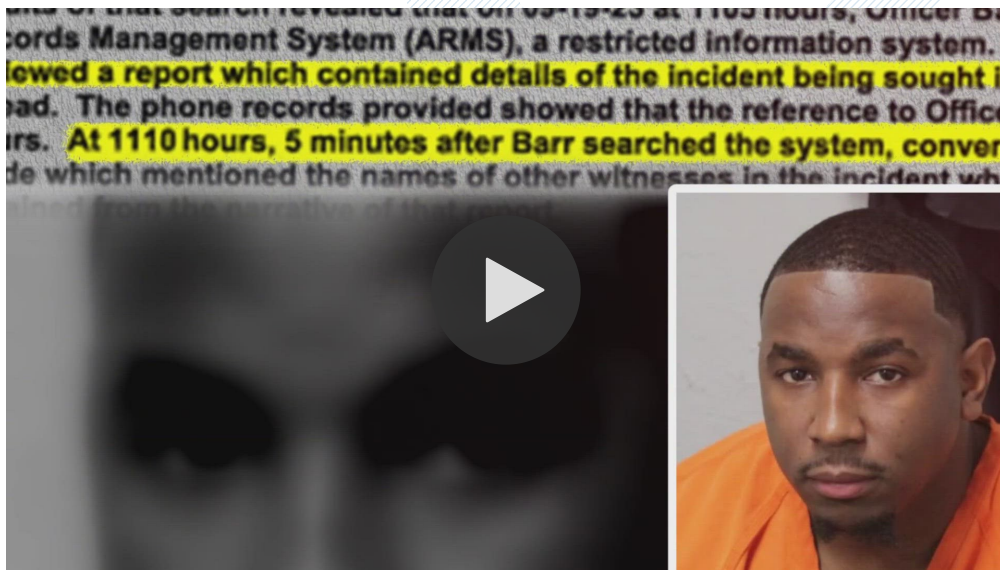


CRIME

Jacksonville Sheriff says there's 'strong possibility' officer's arrest relates to gang activity in city

28-year-old Christopher Barr was arrested on Jan. 27, Sheriff T.K. Waters said, as he resigned upon his arrest. He was hired by JSO four years ago.



Author: First Coast News Staff
Published: 12:39 PM EST February 7, 2024
Updated: 6:52 PM EST February 7, 2024



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A Jacksonville Sheriff's officer was arrested on two counts of "offenses against computer users" last month, Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters announced in a press conference Wednesday.

Christopher Barr, 28, was arrested on Jan. 27, Waters said, and resigned upon his arrest. He was hired four years ago by JSO, Waters said.

Barr was arrested for using protective databases to "access and disseminate law enforcement information to unauthorized individuals," Waters said. The sheriff also said that there's a "strong possibility" that Barr's arrest is related to gang activity in Jacksonville.

According to Barr's arrest warrant, it states that Barr "may have disseminated information from law enforcement databases on Sept. 19, 2023." The information provided came from cell phone data which involved a text thread conversation, or group chat.

In the group chat, a "subject" in a separate investigation another law enforcement agency is working on, sent a message to multiple other individuals in the group chat, asking about details of a police interaction in Jacksonville, the warrant states. In the group chat, the subject was asking others to obtain information about when a particular individual was contacted by police. One of the messages from the subject in that chat indicated that he was going to reach out to Barr, the warrant indicates.

A screenshot from the subject's phone showed the group chat in the background with a minimized FaceTime conversation window over it, the warrant states. The screenshot showed Barr in his JSO uniform and what appeared to be a JSO vehicle, according to the warrant. After the reference to Barr in the group chat, messages were sent with names of other witnesses involved in the separate law enforcement agency's investigation. Research indicated that those names were only documented in the narrative of the JSO reports written for the separate case, the warrant states.

The warrant says that the phone number used in communication between the subject and Barr was Barr's personal cell phone number he registered with JSO.

Based on the circumstances of the incident, the warrant says a search of several JSO databases was conducted, as investigators found that Barr had searched the Agency Records Management System (ARMS), a "restricted information system" on Sept. 19, 2023 at 11:05 a.m. The records show that Barr reviewed a report which contained details of the incident being sought by the subject in the group chat.

"The phone records provided showed that the reference to Officer Barr occurred at 11:03 a.m.," the warrant states. "At 11:10 a.m., five minutes after Barr searched the system, conversation in the thread [group chat] was made which mentioned the names of other witnesses in the incident which could have only been obtained from the narrative of that report," the warrant adds.

On Jan. 25, the warrant states that JSO was notified of a second incident involving Barr.

In the second incident, a text message from the subject of the group chat asked Barr to check a tag number on a car on Nov. 12, 2022. Four days later on Nov. 16, 2022, a search of "NCIC/FCIC records revealed that Barr searched that tag number through NCIC/FCIC records," the warrant says.

The warrant states that based on the details of the two incidents, Barr "misused his position to search disseminated unauthorized law enforcement information to targets of a criminal investigation."

First Coast News Crime Analyst Mark Baughman said a case like this is a big deal. He said the information on the records management system could mean life or death in some situations.

"In that report management system, he was gleaning information and giving it back out. It's very dangerous because that information may expose somebody who's cooperating. Now, you're gonna be putting somebody's life in jeopardy here," Baughman said.

When asked who Barr gave the information to, Waters said he wouldn't give specific names but, said they "were criminals in our community."

"When a JSO employee has been arrested, no one is above the law and we're not going to tolerate the violations of law by our agency," Waters said. "And when a member of this agency violates the law, that person will be held accountable."

Waters said he doesn't suspect there to be more arrests involving Jacksonville sheriff's officers "right now" related to Barr's arrest.

Waters said he could not provide many details on the arrest due to an active investigation. This is the second [arrest of a JSO employee in 2024](#), according to Waters.

Baughman said this is not just an issue within JSO; cases like these do happen within law enforcement agencies across the country. He said they usually shake up a department and force the agency to change their internal policies.

"It not only erodes the trust, public trust with the community, but it also impacts morale negatively if you have a lot of issues or some issues with corruption. In this case, who knows where this may lead it may be another officer involved other than Barr that's doing this. We don't know yet," Baughman said.

Barr's arraignment is set for Feb. 13. His bond amount is listed at \$20,006, according to the arrest warrant.

Jacksonville Sheriff says there's 'strong possibility' officer's arrest relates to ga...



Jacksonville sheriff: 'Strong possibility' officer's arrest relates to gang activity in...



RELATED: [JSO corrections officer arrested after fight with family member, police say](#)

RELATED: [Woman arrested Wednesday dies in JSO custody Sunday morning](#)



LOADING NEXT ARTICLE...

