidavit. He attested to "his participation" in the alleged campaign finance scheme.

In a statement to her constituents, Cooper vowed to "vigorously fight these allegations in court."

With Cooper's suspension from the mayor's office pending the outcome of her criminal case, Vice Mayor Keith London will serve as acting mayor.

Ironically, after Cooper beat London for the mayor's post in 2012, she crowed to the Sun Sentinel: "Good always prevails. Didn't your mom tell you that?"

MEDIA OUTLET: Hollywood Gazette

HEADLINE: Hollywood Police Chief Tomas Sanchez to Retire Feb. 2

BYLINE: David Volz

LINK: <https://www.hollywoodgazette.com/2018/01/26/hollywood-police-chief-tomas-sanchez-to-retire-feb-2/>

STORY: After nearly 30 years of service, Chief Tomas Sanchez will retire from the City of Hollywood effective February 2, 2018. He has submitted his official “Letter of Separation from the City of Hollywood” to the City Manager, Dr. Wazir Ishmael.

Chief Sanchez joined the Hollywood Police Department in May 1988 as a Police Officer. He has worked his way through the ranks of Police Officer, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Assistant Chief, and Interim Police Chief prior to being named chief in the summer of 2015.

Sanchez had extensive experience leading numerous divisions and sections of the Police Department, including Professional Standards, Neighborhood Services, Drug Enforcement, Criminal Investigations, Patrol, Support Services and Special Operations. Throughout his career, Chief Sanchez has received many honorable commendations from residents and civic organizations, as well as certifications from various agencies and universities, according to information from the Hollywood Police Department.

As chief, he has had many successes, culminating in a substantial decrease in crime in Hollywood and a coordinating decrease in violent crime during fiscal year 2017.

Sanchez earned his Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Florida International University in August of 1993, and has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Columbia College in Missouri. He graduated from the Senior Management Institute for Police, the DEA Drug Unit Commanders Academy and the Southern Police Institute.

The Chief of Police position is a non-civil service position, meaning it is an appointed position by the City Manager. It is within the city manager’s authorization and discretion to either publicly post for the position, appoint someone from within the organization or leave the position open. At this point it is not known what the city manager will do. In the interim, Acting Police Chief Chris O’Brien will continue to handle the day-to-day operations of the department. The decision of the city manager will be announced at the time of Sanchez’s departure.

MEDIA OUTLET: ABC Miami (Channel 10)

HEADLINE: Gov. Rick Scott suspends Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper

BYLINE: Andrea Torres

LINK: <https://www.local10.com/news/politics/gov-rick-scott-suspends-hallandale-beach-mayor-joy-cooper>

STORY: HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla. - Florida Gov. Rick Scott suspended Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper on Friday afternoon, one day after her arrest on three felony charges.

Cooper faces charges of money laundering, official misconduct and exceeding limits on campaign contributions, all of which are third-degree felonies. Prosecutors also charged her with soliciting contributions in a government building, which is a first-degree misdemeanor.

"Joy Cooper is prohibited from performing any official act, duty or function of public office; from receiving any pay or allowance; and from being entitled to any of the emoluments or privileges of public office during the period of this suspension," Scott's order said.

According to the Broward County state attorney's office, FBI agents posing as developers and business owners met with Cooper and former attorney and lobbyist Alan Koslow, who pleaded guilty to a federal money-laundering conspiracy charge in a case with the FBI that was part of their "Red Chip" sting operation to target political corruption in South Florida.

Investigator Kate Abrahamsen wrote in the arrest affidavit that Cooper solicited campaign contributions from Koslow that exceeded the legal limit, accepted money that she believed were the proceeds of unlawful activity and falsified campaign treasury reports in September and October of 2012.

Abrahamsen said Koslow was unaware that the wealthy California land developers seeking political favor for commercial land projects were really undercover FBI agents.

According to the affidavit, Koslow introduced the undercover agents to Cooper, who claimed that she and then-Commissioners Bill Julian and Anthony Sanders were a "team of three" who could "ensure a favorable result" for the land project. Koslow showed Cooper a proposed dollar figure and asked her if it was a good number, to which she replied, "No. Add a zero."

It was one of the many recorded conversations involving Cooper, Koslow and the undercover agents, authorities said.

Abrahamsen said the undercover agents gave Koslow a Dunkin' Donuts bag containing \$8,000 in cash -- all \$100 bills -- with the understanding that he would funnel the money to Cooper and the commissioners.

According to the affidavit, one of the undercover agents met with Cooper at the Flashback Diner and pledged that the contributions to Cooper's campaign would be in the form of checks from a "bunch of Russian names." Koslow later told an undercover agent that he personally handed Cooper 20 checks at a Hallandale Beach Chamber of Commerce fashion show.

During an October 2012 meeting with Koslow and the undercover agents at the Flashback Diner, Cooper told the agents, "You guys have been great," acknowledging the payment, the affidavit said.

Cooper's attorney, Larry Davis, said he is extremely disappointed in the state attorney's office for relying on Koslow, who was sentenced to a year and a day in federal prison. Cooper, who walked out of jail Thursday night, said she was going to "vigorously" fight the accusations.

"My mom will be vindicated, I'm sure," Cooper's son told Local 10 News investigative reporter Bob Norman.