



**OFFICE OF
POLICE OMBUDSMAN**
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May 30, 2017

Director Jacqui MacConnell
Spokane Police Division
1100 West Mallon Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99260

RE: R17-03 Arson Investigation

Dear Director MacConnell,

On December 15, 2016, the Office of the Police Ombudsman ("OPO") received an Inadequate Response complaint. Specifically, the citizen alleged that Spokane Police Division ("SPD") did not adequately handle the citizen's request to remove squatters from the citizen's property, despite calling for police services on numerous occasions. During the Internal Affairs ("IA") investigation of the citizen complaint, the citizen's home was severely damaged by fire, due to suspected arson.

It has come to my attention that neither SPD nor the Spokane Fire Department ("SFD") currently conducts criminal investigation of arson cases. SFD only investigates the cause and origin of fires and are no longer commissioned peace officers; in effect SFD is unable to conduct a criminal investigation. A SPD detective would need to be assigned in order to conduct a criminal investigation. However, Internal Affairs Investigators state that SPD does not have any trained arson investigators.

The IA case C17-004/OPO 17-3 specifically addresses this critical gap of a lack of criminal investigation of arson in SPD's law enforcement services which can reasonably be expected from the citizens of Spokane. In order to meet community expectations and provide efficient services to the citizens of Spokane, it is my recommendation SPD addresses this gap. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Bart Logue
Police Ombudsman
Office of the Police Ombudsman, City of Spokane

Logue, Bart

From: Verduin, Ethan J.
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2017 10:18 AM
To: Waters, Daniel
Cc: Reser, Jason L.; Logue, Bart; Meidl, Tracie
Subject: FW: 117 S Perry

Dan,

I was forwarded this information by Cpt. Reser. I appreciate this information and during the course of my on scene fire investigation it became apparent that this house/neighborhood has been an ongoing problem for you guys. It sounds like a majority of PD personnel are still unaware that we are no longer commissioned peace officers. We were not equipped to do the job of criminal investigation properly or efficiently and are now solely functioning in the capacity of fire investigation as it pertains to origin and cause. Our unit has been in contact with Lt. Wohl and in the process of working out policies on how the criminal investigations will be handled going forward with PD. This case will need an assigned PD detective going forward in order to solve the criminal element. It is only with the help of those that are efficient, knowledgeable and equipped to do the job of criminal investigation correctly that these cases will be solved. Going forward on this one I have told Rickie Goodwin to contact Crime Check with any additional information with respect to harassment and information associated with the fire but it sounds like you're his contact. As long as his information is getting to PD. We as fire investigators are happy to and want to assist in any way possible.

Thank you,

Ethan



Spokane
FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ethan Verduin | City of Spokane | Fire Investigator
509.625.7053 | fax 509.625.7039 | ejverduin@spokanefire.org | spokanefire.org

From: Reser, Jason L.
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2017 4:55 PM
To: Verduin, Ethan J. <ejverduin@spokanecity.org>
Subject: Fwd: 117 S Perry

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Waters, Daniel" <dwaters@spokanepolice.org>
Date: April 20, 2017 at 4:53:54 PM PDT

To: "Reser, Jason L." <jlraser@spokanecity.org>

Cc: "Logue, Bart" <blogue@spokanecity.org>, "Meidl, Tracie" <tmeidl@spokanepolice.org>

Subject: 117 S Perry

Hello,

I have been in contact with the victim of the fire at 117 S Perry concerning our (SPD) response to problems at his house. His name is Rickie Goodwin. He called to tell me Rich M Mehaffey 6-29-1964 was at the house and knows who started the fire. Mehaffey has also called and threatened Mr. Goodwin via voice mail. Mr. Goodwin is filing a separate police report for that threat. It is my understanding that you are one of the arson investigators and I told Mr. Goodwin I would pass this info on to you. Mr. Goodwin is staying at 1908 E South Riverton #252 and can be reached at 263-9767 or 227-9965.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is someone else I should send this information to.

Thank you,

Dan



Dan Waters | Sergeant—Internal Affairs, Hostage Negotiation Team | Spokane Police Department

1100 W. Mallon Ave. Spokane, WA 99260

509.835-4541 | dwaters@spokanepolice.org