

'Mamma mia,' here they go again . . .

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A PROSECUTOR told a jury yesterday at a retrial of a former narcotics cop on theft charges that the ex-cop, Gerald Gibson, "pocketed money while on the job."

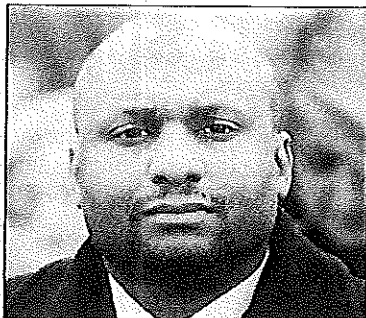
"This case is about opportunity and frailty, the thinking that easy

money was to be had," Assistant District Attorney Douglas Rhoads said in an opening statement at the start of the retrial.

Not so, cried out defense attorney A. Charles Peruto Jr. in his opening statement.

"Italians have an expression — *Mamma mia!*" Peruto exclaimed, contending that the prosecutor had put "a good spin" on the facts.

Besides being a former member of the elite Narcotics Field



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Gerald Gibson: Former member of Narcotics Field Unit.

Unit, Gibson, 45, is the former son-in-law of ex-Gov. Tom Corbett. He and Corbett's daughter, Katherine, were separated at the time of his arrest in 2013; they since have divorced.

In September, another Common Pleas jury deadlocked on the charges against Gibson, prompting prosecutors to retry him.

Rhoads told the jury yesterday that Gibson was caught in a sting set up by a task force of FBI and Philadelphia Police. The sting was an "integrity test" to see what Gibson "would do about money located throughout" a car that appeared to belong to a drug dealer, he said.

FBI Special Agent Thomas Duffy testified that a 1998 Lexus was obtained for the operation. Cameras were hidden inside the car. A total of \$200 was placed in three places — the center console, the

pockets of sweatpants on the floor of the front passenger seat, and the glove compartment.

A plastic baggie of about 50 pills that looked like narcotics also was put in the center console. And the task force gave the car a "lived-in look," Duffy said. Fast-food receipts, clothing and empty packs of cigarettes were strewn throughout, he said.

The operation took place about noon Jan. 31, 2013. Two narcotics supervisors, Lt. Michael Mitchell and Sgt. Michael Kennedy, relayed instructions for Gibson to go to the area of 10th Street near Loudon, in Logan.

There, Gibson met a patrol officer

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er — in reality an undercover officer playing the role — who pretended he had stopped the Lexus because it went through a red light, Duffy said.

Gibson was to drive the Lexus to the Narcotics Field Unit's headquarters, on G Street near Hunting Park Avenue, at the border of North Philly and Juniata Park, which he did.

But, Duffy said, when he went to check the Lexus, \$140 was missing — \$100 from the center console and \$40 from the sweatpants. The bills had been marked

with ultraviolet dust or dye, he said.

When Gibson was confronted later that day, he took out the missing money from his rear pants pocket, Duffy said.

Peruto told jurors that Gibson "didn't steal anything."

"Almost every cop does their paperwork at the end of the day," Peruto said. Gibson was going to fill out the property receipt for the money he recovered from the Lexus, the lawyer said.

"Why didn't he fill out the report yet?" Peruto said. He "didn't have time to."

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