



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CRAIG N. MEIDL CHIEF OF POLICE

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C17-031 OPO Number: N/A

Date of Complaint: 5/20/2017

Allegation: Biased Policing, Demeanor and Unlawful/Improper Search

Chain of Command Finding: Multiple

Final Discipline: Not Applicable

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

The complainant in this case felt that officers racially profiled him when the involved officer pulled him over for a seatbelt violation. He stated that the officer made snide remarks to him and roughed him up when he handcuffed him. He also claimed that the Spokane Police Department was harassing him.

COMPLAINT

Internal Affairs classified his official allegations as Biased Policing, Demeanor, and a violation of Search Protocol.

INVESTIGATION

The Internal Affairs investigation normally includes an interview with the complainant. The complainant agreed to an interview but did not come to the interview and did not return subsequent calls. Internal Affairs was able to continue the investigation with interviews, reports, and body worn camera footage. A review of body camera footage showed the officer's demeanor was professional and he used appropriate police tactics, including handcuffing. The IA interview of the officer explained the rationale for issuing the citations. No problems were identified in the review.

Because the complainant indicated that he had been harassed by SPD previously, the IA investigator also looked up prior contacts with the complainant and found two other contacts in 2017 prior to the involved officer's traffic stop. In one of those calls, officers responded to a call where the caller thought the complainant was a suspicious person possibly trying to "hotwire" a car in the parking lot. Investigators viewed bodyworn camera video footage of that interaction. During that contact, the complainant expressed that he felt he was being harassed. He was in the same car he was driving when the involved officer stopped him. The officers told the complainant he should not be driving the car because the trip permit looked bad and he did not have a license to drive. Their contact with the complainant was less than ten minutes.

The next interaction took place with a traffic officer who stopped the complainant for a bad trip permit. The complainant admitted to knowing the trip permit was “false” and he also knew he had a warrant for his arrest for DWLS at the time that officer contacted him. That officer did not take the complainant to jail on his warrants and also used his discretion to not issue a couple of infractions he otherwise could have issued. The officer made the comment to the complainant that he should get a bus pass because he was going to just get in more trouble if he kept driving that car. One week later, the involved officer stopped the complainant.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The chain of command found no indication of racial bias in the interaction. The Biased Policing allegation was determined to be Unfounded. The Demeanor allegation was determined to be Exonerated. The Unlawful/Improper Search allegation was determined to be Exonerated.