

Quincy Herald Whig

CARTHAGE, IL — Hancock County State's Attorney Jim Drozdz says he dismissed charges in a traffic case because the Illinois State Police trooper who wrote the citations was previously convicted of attempting to obstruct justice.

Brandi Yocum, 29, pleaded guilty in Carthage in December 2010 to attempted obstruction of justice and received a nine-month conditional discharge sentence. Yocum was charged after Drozdz said there were "factual discrepancies" in a police report submitted by Yocum, an ISP District 14 trooper based in Macomb. The report was for a May 2009 traffic stop involving a Bloomington man.

Yocum, a state trooper for five years, was suspended, but returned to active duty. Macomb-based troopers respond to calls in Hancock County and four other counties. In a letter to ISP Capt. Robert Elliott, commander of the Macomb post, Drozdz said Elliott and "Trooper Yocum's supervisors have failed to understand the significance of Trooper Yocum's criminal and disciplinary records."

In an interview with The Herald-Whig, Drozdz said Yocum should have been fired after her 2010 conviction. "She has no value as a police officer, because her credibility has been called into certain question," Drozdz said. Yocum is "a defense attorney's dream," Drozdz said. He said he will not prosecute any case she is involved in as a potential witness, including a July 25 crash in Hancock County where Yocum issued citations for operating an uninsured vehicle and failure to reduce speed to a driver. Drozdz told The Herald-Whig that he did not think the Illinois State Police will do anything about his complaints.

"That's just the way they are," said Drozdz, who formerly worked for the Illinois State Police. "They don't deal with anything head-on and they like to play mind games." In an interview with The Herald-Whig, Elliott said he couldn't comment because it was a personnel issue. Yocum lives in McDonough County, and troopers typically work in the counties where they reside. There are cases where troopers are dispatched to other counties if they are the closest unit, and McDonough and Hancock counties are next to each other.

In May 2009, Yocum stopped a vehicle on Ill. 336 driven by Christopher Tromp of Bloomington, who was cited for speeding. Tromp's license had been revoked because of a prior driving under the influence count, and he was operating an uninsured vehicle, Drozdz said. Yocum allowed Tromp to drive the vehicle after she stopped him for not having a valid license, even though she knew his license was suspended. She later admitted during a preliminary hearing to letting him drive away, Drozdz said.

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