



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF OF POLICE

CRAIG N. MEIDL

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C22-019 OPO Number: N/A

Date of Complaint: 3/27/2021

Allegation: Excessive Force

Chain of Command Finding: Closed

Final Discipline: Not Applicable

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS:

The officer developed probable cause to arrest a theft suspect shortly after the theft took place. The officer located the suspect several blocks away from the victim business. The officer attempted to detain/arrest the suspect who then resisted so the officer could not place him on the ground and in handcuffs. The officer used tactics consistent with training and department policy, which included joint locks and body weight to put the suspect in a prone cuffing position. The suspect alleged the officer used excessive force by “stomping him” and using a “knee strike” to his back causing injury. The suspect alleged back injury and pain as a result.

COMPLAINT:

A complaint was initiated with the officer’s supervisor after the suspect alleged being stomped on and receiving a knee strike from the officer while being arrested. The subject also complained that the officer had pointed his duty pistol at him.

INVESTIGATION:

This matter was looked into by the officer’s supervisor, which included an interview with the suspect. Photographs were also taken of the areas he claimed was injured.

The case was forwarded up through the officer’s chain of command and then reviewed by the Spokane Police Internal Affairs. Internal Affairs looked at the case, read the reports and reviewed the digital evidence.

The investigation was reviewed and certified by the Spokane Police Ombudsman’s Office.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION:

Van Tassel explained why he drew the firearm and the suspect seemed to understand and withdraw his complaint. Van Tassel’s report and BWC clearly shows Van Tassel in the low ready and taking the suspect to the ground in a slow and controlled manner consistent with CJTC trained techniques. Once on the ground, BWC shows Van Tassel’s knee placed in the lower center back of the suspect. Further, Wells spoke with an independent witness who witnessed the incident and confirmed Van Tassel did not stomp or strike the suspect in any manner.

This case was CLOSED – An allegation of misconduct that is disproven upon initial review.

