



RE: Notes from SPD Officer Mac Gordon

Prepared by: Drew Finley and Rob McDermott (both present in conversation)

Date: Conversation Date – April 4, 2017

CONFIDENTIAL

- After a meeting with Seattle PD leadership we noticed an SPD officer directing traffic from the Columbia Tower underground parking garage and approached him to introduce ourselves at approximately 4:00 PM on April 4th 2017.
- We decided to speak with the officer in the hopes of gaining additional market insight about off-duty opportunities and how SPD manages them. We approached him and introduced ourselves, immediately disclosing that we were from CopsForHire, that Drew was the founder and Rob the CEO.
- He introduced himself as Officer Mac Gordon. He indicated he has been on the force for 32 years and working off-duty 31 years of that time.
- He was very polite and respectful. He said he had heard of our company, CopsForHire as recently as the previous Guild meeting.
- Without prompting, he continued to talk about our business model of managing off-duty services through the “Eighth Floor” (while pointing at the HQ building just up the block) and instantly stated “that was your first mistake”. We asked why he said that – Officer Gordon’s reply was that he doesn’t “give a F**K” what they think about how off-duty is managed in this city. He’s been here for thirty plus years and the 8th Floor has no idea how things are done.
- He then said, with an attempt at humor and arrogance; “F**k the 8th Floor, F**k anyone they talk to, and F**k anything they tell us to do!” He went on to say, “Starting with them is where you all screwed up from the beginning, but really you didn’t understand the first thing about off-duty in Seattle”, he went on to tell us that our approach made us laughable within SPOG.
- Around this point, Drew mentioned that he was a retired Pierce County deputy and had also worked about three years with King County Sheriff’s Department. Drew talked about the many hours he had worked off-duty in Pierce County, and why we built our online solution the way we did.
- He then offered, “Yeah, we spoke about your company at a recent Guild meeting and the word was, working as a 1099-MISC was a really bad choice, and possibly illegal. Plus, we had no protection for insurance - it was not available and the officers were not protected if injured.” In short, it was a strong “don’t get caught up with these guys” message from the Guild.
- We then attempted to explain this was misinformation, and that we’ve worked hard to develop solutions that protect Cops, including a \$500,000.00 liability policy that included litigation coverage as well as our supplemental accident insurance, both at no cost to Cops or Departments.

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- Officer Gordon appeared to appreciate this information, allowing us to further explain other areas where he and others were apparently misinformed. We discussed how our Marketplace was fully automated. We were also very clear with him that we were not a staffing company, rather a technology company; hence the W-2 issues did not apply to us. Finally, we shared with him that we only work with commissioned officers and that no retired Cops are a part of the CopsForHire marketplace.
- Rob then asked if Andrew could provide Officer Gordon with further details about CopsForHire, specifically addressing misinformation that we know have been stated about us and shared with SPOG members directly. Rob asked if he would read that information and provide his feedback and comments. Officer Gordon agreed and it was at this point that he offered his business card and suggested that we could e-mail him directly with anything we wish for him to review and comment on. ([email correspondence for reference attached](#))
- At this point, Officer Gordon relaxed quite a bit, and surprised us with about 30 additional minutes of non-stop, highly detailed discussion of how off-duty “really works in Seattle”. He was adamant that off-duty was not a topic that was going to be controlled or changed by anyone. He referenced a lawsuit involving Seattle’s Finest that “took care of that” a few years back. He went on to name the owner of Seattle’s Finest by saying it was initiated by Raleigh Evans to defend their ability work off-duty on their own terms.
- He went further to explain that most large underground parking garages in the city have officers working them. He said that most cops are paid around \$300 a month to “manage the garages before they even work one hour of off-duty”. His quoted \$300/month fee is a fee for simply managing the location. He described that the Manager usually has about 5 or 6 cops working under them, and that the Manager’s responsibility is to make sure that every shift is covered. According to Officer Gordon, as Managers, some Cops earn \$1,200-\$1,500 per month without working a single shift. He indicated that he only runs two locations himself, so he is only making \$600 a month in fees.
- He then embarked on a lengthy description of the underlying infrastructure of off-duty in Seattle. He said that he, and the guys that “manage the work” for off-duty are like “the Mafia,” a term he used at least 5 times during the subsequent conversation. He said that those customers that need their work know this is the way it’s done and everyone knows to not mess with them, or else “all hell breaks loose.” He said to us, “it’s been this way for 50 years, and it’s not going to be changed by CopsForHire or the 8th floor that’s for sure!”
- He stated that the Guild’s primary interest was in the protection of the above-mentioned “management fees”. At this point, he laughed and commented “the 8th floor has no idea how all this really works”. He went further to clarify that Raleigh at Seattle’s Finest understands these relationships, and works with the existing structure to make sure that “managers” get their fees, and helps them run the hours if they want his insurance coverage and to be W-2 employees. The job Officer Gordon was working at the time of our discussion was an example of this arrangement - he said he makes \$300 a month for managing the job (one of 2 he manages), but at this point he revealed that the work still goes through Seattle’s Finest. He said he has 5 guys he schedules. Most “managers” work with 5 to 6 guys in their group.



- Officer Gordon went further to explain that he earns \$100/hr. for the Columbia Tower garage job every day he works the actual shifts at this location. Rob pushed back on the rate of \$100 per hour, expressing to him that it seemed high for Seattle off-duty, he explained that it is actually \$60/hr. for 4 hours, but he works only 2 of them, gets paid for 4 hours, and he takes \$50 dollars x 4 hours billed for his 2 hours actually worked. Raleigh takes the remaining \$10 dollars x 4 hours billed for running the work through his business. So in conclusion, he works 2 hours and takes pay for 4, and has 5 other guys that he splits the hours with weekly. In addition to this overcharged “hourly” rate, Officer Gordon also receives the management fee for this and one other location.
- We then asked about the customer’s thoughts on paying for 4 hours and only having him there for 2 hours, he again laughed and said, “too bad for them, they know how it works, they don’t need someone for 4 hours, I’m not standing around that long, and they pay the 4-hour minimum, that’s how it works in this town”
- In reaction to Rob’s comment that we were confident that the staffing companies were not going to be fans of CopsForHire. Officer Gordon explained that it was this group of “Managers” that “have a lot to lose” if CopsForHire becomes the primary method of running off-duty in Seattle. He went on to tell us that we’ve likely had no clue that they have really been the ones blocking us from making any progress within SPOG, not Raleigh at Seattle’s Finest or anyone else.
- He continued using terms such as “mini mafia”, “breaking legs”, and repeatedly saying “F the 8th Floor” while describing what would happen if anyone would dare try to mess with their off-duty jobs. Officer Gordon went on to describe “really cake jobs” such as Seattle City Light off-duty work. He restated twice how these jobs were viewed. “Yeah, we would really break some bones if those were messed with, those jobs are a minimum of four hours, and most are done within an hour and a half. When the hole is filled back in we take off but get paid for the full 4 hours.” He shared the rates on these City jobs are \$90 an hour and \$180 after hours and weekends and then re-emphasized that “No one is going to F**k with these jobs if they know what’s good for them!”
- Referring to City Light and other City jobs he stressed again that it was the staffing companies like Seattle’s Finest and SSI that did a great job of “training [those customers] that we are going to get paid a minimum, we are going to get paid more after hours and on weekends and holidays, so no one is going to mess with those jobs, or they are going to end up with broken knee caps.”
- In response to a repeated concern over the hourly rates he was quoting, Officer Gordon then offered that he was “squeezing” the building owners for more money. He explained that whenever they wanted a pay raise, he would bypass the parking garage companies and go straight to the building managers. If they refused to pay more, he would threaten to leave and ensure no other cops would work the job. Officer Gordon said that within a day or two with no cop, the building manager would be calling back asking him to please return, quickly agreeing to any new rate. He indicated that getting to \$90 per hour, before the current rate of \$100, that this is exactly how it was done in a very matter of fact and arrogant tone.



- Officer Gordon went on to explain that this “squeezing” was so effective because it only takes one or two calls from building tenants waiting an hour or longer to exit a building to make a building manager cave to his demands. He went further to stress that although payment often comes from the parking companies that manage the garages, they never deal with those companies – leveraging with the building manager is so much more effective, since they need things to run smooth.

Conclusion:

The above notes capture a conversation that occurred when we happened upon a 32-year veteran of Seattle Police Department. He bragged about how neither we, nor anyone else were going to “f**k with fifty plus years of culture” in Seattle. He talked openly and freely – for about 45 minutes - with absolutely no fear and no belief that the current lack of oversight and transparency in off-duty would ever change.

Andrew Finley, as an 18-year law enforcement veteran, is experienced in and recognizes “cop talk” when he hears it. He can fully appreciate how some stories can be told in a colorful way to emphasize a point.

Officer Gordon’s statements, however, both support and add important context to customer comments we’ve received regarding exploitative behaviors by both off-duty staffing agencies and Seattle Police. They reflect extortionist behavior and violate SPD policies on several levels. The behavior Officer Gordon described is considered “profiting from your position”. Andrew, during his career, would expect to have been fired and/or prosecuted for such behavior. Andrew was never permitted to accept as much as a cup of coffee without the threat of being fired for abusing his position.

As disturbing as the implications of this conversation were, it did provide us with some much-needed insight. We now more fully understand the source of the resistance and pushback to Seattle Leadership’s efforts to bring oversight, fairness and transparency to off-duty – even in the form of misinformation - from SPOG. Seattle’s off-duty is not merely suffering from lack of oversight, transparency and policy enforcement, it is a disturbing source of corruption.

Seattle Police Department may not realize the extent of corruption within Seattle’s rank and file with regards to off-duty work. Ultimately, this story will become exposed, become public and fuel even more community distrust and disrespect for law enforcement. Meanwhile, customers do not deserve this treatment at the hands of those sworn to serve and protect.

The whole of law enforcement suffers from the behavior of a few. Communities, customers, departments and cops themselves all lose. Seattle Police Department must demand immediate transparency and move to fully enforce policies that are in both their own best interests as well as the interests of communities they serve.

- Rob McDermott and Andrew Finley