



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CRAIG N. MEIDL
CHIEF OF POLICE

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C18-002 OPO Number: N/A

Date of Complaint: 1/4/2018

Allegation: Multiple

Chain of Command Finding: Multiple

Final Discipline: Multiple

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

The complainant (an SPD detective) brought forward allegations of Untruthfulness regarding a Corporal assigned to another investigative team. The complainant discussed the allegations with the Spokane County Prosecutor's Office who later sent a request to SPD Internal Affairs to open an investigation into the allegation.

While investigating the initial allegation, allegations were brought against the complainant and his Sergeant.

COMPLAINT

The Untruthfulness allegation stems from a traffic stop wherein the complainant (a detective) alleges that the Corporal who authored a report of a traffic stop was untruthful in documenting the facts of the incident in his arrest report. The complainant discussed the allegations with the Spokane County Prosecutor's Office. The Spokane County Prosecutor's Office subsequently sent a request to Spokane Police Department's Internal Affairs Unit to open an investigation concerning the allegation that the Corporal may have been untruthful in this particular case.

While conducting the investigation, it was learned that the complainant had advised his Sergeant of his intent to contact the Prosecutor's Office. The Sergeant did not inform his chain of command, nor did he inform the Corporal's sergeant of the complainant's intent to talk to the Prosecutor's Office. The complaint against this Sergeant was his failure as a supervisor to report alleged misconduct of an employee to that employee's supervisor, failing to explore the issue and to conduct additional fact finding to determine if an investigation was warranted or if the allegation had merit.

While conducting the investigation, it was learned that the complainant did not provide any facts or proof that the Corporal had been untruthful. It was found that the statements were made recklessly, circumventing his chain of command and the Internal Affairs process. In addition, the complainant brought forward unsubstantiated claims of wrongdoing by other detectives in the unit.

INVESTIGATION

Internal Affairs conducted an investigation which included interviewing members of the complainant's chain of command and work unit, as well as the Corporal's chain of command and work unit. It also included a review of material provided to Internal Affairs from the Spokane County Prosecutor's Office.

The investigation was to determine the serious allegation that the Corporal was untruthful in his report of the traffic stop based on what the complainant alleges were inaccuracies and omissions.

Through the investigation it was found that the complainant failed to provide any proof that the Corporal was untruthful during his criminal investigation of the traffic stop. He provided opinion, unsubstantiated accusations and self-set standards in investigations but failed to provide facts to show the Corporal was untruthful.

The "misconduct" as reported by the complainant to his Sergeant had to do with the Corporal's failure to properly report the traffic stop and subsequent arrest that he made. The Sergeant failed to report the alleged misconduct to the Corporal's supervisor and his own Lieutenant.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

An allegation of untruthfulness against an officer is a very serious allegation and the ramifications for the officer if the allegation is sustained are career changing. This investigation was conducted thoroughly to understand the extent to which the complainant believed the Corporal was untruthful. In conclusion, there was no proof that the Corporal was untruthful but that the complainant was reckless in accusation and the manner in which the accusation was brought forth.

The allegation against the Corporal of Untruthfulness was determined to be Unfounded.

The allegation against the complainant's Sergeant which was sustained was:

Ethical Standard 3.1: Members of the Spokane Police Department, as professionals, shall maintain an awareness of those factors affecting their responsibilities.

Allegations against the complainant, which were sustained, were for:

Policy 340.3.5: Knowingly making false, misleading or malicious statements that are reasonably calculated to harm or destroy the reputation, authority or official standing of the department or members thereof.

Ethical Standard 3.1: Members of the Spokane Police Department, as professionals, shall maintain an awareness of those factors affecting their responsibilities.

Ethical Standard 3.6: Members of the Spokane Police Department, with due regard for compassion, shall maintain an objective and impartial attitude in official contacts.

Ethical Standard 4.9: Members of the Spokane Police Department shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner which does not discredit the law enforcement profession or the Spokane Police Department.