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## Lawyers: Cox has conflict in Plants case

Judge's attorneys say he can't prosecute her after he defended her in past

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*FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS*

Lawyers for a judge accused of allowing perjury in a 2005 drug trial want to get the attorney general off the case.

The reason: Attorney General Mike Cox's office defended Wayne County Circuit Judge Mary Waterstone in a failed civil suit brought by a drug dealer whose trial was tainted by false testimony. The lawyers contend it's a conflict for Cox to prosecute her after defending her actions just last year.

Waterstone, along with former drug prosecutor Karen Plants and two Inkster cops, was charged Tuesday with perjury-related crimes in connection with the cocaine case.

Plants' lawyer Ben Gonek said: "It absolutely is a conflict."

But John Sellek, a spokesman for Cox, said the office has safeguards in place.

Sellek said the civil suit was handled by different lawyers in different cities than the attorneys now overseeing the criminal cases. He vowed that nothing Waterstone told the civil lawyers will be shared with the office's prosecutors.

Mark Krieger, a criminal defense lawyer not tied to the perjury case, disagreed.

"The charges arose from the same set of facts that gave rise to the civil case," he said, contending Cox can't handle both.

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