



March 26, 2025

Former Rocky River Police Officer Michael Bernhardt Indicted on Multiple Counts for Illegally Searching Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG) and Law Enforcement Automated Database System (LEADS) Over 70 Times in 10 Year Span

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that a Cuyahoga County grand jury has returned an indictment charging former Rocky River Police Officer Michael Bernhardt, 54, for illegally searching OHLEG and LEADS over 70 times in a 10-year span.

"Michael Bernhardt's blatant and egregious pattern of disregarding citizens' — including minors' — privacy rights is outrageous, especially for a police officer," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "This case raises all kinds of red flags."

From 2013 to 2023, Michael Bernhardt would illegally search multiple people without an official law enforcement purpose in the law enforcement databases OHLEG and LEADS while he was a law enforcement officer with the Rocky River Police Department (RRPD) and a school resource officer at Rocky River High School. These searches included Rocky River students and their family members, other law enforcement officers and colleagues, school teachers and school administrators, and his own family members and ex-spouses.

The investigation was initiated by RRPD who requested in October 2023 that the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) conduct the investigation. BCI's investigation uncovered several suspicious database searches, which RRPD then confirmed served no valid law enforcement purpose.

The investigation stemmed from allegations of inappropriate relationships and contact with high school students. Investigation into this conduct revealed Bernhardt conducted 77 unlawful searches in either OHLEG or LEADS over 10 years, and the majority of searches were of females, many of which were related to his obsessive and inappropriate relationships with students. Michael Bernhardt ceased employment with RRPD in April 2024.

Anyone with information about Michael Bernhardt and/or matters relevant to the investigation is encouraged to **contact BCI at 855.BCI.OHIO or 855.224.6446.**

"Upon learning of allegations of inappropriate conduct regarding Bernhardt, we promptly requested the assistance of an outside agency to conduct a thorough and independent criminal investigation, which led to this indictment," said Rocky River Police Chief George Lichman. "We will continue cooperating with BCI and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. The Rocky River Police are committed to providing professional, dependable, and trustworthy police services to our community."



On March 25, 2025, Michael Bernhardt was indicted on the following charges:

- **11 counts of Unauthorized Use of the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (F5)**
- **One count of Unauthorized Use of the Law Enforcement Automated Database System (F5)**
- **One count of Possessing Criminal Tools (F5)**

You can view the indictment [here](#).

He will be arraigned at the Cuyahoga County Justice Center at a later date.