



Peace Officer Standards and Training



Integrity Bulletin

Overlooked Quality of a Great Police Officer

By Jess Schermanon

Communication skills

Are you the type who is extremely thorough when writing emails or letters? When you relay a story, do you take special care to ensure you don't leave out any important details, painting as vivid and accurate a picture of what happened as possible? If so, you'll be happy to hear that these valuable communication skills can be leveraged in a successful law enforcement career.

In fact, proficient communication skills can be more than just helpful as a police officer—they can be vital. "When you write a report, your specific wording can be the difference between something usable in court and something that gets thrown out," explains Brian McKenna, a retired Lieutenant with more than 30 years of law enforcement experience under his belt. "You have to be very exact, and you have to know the laws that impact your reports."

It's also true that your ability to communicate clearly can help you earn the trust of the community in which you serve as a law enforcement officer. "Interpersonal communication skills are important because they allow officers to develop a good rapport with the community, with fellow officers and with those from diverse cultures," offers Eileen Carlin, state program director for the Rasmussen College School of Justice Studies.

Another important aspect of effective communication is the ability to patiently listen. "Officers who take the time to really hear what people are saying and who ask questions with real curiosity are going to get better results," McKenna says. He explains that when citizens feel like police officers truly care, they're more likely to cooperate, they typically offer more information and they often work to help law enforcement get to the bottom of an issue.

OPR Manager's Note

The POST Integrity Bulletin looks at the self-imposed circumstances in which our POST certified professionals find themselves.

What causes, otherwise reasoned, rational and professional law enforcement officers, to do the stupid things they sometimes do?

Our continuing efforts to study acts of misconduct and find a solution, have met with less than positive results.

We hope the information herein will bring attention on our profession's ability to deter official misconduct, improve the public perception of Idaho's law enforcement officers, and promote responsible, ethical discourse within your agency or department.



INSIDE STORY

The following incidents (we say “incidents” instead of “stories” because if they were not real, you may think they are just that, “stories”) are provided for your benefit and “enlightenment”. You’ve heard the saying, “You can’t make this stuff up.” Well, we either say, or hear it said, on a daily basis.

These incidents were NOT ultimately entertaining for the officer experiencing the consequences that followed, but by sharing them with you, we hope to let you learn from the mistakes of others. If you can not do that, then maybe someday, you too will be prominently featured here in the Integrity Bulletin...Don’t worry we will keep the names and agencies out of the story to protect (if possible) what’s left of your reputation.

He wanted to keep his purchases “low profile.”



COUGHING Liar Throat’s on Fire



COUGHING LIAR LEGAL STUFFS

IDAPA 11.11.01.057.07...

Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and regulations of my department.

IDAPA 11.11.01.110.02

b. A violation of the Council’s Code of Ethics;

f. Lying or falsifying official written or verbal communications;

Officer Rob Tussin was a police veteran of over 22 years. He’d seen a lot and done a lot. And some of those “a lots” were playing with his head. Tussin dealt with those policing experiences the best he could but sometimes it seemed like playing tiddlywinks with mittens on; he just could not play that delicate game without a little self help.

One afternoon, Betsy from the pharmacy called the chief with concern. The store was ordering a far larger quantity of DXM cough medicine than normal. At first they thought they were losing it through pilferage. Upon further investigation however, they found the cough medicine was being sold and the large majority of it to one purchaser, Officer Tussin. Betsy reported seeing Officer Tussin buying a bottle of cough medicine AGAIN, taking it out to his patrol car AGAIN, and knocking it out. Betsy wasn’t the only one seeing this happen. A customer came in the store one day and told her that she saw a police officer drink an entire bottle of cough syrup in his patrol car in the parking lot.

A careful review of the store’s receipts disclosed Tussin’s purchase history. Betsy pointed out that some employees referred to Tussin as “Officer Robotussin” or “Robo Cop”.

Tussin admitted self medicating to “numb” the effects of those policing experiences over the years and buying the goods from multiple sources so as to maintain a “low profile”; *But I never drank it on duty.* Well Mr. Robo Cop, that’s not what the witnesses or the polygraph says. Unfortunately Rob Tussin decided to self medicate and ignore the help offered him.



DECERTIFIED

LAZY LARRY'S STORY OF DECERTIFICATION



“Larry developed a kind of sour attitude in day to day operations and I would say lackadaisical would be his paperwork. He wasn’t, he was never a near zero producer, so he didn’t have a lot of citations and stuff to turn in. That was just his way of not having to do, to make sure his paperwork was accurate, he just didn’t produce any.” “But you could see, if he didn’t feel it was important...he just wouldn’t. His reports were notoriously void of detail. I would say he just didn’t care to

do it the best way he could. He wasn’t known for his accuracy.”

During a yearly performance evaluation, supervisors observed that Larry had repeatedly entered inaccurate and/or false information on his monthly statistical reports by turning in the same stat sheet month after month, changing only the name of the month. Required statistics sheets add in tracking hours worked and number of patrol functions (vehicle stops, traffic citations, calls for service) conducted per deputy in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. The information is compiled with other data to produce a department-wide report that is then published in the department’s Annual Report. The data is also used to receive grant funding from other State or Federal agencies.

Investigation discovered Larry had intentionally submitted deceptive and faulty stat sheets going back two years. He said, *“I honestly am not certain, my stats have never been accurate.” “I couldn’t tell you on a specific month how I did that. You are correct though, at some point they were just delete, (add a month) and send them in.” “They’re stats just made up anyway, they’ve been made up since the day I started ‘em, what difference does it make?”*

Well Larry, the difference is certification or DECERTIFICATION .

As a side note, after Larry was placed on administrative leave for the investigation, the department recovered 6 traffic citations from his patrol car that were never delivered to the Courthouse, 20 original incident reports he failed to turn in, and several Idaho driver’s licenses and proof of insurance cards never returned to citizens.

Lazy Larry’s

LEGAL STUFFS

IDAPA 11.11.01.057:

Para II Honest in thought and deed in both my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department.

V. I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

11.11.01.110.02:

f. Lying or falsifying official written or verbal communications.



VENDING CAPER:

LEGAL STUFFS

IDAPA 11.11.01.057.07

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or my agency.

IDAPA 11.11.01.110.02:

- b. A violation of the Council's Code of Ethics;
- c. Criminal conduct whether charged or not;
- f. Lying or falsifying official written or verbal communications.

DECERTIFIED



Vending Caper

Cpl Conway was on duty when he was dispatched to a vending-machine-in-the-ditch call (nothing out of the ordinary) at around 1339.

Conway cleared the call as unable-to-locate. The next day, Conway checked out at his father-in-law's place, only to check back in awhile later at the same location of the vending-machine-in-the-ditch call from the day before. He was loading a vending machine into his father-in-law's truck with the assistance of his father-in-law and an unknown passerby. Conway then cleared the location and ran an NCIC check on the vending machine serial number.

(The vending machine, valued at between \$500 and \$900 had in fact been stolen from a local business but was not in the system because the owner could not find a serial number.)

Conway subsequently helped unload the vending machine and then, after finding it worked, took it home and converted it for his personal use.

Conway told investigators he had been summoned to the vending machine's location by his father-in-law, who he assumed bought it at a lien sale from a storage facility. He claimed he did not remember being dispatched to a vending-machine-in-the-ditch call the day before and clearing it as unable-to-locate. Interestingly, Mr. father-in-law described the circumstance a little differently. He said Conway came to his house and asked for help recovering a vending machine. A polygraph confirmed the father-in-law's version of events and found Conway as deceptive.

"I thought I was in the right about the pop machine, I got it from my father in law, no matter what he says."

**AND YOU KNOW
WHAT ELSE**



This guys was Decertified too.

d. ~~0412-0506~~: Your Activity Log shows that you went to lunch from 0412-0506 hours. There is an hour gap in time from the end of your lunch and your following entry at 0610 hours. It was during this time that you were supposed to be working but were actually in the Police Department, logged on to the City's office computer, searching for sexually oriented photographs and videos on Facebook. On the computer workstation that you use in the City Office, your City account showed that you had saved 645 items in the last 7 days on the City's computer during working hours. You used your City-inappropriate website information. These websites included Facebook, Mafia Wars, and numerous sexually explicit searches within Facebook, such as "Houston Horny Hotties, Sex in Public, Thick and Sexy, I Want to Sleep With One of My Facebook Friends, etc." The majority of these searches were conducted while you were on duty.

CONVERSION

Allegation #4: Sergeant [REDACTED] took evidence of criminal activity, specifically alcoholic beverages from teenagers and converted that property to personal use. I concur with Sergeant [REDACTED]'s and [REDACTED] conclusions that this allegation is supported by their investigative findings as well as Sergeant [REDACTED]'s admissions that he did in fact commit this act on more than one occasion. Further it became known as a result of this investigation that while acting in the capacity of a watch commander, Sergeant [REDACTED] allowed and encouraged some of his subordinates to act in the same manner.

In addition, I believe that during the course of this investigation Sergeant [REDACTED] was not truthful on specific issues when questioned both by ISP and Sergeant [REDACTED]. Again for brevity sake and in light of his resignation I will not specifically delineate these lies.

IN THE NEWS

The Fresno Bee

Ex-Fresno correctional officer sentenced for sex with inmate. Her boss called her 'depraved'

By Robert Rodriguez, Updated June 29, 2021 (edited)

A former Fresno County correctional officer was sentenced Tuesday to two years probation and seven months in the county jail for having sex with an inmate. Tina Gonzalez, 26, who worked as a correctional officer from 2016 to 2019, was arrested on May 1 last year after an investigation by the Sheriff's Office's vice unit and internal affairs division. The investigation was prompted by a tip that a male inmate was given a cell phone and was having sex with a correctional officer.

Gonzalez pleaded no contest in April to one count of sexual activity by a detention facility employee with a consenting confined adult, one count of possession of drugs or an alcoholic beverage in a jail facility and a misdemeanor count of possession of cellular device with intent to deliver to an inmate.

Assistant Sheriff Steve McComas, said not only did Gonzalez have sex with the inmate, she also supplied him razors, a potential weapon in the hands of inmates, and also gave him inside information about when officers would be inspecting the inmate's cell.

She allegedly cut a hole in her uniform to make it easier to have sex with the inmate she was involved with. He also accused her of having sex inside the jail in full view of 11 inmates. "That is something only a depraved mind can come up with," he said. The assistant sheriff was hoping that Gonzalez might show some remorse about what she had done. But her phone calls to the inmate after she was caught, showed him otherwise.

The Judge: "I think what you did was terrible, stupid and you have ruined your career," Idiart said. "But I also believe that people can redeem themselves and you have the rest of your life to do that. Good luck."

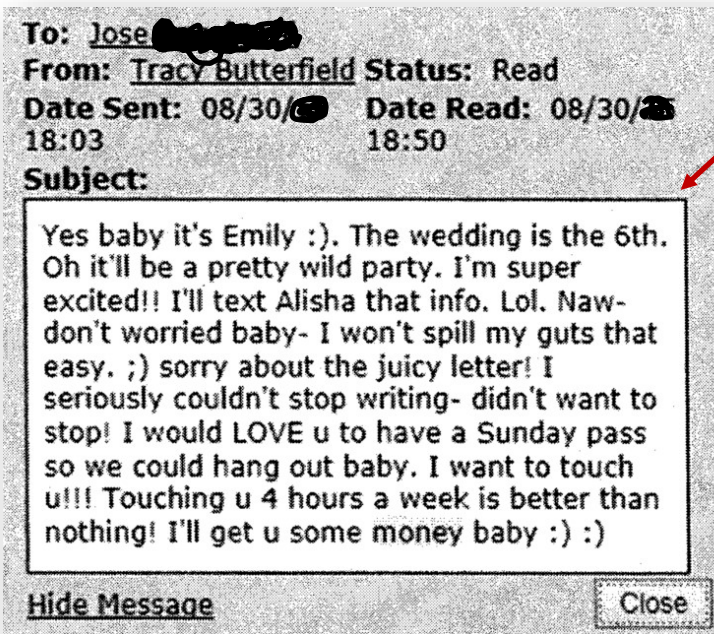


THE EVERLASTING ALLURE OF AN INMATE

Sgt. Jones was listening to a recorded phone call to an inmate identified as Jose, when Deputy Soundsberry overheard the call and recognized the female caller's voice as that of Deputy Emily Flussenhiemer. The caller was registered as "Tracy Butterfield." Subsequent reviewed calls between Jose and "Butterfield" noted her commenting on his love letters. She said she kept them even though she knew if [her husband, a police officer] found them, things would blow up. Sgt. Jones pulled text messages between Butterfield and Jones only to find 9 pages of recorded text messages. Jose referred to "Tracy" as "Emily" in several of the texts.

On one occasion, "Emily" wrote to Jose advising she was going to be off attending a wedding. Sgt Jones confirmed Deputy Flussenhiemer was on vacation during the "wedding" date. Tracy Butterfield's email address was lookinatemm84@gmail.com. Hmmm, Deputy Flussenheimer was born in 1984.

And by coincidence, clothing had been brought into the jail and placed in Jose's property without proper documentation. The Kohl's shopping bag containing a new pair of pants, 2 t-shirts, one pair of shoes, socks, and a can of deodorant. There was no inventory sheet explaining the property and who placed in his property bag.



After putting all this together, Deputy Flussenhiemer was given the opportunity to speak with the Chief Deputy. She knew why she was requested to meet. She admitted using an account under the name, Tracy Butterfield, but refused to answer when asked about her relationship with Jose. She then asked if it was illegal to put money on an inmate's account. Admitting that she had done so, she used a different name because she thought it would look funny if she did it under her true name. *D'ya think?*

Oh, and she dumped the police officer husband for Jose after his release.

ALLURE OF AN INMATE

LEGAL STUFFS

IDAPA 11.11.01.057.07

I will keep my private life unsullied

IDAPA 11.11.01.100.02

h. An inappropriate relationship

I asked Jose if he had any sexual relations while he was in custody and he replied "no" (his body language was similar to the first part of the interview). I asked Jose if he had any touching he would consider inappropriate and he said "no" (his body language again changed to rock back in his chair and he smiled). I asked Jose if there was any kissing while he was in custody and he replied "no, hell no" (Jose had a noticeable smile and rocked forward in his chair).



By: Jordan Fischer

Posted at 12:08 PM, Sep 06, 2017

GREENCSATLE, Ind. -- A corrections officer at the Putnamville Correctional Facility was arrested Tuesday on allegations he smuggled contraband into the prison.



RTV6
INDIANAPOLIS

The Indiana Department of Correction issued a statement Tuesday saying corrections officer Justin Ray Johnson had been taken into custody following an investigation into possible drug trafficking at the prison.

According to the release, when questioned by investigators, Johnson admitted he had trafficked illegal narcotics into the facility “on several occasions for multiple offenders.”

“It is sad to see our own staff involved in trafficking, but they are not above the law. Any trafficker will be held accountable, and will be prosecuted to ensure the safety and security of our facility, as well as the department,” Putnamville Correctional Facility Warden Brian Smith said in a statement.

Johnson was booked into the Putnam County Jail on preliminary charges of trafficking with an inmate, a level 5 felony.

Johnson is at least the second Putnamville correctional officer arrested this year on allegations of smuggling contraband into the facility.

In July, officer Rachel Marie Spendal told investigators she had been paid \$1,000 to bring a package containing Suboxone and pornographic photos to an inmate inside the facility.



IS SOCIAL MEDIA GOOD OR IS IT BAD?

HOW ABOUT GOOD?

These six Nashville police officers evacuated residents minutes before an RV exploded.

God bless our law enforcement! Back the blue! 🚓 🇺🇸



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[andrewcbemo](#) God bless these BRAVE men and women in blue! This is why we should NEVER defund the police! 🇺🇸



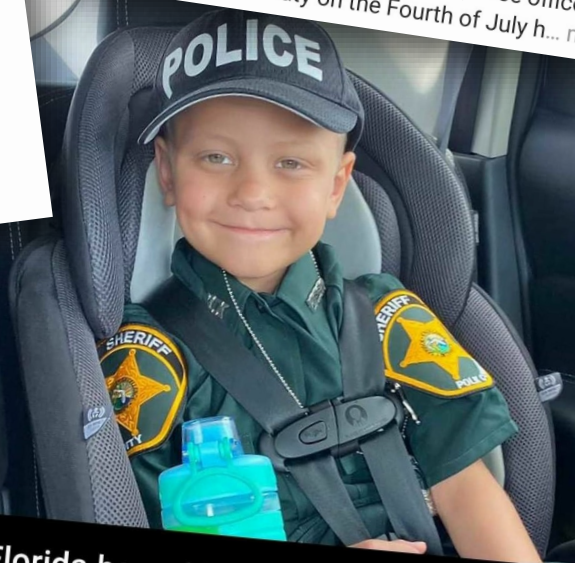
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RIP OFC. A. DIA #118
NEVER FORGOTTEN



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BACK PAGE INFORMATION

OPR

The Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) is an office within the Idaho Division of Peace Officer Standards and Training. OPR is staffed by OPR Manager, Dan Smith, a former NCIS Special Agent, and eight contract investigators located throughout the State of Idaho. All of the investigators are former federal, state or local law enforcement officers. POST investigators endeavor to complete thorough, competent investigations to ensure the entire story is presented during the reporting of allegations against peace officers and others we certify. It is a mainstay of POST's mission to maintain an ethical and lawful law enforcement profession for the people of Idaho.

The Idaho Legislature formally established the Idaho Peace Officers Standards and Training Council (POST Council) for the purpose, among others, of setting requirements for employment, retention, and training of peace officers, including formulating standards of moral character, and other such matters as relate to the competence and reliability of peace officers. The POST Council also has the power to decertify peace officers upon findings that a peace officer is in violation of certain specified standards, including criminal offenses, or violation of any of the standards of conduct as established by the Council's Code of Ethics. Idaho Code also requires that when a peace officer resigns his employment or is terminated as a result of any disciplinary action, the employing law enforcement agency shall report the employment action to the POST Council within 15 days.

IDAPA 11, Title 11, Chapter 01

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