

<p>La Plata County, Colorado 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court  Court address: 1060 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Durango, CO 81301  Phone Number: 970-247-2304</p> <p><b>Plaintiff(s): THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO,</b></p> <p><b>Defendant(s): Edward J. Aber (DOB: [REDACTED])</b></p>	<p><b>COURT USE ONLY</b></p> <p>DATE FILED  July 22, 2025  CASE NUMBER: 25MS32</p> <p>FILED  IN COMBINED COURT  LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO</p> <p>JUL 22 2025</p> <p>DEPUTY CLERK</p>
<p>Agent Stephon Lobato  Colorado Bureau of Investigation  126 Rock Point Drive, Suite C, Durango, CO 81301  Phone: 970-712-7661  E-mail: <a href="mailto:stephon.lobato@state.co.us">stephon.lobato@state.co.us</a>  CBI Case Number: 2025-0003</p>	<p>Case Number: 25MS32  Division B Courtroom</p>
<p><b>ARREST WARRANT</b></p>	

I, Agent Stephon Lobato, your Affiant herein, being first duly sworn and under oath, have probable cause to believe that **Edward J. Aber (DOB: [REDACTED])**, Caucasian male, 6'00", 245 pounds, grey hair, blue eyes, Social Security # [REDACTED], CO License [REDACTED], has committed the crimes of:

- **Invasion of Privacy-Sexual Gratification: 18-3-405.6(1),(2)(a): a class 1 Misdemeanor – 117 Counts**
- **1st Degree Official Misconduct 18-8-404(1)(a): a class 1 Misdemeanor**

As grounds, therefore Your Affiant states:

I am a P.O.S.T. certified and sworn Colorado Peace Officer, employed as an Agent with the Colorado Bureau of Investigations and was so sworn and employed at all times of this investigation.

The facts asserted herein are known to me. I have directly participated in this investigation and am familiar with all aspects of the investigation through personal participation and through information and reports made available by the Colorado Department of Public Safety.

As an Agent with CBI, I was called upon to investigate a series of Invasion of Privacy-Sexual Gratification and Official Misconduct occurring in the City of Durango, County of La Plata, and the State of Colorado.

On 01/02/2025, I was called to assist the La Plata County Sheriff's Office with investigating a former jail commander identified as Edward Aber (Ed Aber) (DOB:

██████████) for several instances of Invasion of Privacy-Sexual Gratification - C.R.S. 18-3-405.6(1), and First-Degree Official Misconduct - 18-8-404 (1)(a).

On 01/06/2025, I met with the La Plata County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant (Lt.) Joey LaVenture in reference to the several allegations against Edward Aber. A previous investigation was conducted into Aber for allegations of unlawful sexual contact with female inmates; however, no charges were filed.

Lieutenant (Lt) LaVenture advised that after the previous investigation involving former jail commander Edward Aber, LaVenture began looking through electronic devices issued to Aber while Aber was employed with the La Plata County Sheriff's Office. The devices issued were a laptop, Surface Pro, and Dell Tower for a desktop computer. These items were placed into evidence with CBI and a digital forensic analysis of the devices occurred.

The following is a summary of the conversation I had with Lt. LaVenture and information received during that conversation.

Edward Aber was promoted to Jail Commander in 2018 in which he was given admin access to evidence.com in 2019. Edward was placed on administrative leave at the end of July 2024 pending an investigation of alleged sexual conduct with female inmates and alleged sexual harassment of numerous female employees of La Plata County Sheriff's Office. While no charges were filed as a result of the investigation into the alleged sexual conduct with female inmates, Aber resigned during the pendency of the sexual harassment allegations investigation. During Aber's time of employment, Aber was issued a company laptop, a Surface Pro, and a Dell Tower for a desktop computer to assist him in his role as the Jail Commander while conducting his duties.

An investigation of Edward Aber involving allegations of inappropriate sexual conduct with female inmates led to an investigation into the devices issued to Aber during his employment with the La Plata County Sheriff's Office.

In October of 2024, Lt LaVenture began looking through the downloads completed by their IT department of the Sheriff's Office devices issued to Aber while he was a Commander for the jail. From the downloads, Lt LaVenture noticed Aber appeared to have been reviewing the Facebook profiles of female inmates and female Deputies. Lt LaVenture also noticed what appeared to be a photograph of body-camera footage depicting a female inmate's strip search from within the La Plata County jail. Lt LaVenture believed the photographed video was from the dress-out room located in the jail's booking area. It should be noted that Lt LaVenture had previously worked in jail and is familiar with the layout and function of the jail.

La Plata County jail utilizes AXON body cameras that Deputies in the jail wear while in service at the jail. The footage is stored and accessible through Evidence.com, the proprietary software utilized by AXON. It should be noted that in order to access archived footage or photos housed on Evidence.com, a user is required to input credentials such as a username and password. Whenever a user logs in and accesses data,

an audit log is automatically kept, marking the date and time of the login, which particular file is accessed, and what is viewed by the user. Lt LaVenture stated that he began reviewing the audit log from Evidence.com of Edward Aber's profile. The following are Edward Aber's Evidence.com login credentials: (Aber, Edward- Badge ID: S371/ Username: abereJ /User ID: 505019382d9c4e538a6903426138153e). The audit was from February 2019 shortly after Ed Aber became a Commander in the jail, through July 2024. During this timeframe, Lt LaVenture advised that the audit showed Aber logged into evidence.com approximately 3,166 times. A large number of the videos logged into by Aber were videos that were labeled "Strip Search" of female inmates. LaVenture also advised there were videos labeled "suicidal" or "suicide", and "intake" that could potentially show nude inmates as they were processed into the jail or under observation. The videos were recorded by different Deputies using the AXON bodycam issued to them during the incidents that were recorded. These labels are not exact and vary depending on the Deputy that labeled them. Lt. LaVenture advised that these videos containing nudity are restricted to a majority of jail personnel and Deputies. Only those with administrative credentials may access these videos. Personnel holding the rank of Lieutenant and above have admin view credentials.

The audit showed several female inmate strip search videos that were logged into multiple times on a variety of dates by Edward Aber's login. Lt LaVenture stated he had sorted the information from evidence.com and that some of the videos had already begun purging out automatically due to the passage of time and storage settings in evidence.com. However, the logins of Aber were still documented. Lt. LaVenture took measures to preserve any information still available from evidence.com and ensure that videos containing strip searches were not purged so that the investigation could continue.

It should be noted that the audit also contained strip search videos that were repeatedly accessed by Edward Aber of the female inmates from the previous investigation of unlawful sexual contact with inmates. The females were identified as [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The audit log established that Aber frequently accessed and viewed strip searches of these particular inmates in addition to 114 additional female inmates as later described.

In speaking with Lt. LaVenture and during my investigation, I learned that no one working at the Sheriff's Office should routinely view videos of the strip searches. The only time a strip search video may have been reviewed is when a suspect is uncooperative, force was used, or contraband was found. If such a review occurs, it would be typically done immediately after the incident and in conjunction with an investigation or review of the incident. There exists no legitimate nor any authorized purpose to regularly view strip search videos of inmates – indeed, no legitimate nor any authorized purpose exists in viewing strip search videos of female inmates well after the fact and on multiple occasions.

During a strip search, a Deputy will accompany the inmate into a private room where the inmate is required to disrobe entirely. Female inmates' breasts are observed to

determine whether any contraband is hidden underneath the breasts, the buttocks are spread in order to observe whether any contraband is secreted into the anus or vagina. Male inmates' buttocks are spread in order to observe whether any contraband is secreted in the anus, and the penis and testicles are observed to determine whether any contraband is hidden underneath. The Deputy performing the strip search wears a body-worn camera that captures the entire event. In sum, the intimate parts of the inmate are readily observable and captured on video from a close vantage point. These strip searches are conducted in a secure room, not observable by persons other than the Deputy or Deputies performing the search – male Deputies search the male inmates and female Deputies search the female inmates. The body-camera videos of these searches are maintained within a secure database on evidence.com and only accessible by personnel with certain admin clearance – Lieutenants and above.

Possessing the rank of Captain and as Jail Commander, Ed Aber had admin access to the otherwise secure videos of strip searches.

As part of the investigation, I was told that in 2018 or 2019 Edward Aber had asked another Sheriff's Office employee identified as Michael Slade to start reviewing strip searches due to contraband entering the jail. It was reported to me that Slade advised that the request seemed to be out of the ordinary and that Slade was uncomfortable with watching the strip search videos, particularly the videos of female inmates. Slade reported that he did not agree with watching the strip search videos of inmates. I learned that Aber told Slade to watch the male videos while Aber indicated to Slade that Aber would watch the female videos. Slade left the Sheriff's Office in 2020 and indicated that he was unaware of anyone else who was regularly reviewing strip search videos. Slade was later interviewed, and Slade advised that he thought Lieutenant Jacob Harris with the LPCSO might have had a similar interaction with Aber. Lieutenant Harris advised Aber, and he spoke about the conversation that took place between Slade and Aber. Lieutenant Harris also informed Aber that he (Lt. Harris) was uncomfortable watching the strip search videos. Lieutenant Harris advised that there was a drug issue that arose at the jail during the time Aber was a commander. However, Lieutenant Harris could not think of a reason anyone would take still shots or download strip searches.

From reviewing the audit log given to me by Lt. LaVenture, there were seven IP addresses listed that were used to log in to evidence.com from Ed Aber's login credentials. Only one of the seven was confirmed to belong to the La Plata County Sheriff's Office by LPCSO IT personnel. The IP address belonging to LPCSO is 209.203.139.2. The other IP addresses are not recognized by the LPCSO and are listed as follows:

- 24.251.167.247 Cox Comm: The IP Address comes back to Ronnie Williams, 6940 North 87<sup>th</sup> Lane, Glendale, Arizona 85305. (Failed attempts May of 2019)
- 50.200.94.155 Comcast: This IP Address comes back to the Colorado Hospitality Services Inc. (Comfort Inn), 4685 Quebec Street, Denver,



Colorado 80216. (Eight female strip search videos streamed on 08/12/2019 starting @ 1838 hours)

- 70.176.90.84 Cox Comm: This IP Address comes back to Dara Prak, 7883 West Krall Street, Glendale, Arizona 85303. (Strip search streamed November of 2020)
- 166.137.163.11 AT&T: This IP Address came back with no results due to AT&T not storing records. (Purged videos streamed of a male, does not appear to be strip searches from the title)
- 174.45.56.202 Charter Comm: No results from company; however, believed to be Aber's home IP address. (Numerous videos streamed over a two year period)
- 204.134.189.138 CenturyLink: This IP Address comes back to the Warwick Corporation, 1775 North Grant Street, Denver, Colorado 80203. (All failed attempts in January of 2020)

Several of the IP addresses that were used by Aber to log in to evidence.com were from locations outside of La Plata County Jail. There may also be other incidents that were done so by use of a Virtual Private Network ("VPN"). However, there would be no way to show this because the IP address should show the LPCSO IP address. Lt LaVenture indicated that no authorized or legitimate purpose exists for someone to log into evidence.com while not at work with such frequency, especially in order to watch strip search videos.

Aber's login credentials were determined to have accessed and streamed strip search videos of female inmates multiple times and oftentimes years, months, weeks, or days after the strip search was captured on video. Several of the female inmates in La Plata County Jail were repeatedly incarcerated and had multiple strip searches conducted each time they were booked into the jail. Aber's login credentials would regularly be used to view the multiple strip searches of multiple booking processes of female inmates that had occurred over the course of months, years, or days. Aber would access and view the successive videos of several female inmates regularly. On multiple accounts, Aber would access and view multiple strip search videos of several female inmates throughout the day, oftentimes viewing the multiple videos late at night or early in the morning.

While Aber accessed a multitude of videos through evidence.com that had since been purged but were noted to be "strip searches" of female inmates prior to the videos being purged, many of the videos had not been purged and were reviewed in the course of this investigation.

It should be noted that among the purged videos that Ed Aber accessed and viewed were at least 5 instances of entire cell blocks that were strip searched – an event where every inmate in a particular cell block is strip searched by Deputies wearing body-worn cameras. Four of the five cell blocks that were strip searched and the video footage

was since purged were female inmate cell blocks and one was male. Ed Aber accessed the four female cell block strip search videos and watched a number of them multiple times prior to the videos being purged.

Of the unpurged videos, I verified hundreds of body-worn camera footage videos that did indeed capture strip searches of female inmates and a handful of male inmates that were accessed and viewed by Aber. Only the female inmate strip search videos were accessed and watched by Aber multiple times. There were a total of 117 female inmates whose unpurged strip search videos were accessed and viewed by Aber, many of which multiple times – oftentimes weeks and months after the event, spanning from February 14, 2019, through January 14, 2024.

The first verified camera footage of strip searches that had not been purged of female inmates that Aber's credentials were used to access and stream occurred on February 14, 2019. Until July 14, 2024, Aber would regularly access and view strip search videos of female inmates, oftentimes watching the videos multiple times on different days. From February 14, 2019, through July 14, 2024, Aber accessed and viewed strip search videos of 117 different female inmates, of which videos have not been purged. It is to be noted that this number would be higher had the videos not been purged from the system.

A digital forensic search of other devices in the possession and control of Edward Aber while he was employed with LPCSO yielded a litany of communications with several of the female inmates' strip search videos that Aber regularly viewed. Likewise, photographs of the body, cleavage, breasts, and face of these former and current female inmates were recovered from electronic devices belonging to Aber.

Several of the female inmates whose strip searches were repeatedly viewed by Aber were sentenced to Community Corrections (Hilltop House) in Durango, CO. Ed Aber was heavily involved with Hilltop House and reported to have had numerous communications and contacts with these female inmates. Similarly, Aber would regularly have female inmates in his office with the door closed. Such arose concern and suspicion amongst jail personnel. Among the females whose strip searches were repeatedly viewed by Aber, several were included in the closed-door office meetings with Aber.

During the investigation into the alleged sexual contact with inmates, it was reported that on one instance, an employee at the jail knocked on the closed door of Aber's office and opened the door. Aber was described as appearing startled when the door was opened, and then a female inmate was observed to appear from underneath Aber's desk. Aber was described as having offered an explanation that the inmate was merely adjusting the computer wires under his desk.

In 2024, at least fourteen female La Plata County Sheriff's Office employees reported multiple instances of alleged inappropriate sexual advances and comments made by Ed Aber over the course of years. An investigation commenced into the sexual harassment, and Ed Aber resigned prior to the investigation concluding.

It should be noted that on January 22, 2025, the Durango Herald published an article entitled “Widespread sexual harassment found after resignation of La Plata County Jail Commander.” The article named Ed Aber and mentioned that “[t]he Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) database, which logs complaints, investigations and other actions related to law enforcement officers states that CBI is investigating Aber for invasion of privacy for sexual gratification – a crime committed when someone takes intimate photographs or video of someone without their consent.”

During the course of the investigation, search warrants were issued to seize and forensically analyze electronic devices belonging to Ed Aber. It should be noted that one of these devices was an Apple iPad. When the iPad was seized and a digital download was attempted, it was learned that the device had been reset and data erased. This reset and erasing of data occurred the same day the Durango Herald interviewed Aber about the investigation of invasion of privacy for sexual gratification. The LPCSO responded to Aber’s place of employment the following day due to Aber making suicidal threats.

In light of the frequency with which Ed Aber used his credentials to repeatedly view strip search videos of at least 117 different female inmates with no apparent legitimate purpose to do so and in conjunction with the apparent prurient interest he showed towards several of the inmates by having in his possession photographs of cleavage, breasts and other intimate parts, probable cause exists to believe that Ed Aber viewed the videos for the purpose of his own sexual gratification – thereby Ed Aber committed 117 acts of Invasion of Privacy for Sexual Gratification in violation of C.R.S. Section 18-3-405.6(1) between the dates of February 14, 2019 and July 14, 2024.

During the timeframe of February 14, 2019, and July 14, 2024, Ed Aber was a Captain with La Plata County Sheriff’s Office and thereby a public servant. Ed Aber regularly used law enforcement credentials to access evidence.com in order to view restricted body-camera footage that contained close-up vantage points of the intimate parts of at least 117 female inmates. With no apparent legitimate law enforcement purpose to do so, he thereby obtained a benefit – albeit nefarious and illegal, by accessing a trove of footage depicting naked female inmates’ intimate body parts to purportedly fuel a sexual desire or gratification held by Aber. Such purpose was otherwise unauthorized and well outside the scope of the access he had in his capacity as a public servant and Jail Captain. As such, probable cause exists to believe that Ed Aber committed First Degree Official Misconduct in violation of C.R.S. Section 18-8-404(1)(a).

In light of the hundreds of times that Ed Aber accessed evidence.com, accessed strip searches of female inmates, and viewed the videos repeatedly, such constitutes a series of acts performed at different times between February 14, 2019 and July 14, 2024 pursuant to C.R.S. 16-5-401(4). The series of acts were offenses relating to an abuse of his public office pursuant to part 4 of article 8 of title 18, C.R.S. as delineated in C.R.S. Section 16-5-401(4.5)(o). The series of acts were discovered in July of 2024.

It should be noted that Ed Aber has been a sworn peace officer for nearly three decades, is known to own and possess numerous firearms. Ed Aber was a law enforcement firearms instructor and as such is proficient with firearms. For several years, he was an operator and commander of a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). He is familiar with law enforcement tactics, procedures, communications, and operations. Ed Aber indicated to La Plata County Sheriff Sean Smith that he would never go to jail and has made an attempt at taking his own life during the investigation into the above-delineated crimes. As such, an arrest warrant is sought so that law enforcement may make a plan and exercise caution in order to safely take Edward Aber into custody.

Based on the above-stated facts of all incidents combined, probable cause exists to believe that **Edward J. Aber, DOB: [REDACTED]** committed the following crimes.

- **Invasion of Privacy-Sexual Gratification: 18-3-405.6 (1), (2)(a): a class 1 Misdemeanor – 117 counts**
- **1st Degree Official Misconduct 18-8-404 (1)(a): a class 1 Misdemeanor –**

Therefore, a warrant for the arrest of **Edward J. Aber** should be issued forthwith.

Your Affiant “swears or affirms under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing information is true and correct.”

FURTHER YOUR AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.

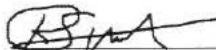


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Stephon Lobato  
Affiant

*REVIEWED BY: /s/ Vance Davis*  
*Asst. D.A. # 54301*

Subscribed and sworn to before me by phone on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of July 2025.



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Reid Stewart  
JUDGE