



**HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**



**INVESTIGATOR:**

Lt. John Tate

**DATE OF INCIDENT:**

7/12/13

**OFFENSE:**

Internal Investigation

**SUSPECT (S):**

Willie Slack

**VICTIM (S):**

Melissa Blair

**CASE NUMBER:**

On 7/17/13 I was contacted by Sheriff Brown and Lt. French and asked to conduct an internal investigation into an incident that occurred at the Holmes County Jail on 7/12/13 involving inmate Melissa Blair and Sgt. Willie Slack.

Lt. French provided me with two inmate requests, one from Melissa Blair stating that on 7/12/13 she was involved in an incident with Sgt. Slack and she believed that he used excessive force on her and also alleged he sexually assaulted her. The other request was from inmate Crystal Harper who wanted to talk about the incident.



## **HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**



I viewed a copy of the camera footage inside the officer control room. I observed Sgt. Slack escort Ms. Blair into the control room and then place her over a desk. I then observed Sgt. Slack holding Ms. Blair arms behind her back, standing in an interview stance with his knee up against her while Ofc. Larry Evins called for Ofc. Melissa Davis to come from the front to the control room with a pair of cuffs and escort her to the front.

On 7/18/13 I went to the Holmes County Jail to interview the alleged victim (Melissa Blair) and other potential witness(s) and to obtain sworn taped statements from all.

I spoke with the alleged victim Ms. Blair who stated to me that around 9pm on July 12<sup>th</sup> she asked to speak to Sgt. Slack about opening the bean flap on the door so that she could get some air. She went on to say that Sgt. Slack would not open the flap and he observed laundry hanging on the bunks of several inmates. Sgt. Slack stated to the inmates to get against the wall that he was going to confiscate the clothes because they were not suppose to be hanging clothes up on the bunks. Ms. Blair told Sgt. Slack that he was not taking her clothes because that is all the clothes that she had. She then went to grab her clothes and Sgt. Slack told her not to grab the clothes and she did anyway. Sgt. Slack got a pair of handcuffs and she had her clothes and she would not let go of them. Sgt. Slack grabbed her and was trying to handcuff her and ordering her to put her arms behind her back however she would



## ***HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORT***



not comply and give him her arms. She went on to say that she bent over the table to keep him from gaining control of her arms and clothes. She went on to say that she still refused to let him and Ofc. Evins gain control of her arms. She stated while she was bent over the table Sgt. Slack was behind her and she could feel his penis up against her. She went on to say that he attempted to put handcuffs on her and pinched her on the hand (observed bruise) and he grabbed her around the neck and put his knee in the back of her leg. She added that her pants were falling down and Sgt. Slack reached and pulled her pants up for her. Ms. Blair stated that she had boxer shorts on under the pants. He then escorted her to the control room where he leaned her up against the desk while Ofc. Evins called for Ofc Davis to come to the control room. Ofc Davis came from the front with a pair of cuffs and then escorted her to the front. Ms. Blair stated that while in the control room she felt Sgt. Slack's penis up against her again until Ofc Davis arrived. Ms. Blair stated to me on several occasions that she was wrong and she knows she over reacted but, however she feels Sgt. Slack used to much force. I then told her that I had reviewed the footage inside the control room and it looks to me that Sgt. Slack has his knee up against her and he was holding her arms behind her back. She stated that she didn't know what it was she just felt something. I asked her about the bruises on the back of her leg and she stated that she felt like the bruises came from Sgt. Slack kneeling her while trying to restrain her.



## ***HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORT***



I then interviewed the following inmates as potential witnesses: Catherine Chandler, Crystal Harper, Stacie Ryals, Deziraie Fielding, Victoria Petit, Terri Bradley, Victoria Huckaby, Brenda Bertholf, and Jamie Sanders. All the witness gave consistent statements with Ms. Blair accounts about the incident. All the inmates stated that Sgt. Slack came to the pod and observed the laundry hanging on the bunks. Sgt. Slack told them to get against the wall and he stated to them that he was going to take the clothes that were hanging on the bunks. Blair told him that he was not taking hers. Sgt. Slack told Blair to get her stripes (pants) on because she had on boxer shorts. When Blair went to get her pants on she grabbed her clothes that was hanging on the bunk and stated to Sgt. Slack again that he was not taking her clothes and they got into a verbal argument. Sgt. Slack got a pair of handcuffs and told Blair to put her hands behind her back in which she told him no and refused to let go of her clothes. Sgt. Slack grabbed Blair and was attempting to cuff her and she was resisting by leaning over the table attempting to keep her clothes and arms away from him. Ofc Evins came in to help Sgt. Slack grab her arm while Sgt. Slack attempts to cuff her and Blair slipped her hand out of the cuffs. Sgt. Slack was able to gain control of Blair's arms and sometime during the scuffle her pants fell down a little and Sgt. Slack pulled her pants back up. Sgt. Slack escorted Blair out of the pod and into the control room. The inmates stated that they felt Sgt. Slack used to much force, however they all stated that if Blair would have complied and not resisted the incident would not have occurred.



## **HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**



I spoke with Ofc. Davis who gave a statement to the fact that she was contacted by Ofc. Evins to come to the control room with a pair of cuffs. Ofc. Davis stated that when she arrived at the control room she cuffed Blair and escorted her to the front.

I spoke with Sgt. Slack and he stated that Ofc. Evins called him and stated that the females wanted to talk to him about the bean flap being opened so that they could get some air. Sgt. Slack went on to say that he went to the back and spoke to the females and told them that the flaps had to be closed per Sgt. Weeks and everybody else flaps are closed. While talking to them he observed towels and clothes hanging on bed rails where they have been told prior that they were not suppose to have them hanging there. He told Blair to go get her pants on because she was in her boxer shorts and she walked over to her bunk and got her pants on and grabbed her clothes that was hanging and told Sgt. Slack that he was not going to take her clothes and she walked back over to him. Sgt. Slack then told her to release her clothes she was holding and she refused. Sgt. Slack then reached and tried to take the clothes from her and she leaned over the table trying to keep the clothes from him. He then called for Ofc. Evins, to come and help him try and cuff her. They were able to get one hand cuffed but somehow she was able to slip out of the cuffs and they fell to the floor. Sgt. Slack then escorted her out of the pod to the control room where he held her down against a desk until Ofc. Davis could arrive with another set of cuffs. Sgt. Slack stated that he did not see inmate Blair's pants falling down and he did not reach and pull inmate Blair's pants up for her.



## **HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**



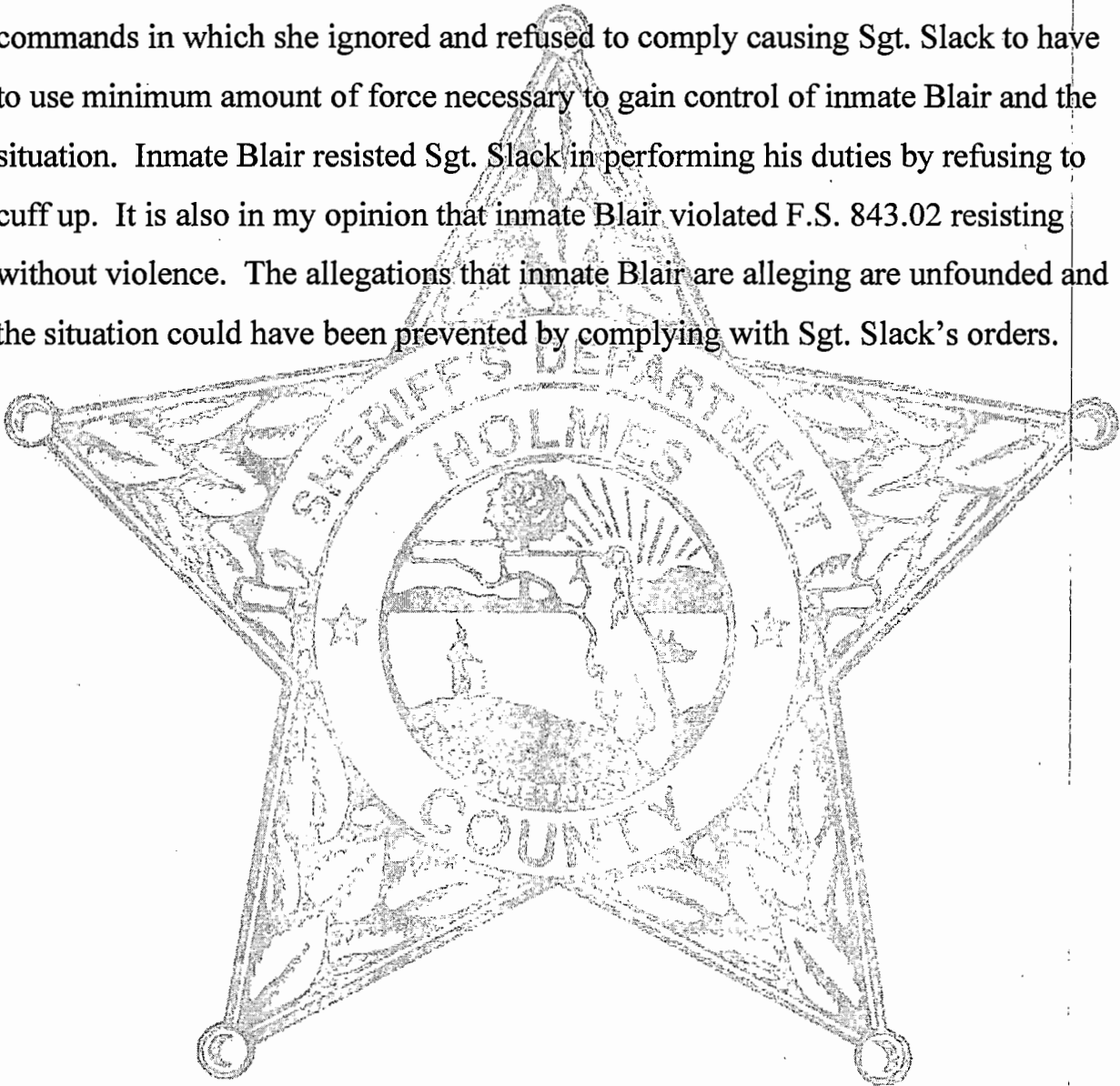
On 7/25/13 I met with Ofc. Evins at the Sheriff's Office and obtained a statement from him about the incident. Ofc. Evins stated that when he come on shift he went around closing the bean flaps on the pods like Lt. Lee and Sgt. Weeks told him to. While closing the flaps inmate Blair stated that she couldn't breathe and wanted him to leave the flap open. Ofc. Evins told her that he could not do that and inmate Blair asked to speak with Sgt. Slack. He went on to say that Sgt. Slack came back to the female pod and talk to inmate Blair and while talking to her he observed laundry hanging on their bunks and begin to talk to them about the regulations of the jail. Sgt. Slack then told them to get against the wall and that he was going to collect the clothes that they are not suppose to have and put them in their property. Ofc. Evins further stated that Inmate Blair came off the wall and went over to her bunk and grabbed her clothes and told Sgt. Slack that he was not taking her clothes. Sgt. Slack then told inmate Blair to get back on the wall and she refused to do so. Sgt. Slack then went over to inmate Blair and attempted to take the clothes from her and she resisted him. Sgt. Slack then grabbed her by her arm and was trying to cuff her and she started fighting with him and would not comply with his orders by cuffing up. Ofc. Evins added that he was then summonsed by Sgt. Slack to come help him to get her cuffed and he started talking to inmate Blair trying to get her to quit resisting and she told him to "fuck you". Ofc. Evins went on to say that Sgt. Slack was able to gain control on inmate Blair and escort her to the control room where Ofc. Davis came and cuffed her and escorted her to the front for lock down.



**HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

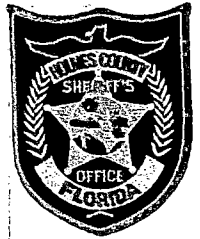


After interviewing everyone involved including the witness(s) and based upon the statements given it is in my opinion that Sgt. Slack gave inmate Blair several verbal commands in which she ignored and refused to comply causing Sgt. Slack to have to use minimum amount of force necessary to gain control of inmate Blair and the situation. Inmate Blair resisted Sgt. Slack in performing his duties by refusing to cuff up. It is also in my opinion that inmate Blair violated F.S. 843.02 resisting without violence. The allegations that inmate Blair are alleging are unfounded and the situation could have been prevented by complying with Sgt. Slack's orders.





# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT



**Date:** January 25, 2013

**To:** Sheriff Tim Brown

**From:** Lt. Michael Raley

**Reference:** Inquiry into allegations of unbecoming conduct

On January 22, 2013, Sheriff Tim Brown had received an anonymous letter alleging improper conduct by Sergeant Tyler Harrison during a Holmes County School Board meeting on January 15, 2013. The letter alleges that Sergeant Harrison was off duty wearing civilian clothing wearing his badge and department weapon disrupted the school board meeting and accosted a female in the parking lot.

At your request, I have conducted an inquiry into the allegations. I have spoken with Sergeant Harrison regarding the allegations. Sergeant Harrison was indeed present at the school board meeting on that date, along with Sergeant Adrienne Odum (School Resource Officer) and Sergeant Daniel Morris. Sergeant Harrison was in plain clothes, wearing his department weapon and badge, which is the dress code for members of the Criminal Investigative Division of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office. Sergeant Harrison decided to attend the school board meeting at his own choice to observe the meeting and assist Sergeant Odum and Morris if needed. The school board meeting on January 15, 2013 began at 6:00 PM, which is after Sergeant Harrison's normal hours; however as he is subject to being on call, it is not uncommon for member of the Criminal Investigative Division to attend functions after business hours wearing their department weapon and badge.

Sergeant Harrison denied making any inappropriate comments or disrupting the meeting. Sergeant Harrison did state that after the meeting he did engage in a conversation with Wade Kriser and his cousin Megan Kriser. Sergeant Harrison stated that while he and the Kriser's did disagree over the conversation, he did not raise his voice, make any rude or unprofessional comments or conduct himself in an unprofessional manner. Sergeant Harrison stated that the disagreement was over the controversy caused by the school board's decision to transfer Zeb Brown from principal of Bethlehem School and other family issues. Sergeant Harrison also did not know who would have written the letter.

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I then spoke with Sergeant Daniel Morris regarding the allegations. According to Sergeant Morris, Sergeant Harrison stood by him throughout the meeting. Sergeant Morris specifically stated that Sergeant Harrison did not cause any disruption in the meeting and never raised his voice to any of the attendees. Sergeant Morris did disclose that while Sergeant Harrison was having a discussion with Wade Kiser, Megan Kiser also joined in the discussion and began raising her voice. Sergeant Morris did disclose that he asked Mrs. Kiser to lower her voice. Sergeant Morris denied Sergeant Harrison raised his voice or accosted Mrs. Kiser.

I then spoke with Sergeant Adrienne Odum regarding the allegations. According to Sergeant Odum, she had been contacted by Holmes County School Superintendent Eddie Dixon. Superintendent Dixon requested Sergeant Odum have another officer attend the school board meeting due to the recent controversy over the transfer of Zeb Brown from his position as principal of Bethlehem School. Sergeant Odum contacted Sergeant Daniel Morris, who was on duty that day. Sergeant Harrison stood next to Sergeant Morris during the meeting and in the proximity of Sergeant Odum. Sergeant Harrison did not say or do anything that would have been disruptive to the meeting. Sergeant Harrison did not seem at all disgruntled or agitated. Sergeant Odum did disclose that after the meeting while Sergeant Harrison was engaged in a conversation with Wade Kiser, Megan Kiser joined in the conversation and began raising her voice. Sergeant Odum denied Sergeant Harrison raised his voice or accosted Mrs. Kiser.

Also on January 23, 2013, I spoke with Pastor Eddie Eaton. Pastor Eaton had been standing next to Sergeant Morris and in very close proximity of Sergeant Harrison during the school board meeting. Pastor Eaton stated that he never heard Sergeant Harrison make any comments during the meeting, nor do anything that would be considered disruptive or unprofessional. Pastor Eaton stated that he had left after the meeting.

On January 24, 2013, I spoke with Superintendent Eddie Dixon. Superintendent Dixon. According to Superintendent Dixon, he did not observe Sergeant Harrison say or do anything disruptive or inappropriate. Superintendent Dixon also advised that the meetings are audio recorded and could be made available if needed. Superintendent Dixon did not observe Sergeant Harrison after the meeting or outside of the building.

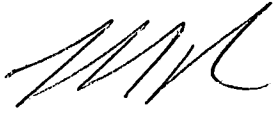
On January 25, 2013, I spoke with Wade Kiser on the telephone. Mr. Kiser stated that he and his wife Megan had a disagreement with Sergeant Harrison after the meeting, but did not believe that Sergeant Harrison had committed any violations of law or policy or caused any disruptions. Mr. Kiser denied that Sergeant Harrison had accosted or prevented him or Mrs. Kiser from leaving. Mr. Kiser stated that he and Mrs. Kiser have no ill will or hard feelings toward Sergeant Harrison and they are working to resolve any family problems.

Based on my interviews with Sergeants Odum and Morris, Superintendent Dixon, Pastor Eaton and Mr. and Mrs. Kiser, the allegations made in the letter are without merit. I have also not found any violations of the Holmes County

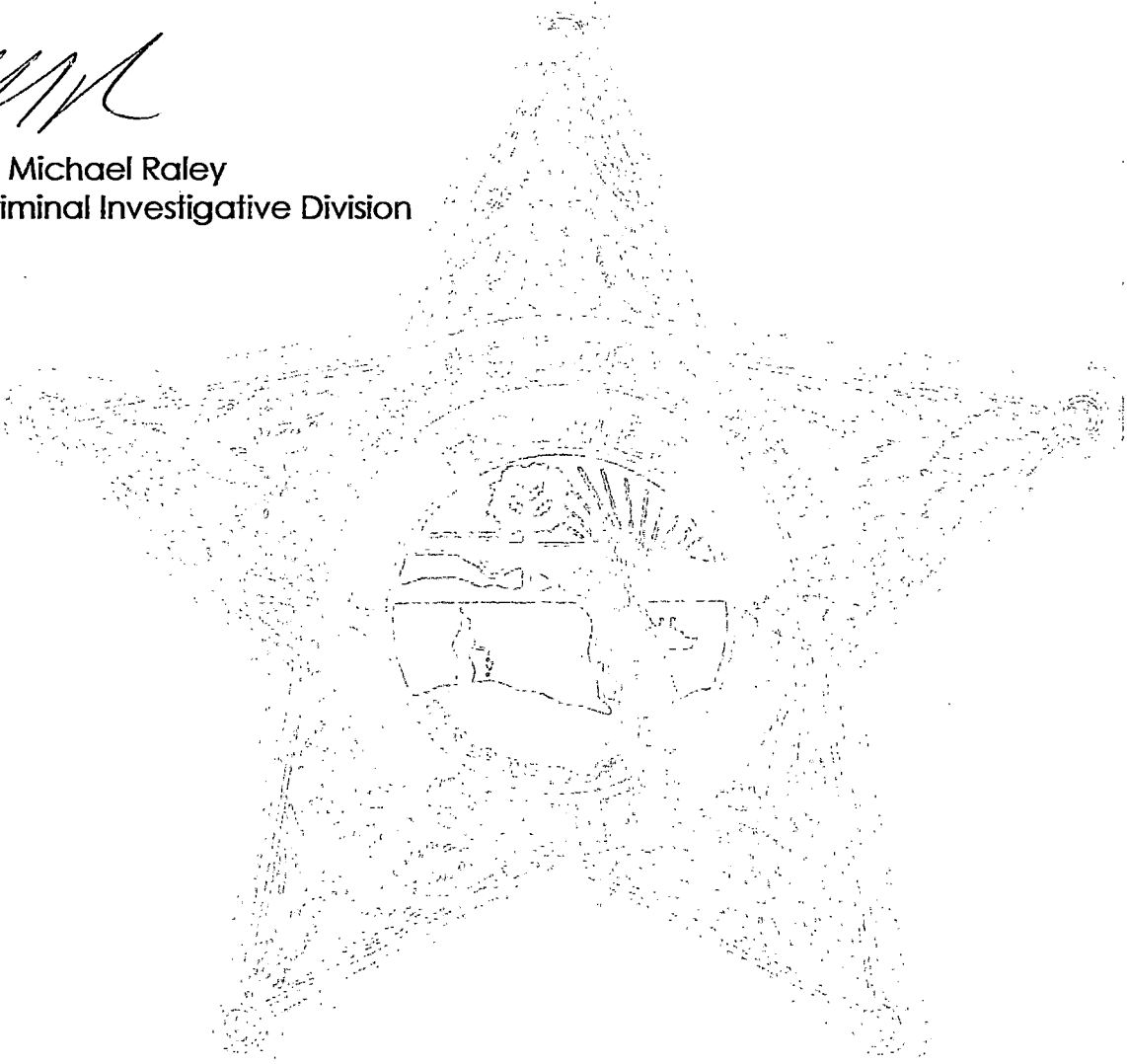


Sheriff's Office Standard Operation Procedure were violated by Sergeant Harrison.

In an effort to prevent any future allegations, the controversy over the Holmes County School Board transfer of Zeb Brown as principal and the pending litigation by Sergeant Harrison's mother against the Holmes County School Board over actions taken by Zeb Brown, Sergeant Harrison has been advised not to attend any school board meetings, either on or off duty and to avoid any unnecessary controversy involving the school board's actions and his family's pending lawsuit.



Lt. Michael Raley  
Criminal Investigative Division



**HOLMES**

**COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



**TIM BROWN**  
**SHERIFF**

January 19, 2016

To: Lisa Wells

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 you were arrested by the Holmes County Sheriff's Office for the charge of Battery Domestic Violence. Based on your arrest, this is a violation of Holmes County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedures 1.4.5 (Conformance to Laws).

As of this writing, January 19, 2016 you are being separated from your position as an Auxiliary Correctional Officer with the Holmes County Sheriff's Office and you will return all property belonging to the Holmes County Sheriff's Office in a timely fashion.

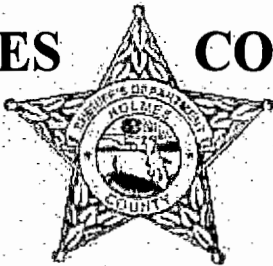
Also you may provide a written response to this decision. If you choose to do so it will be placed in your personnel file.

Regretfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Brown", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sheriff Tim Brown

# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



**TIM BROWN**  
**SHERIFF**

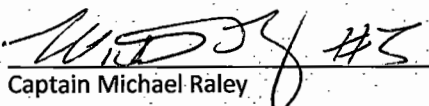
## LETTER OF REPRIMAND


Date: October 18, 2016  
To: Sergeant Thomas Pate  
From: Captain Michael Raley  
Subject: Conduct Unbecoming

On Tuesday, October 18, 2016 Sheriff Tim Brown received a complaint from Jason French regarding a harassing text message he had received. On the evening of Sunday, October 9, 2016, Mr. French, a candidate for Holmes County Sheriff, received a lengthy text message calling him among other things a liar and ending with "Enjoy the surprise you'll see tomorrow". The text was received from [REDACTED]. The next week Mr. French made a complaint regarding the text message with the Bonifay Police Department. The investigation by the Bonifay Police Department revealed the number came from a phone app called "Pinger". "Pinger" records indicate the associated phone number from the account is [REDACTED]. Further investigation by the Bonifay Police Department revealed the [REDACTED] number was under your account. Also on Tuesday, October 18, 2016 you admitted to Sheriff Brown and myself that you had sent the text message.

Based on this action, you have violated Holmes County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedure 1.4.2 (Unbecoming Conduct). "Personnel shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect most favorable on the department. Conduct unbecoming Sheriff's personnel shall include that which tends to bring the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the person as a member of the Department or that, which tends to impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or personnel. Employees shall at all times conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect a favorable image on themselves and the Holmes County Sheriff's Office."

Sergeant Pate, you should always maintain a high level of professionalism in your job and off duty actions. Because of the way you concealed your identity sending the message and the content of the message, you have sullied the image of the Sheriff and the Sheriff's Office. Because of the seriousness of this incident, you are hereby receiving this letter of reprimand to be placed in your personnel file.

  
Captain Michael Raley

  
Sergeant Bill Pate



# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT



**Date:** February 12, 2016

**To:** Sheriff Tim Brown

**From:** Capt. Michael Raley

**Reference:** Inquiry into allegations of excessive force/false report

On January 27, 2016 I was contacted by Jill Simpson from the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission. Ms. Simpson advised they had received a complaint on Deputy Jason Stafford from Michael Johnson and requested an investigation into his allegations. Later that day I was ordered by you, Sheriff Tim Brown to conduct an inquiry into the allegations.

I reviewed the allegations Michael Johnson had sent CJSTC. According to Mr. Johnson, Deputy Stafford had falsified a report anticipating Trooper Roger Pyle was going to arrest Mr. Johnson for an accident he had been involved in. Mr. Johnson also alleged Deputy Stafford choked him unconscious.

On February 1, 2016 at approximately 1:20 PM I spoke with Trooper Roger Pyle. According to Trooper Pyle he had been dispatched to a disabled vehicle. His investigation revealed the vehicle had struck a fence post up the road, had left the scene and became disabled. He was later notified of a subject walking along US Hwy 90, later identified as Mr. Johnson. Trooper Pyle made contact with Mr. Johnson and Mr. Johnson told him he was a passenger in the vehicle. Trooper Pyle also stated Mr. Johnson was not making sense when he was talking. Deputy Stafford arrived on scene at some point. Trooper Pyle stated Mr. Johnson began making statements about converting to Islam and began stepping into the road even as both were telling him to stay out of the road because of traffic. Trooper Pyle stated Deputy Stafford grabbed Mr. Johnson because he would not get out of the road and Mr. Johnson began struggling. Trooper Pyle stated he assisted Deputy Stafford in restraining Mr. Johnson and placing him on the ground and into handcuffs. Trooper Pyle stated Deputy Stafford used the least amount of force necessary to place Mr. Johnson into custody and Deputy Stafford probably saved Mr. Johnson's life as he was almost struck by a passing vehicle. I asked Trooper Pyle if he had any video of the incident. Trooper Pyle advised if the footage would have been evidence of a criminal case it would have been downloaded otherwise the video deletes after

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30 days. I asked Trooper Pyle if he had made any other indications of the incident other than the crash report. Trooper Pyle advised he did not use any force other than assisting Deputy Stafford restrain Mr. Johnson. Trooper Pyle stated while he could not prove Mr. Johnson was driving the vehicle, Mr. Johnson admitted to being an occupant in the vehicle and Mr. Johnson did not act like he was in his right mind as if he was under influence of something.

On February 8, 2016 I obtained a sworn taped statement from Deputy Jason Stafford. According to Deputy Stafford he went to assist Trooper Pyle when Trooper Pyle was out with Mr. Johnson. When he arrived Mr. Johnson appeared that he was not in his right mind. Because of Mr. Johnson's erratic behavior, Deputy Stafford was initially going to Baker Act Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson began backing into the road. Deputy Stafford told him not to get in the road but Mr. Johnson continued. Deputy Stafford grabbed Mr. Johnson to get him out of the road, when he began snatching away trying to get away. Deputy Stafford and Trooper Pyle were then able to get Mr. Johnson on the ground and place him in handcuffs. Because Mr. Johnson had resisted and was on state probation he decided to charge him with resisting an officer without violence. Deputy Stafford denied choking Mr. Johnson or falsifying any documents. Deputy Stafford stated the incident was not recorded on his body cam because it had been left on and the battery was dead. Captain John Tate had previously reprimanded Deputy Stafford regarding the body camera and reminded him to follow policy and ensure the battery is charged.

I then reviewed Mr. Johnson's jail file. Mr. Johnson does not have any marks or redness, or any sign of being choked unconscious visible in his booking photo. Mr. Johnson also did not report any injuries in his booking file, medical file or file any grievances regarding the excessive force or false arrest.

Florida Statute 843.02 (Resisting an officer without violence) states  
Whoever shall resist, obstruct, or oppose any officer as defined in s. 943.10(1), (2), (3), (6), (7), (8), or (9); member of the Florida Commission on Offender Review, or any administrative aide or supervisor employed by the commission; county probation officer; parole and probation supervisor; personnel or representative of the Department of Law Enforcement; or other person legally authorized to execute process in the execution of legal process or in the lawful execution of any legal duty, without offering or doing violence to the person of the officer, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

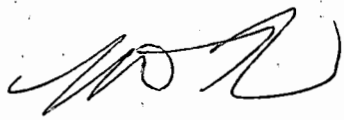
Based on Trooper Pyle's and Deputy Stafford's statements, because of Mr. Johnson's behavior, Deputy Stafford believed without intervention, Mr. Johnson's behavior may cause him to harm himself. Mr. Johnson did violate Florida Statute 843.01 by attempting to run and snatching and pulling his arms



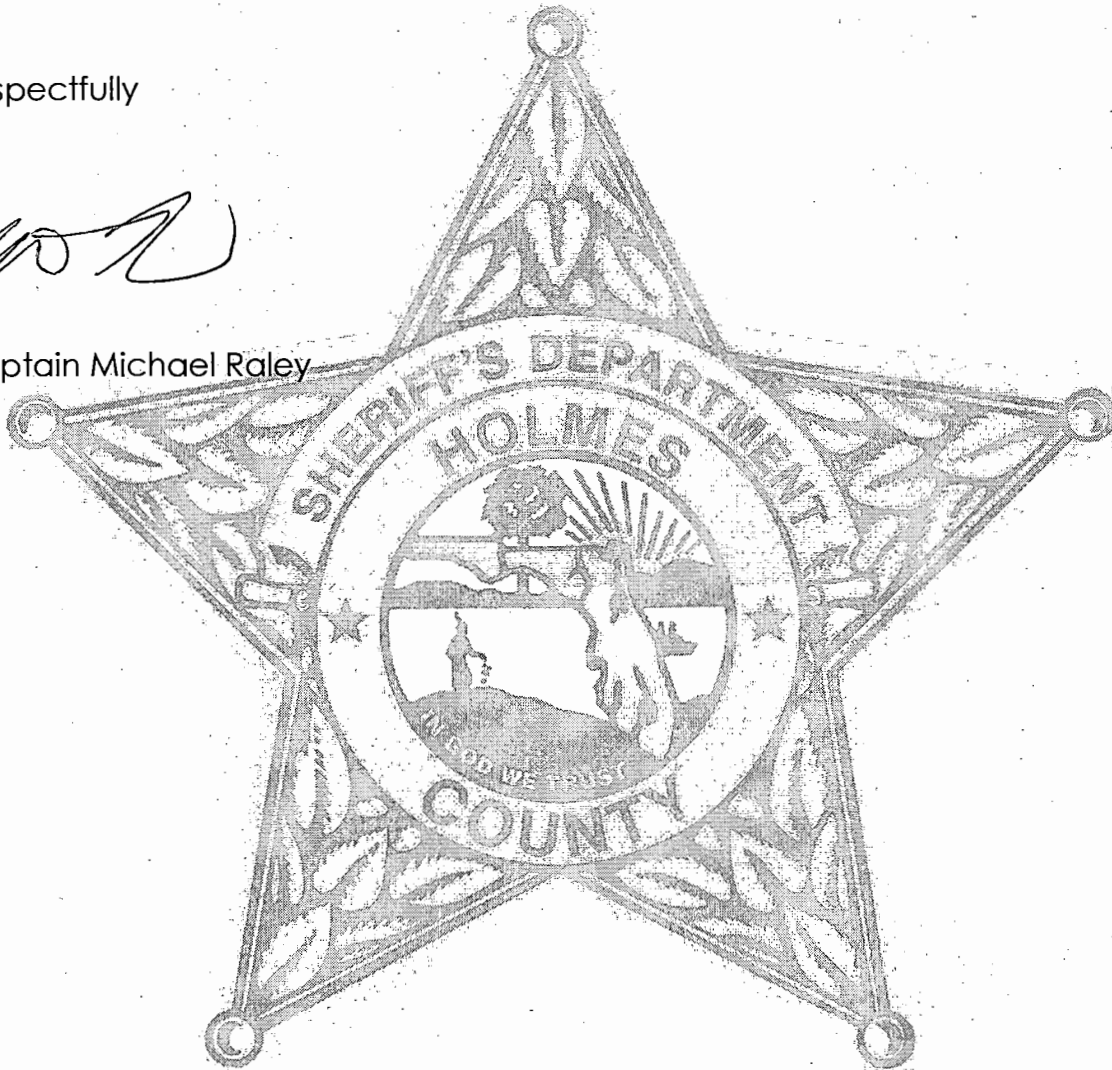
away and Deputy Stafford was within the policy of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office and Florida Statute in placing Mr. Johnson into custody.

Based on the statements of Deputy Stafford and Trooper Pyle and the lack of any signs of injury or any other evidence of excessive force these allegations are unfounded and are not supported by any of the allegations of Mr. Johnson.

Respectfully

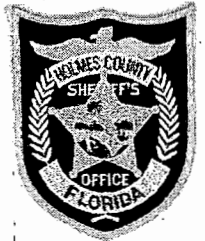


Captain Michael Raley





# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT



**To: Sheriff Tim Brown**

**Internal Investigation Case Number: IA16-05**

**Classification: Conduct Unbecoming**

**Subject Member: Deputy Shane Hamilton**

**Complainant: Captain John Tate**

**Date Initiated: 5-27-2016**

**Final Report Date: 7-01-2016**

**Case Investigator: Captain Michael Raley**

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On March 27, 2016 I was advised by Sheriff Tim Brown to conduct an internal investigation regarding the allegation Deputy Shane Hamilton violated Holmes County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedure 1.4.2 (Conduct Unbecoming). Sheriff Brown had been notified in the early morning hours of an incident in which Deputy Hamilton had caused a disturbance. Deputy Hamilton was given written notice by Captain John Tate on May 27, 2016 that he was placed on administrative leave.

On June 14, 2016 I received and reviewed the case file (HCSO #2016-004786). The case file contained an offense report from Deputy Wade Strickland, supplemental reports from Deputy Donnie Justice and Captain John Tate and a sworn written statement from Hannah Porter.

Based on the statement of Hannah Porter and the reports of Deputy Strickland and Captain Tate; Deputy Shane Hamilton came to 100 Judy Lucas Drive Apt E-5 on the evening of May 26, 2016. Deputy Hamilton's girlfriend, Christina Alderman lives at the apartment, but was not at home that evening. Deputy Hamilton let himself into the apartment using his key. Hannah Porter was babysitting Ms. Alderman's child and was asleep inside when Deputy Hamilton came inside and woke her up. Deputy Hamilton asked where Christina was and Ms. Porter told him she was not there. Deputy Hamilton continued to ask where Christina was and began searching the apartment looking for her. Deputy



Hamilton went upstairs and Ms. Porter continued to ask him to leave. Deputy Hamilton then went down to Apartment E-3, where Ms. Alderman was and began beating on the doors and windows. When Ms. Porter told Deputy Hamilton she was calling 911, Deputy Hamilton went and sat in his vehicle.

Also on June 14, 2016 I received a copy of the 911 call from 911 Director Cliff McGowan. According to the 911 time stamp on 5-26-16 at 11:50 PM, Hannah Porter calls about Deputy Hamilton coming in the apartment and banging on the neighbors doors. Ms. Porter stated "gonna need someone to come get him" and indicates his girlfriend, Christina Alderman was hiding from him. At 12:01 AM Holmes County Communications Officer Fallon Braxton calls Captain John Tate and informs him of the situation.

Also on June 14, 2016 I requested the 911 call from the incident and any and all in car camera and body camera footage.

On June 15, 2016 I traveled to the residence of Deputy Hamilton and presented with a notice of providing a statement on June 17, 2016. I explained the purpose of the notice, the "Garrity" warning and his right to a representative. While at the residence, I observed Christina Alderman's white Toyota Camry at his residence. I explained to Deputy Hamilton she had not provided a statement regarding the incident and I would take a statement from her if she wished.

Also on June 15, 2016, I requested Sergeant Clint Smith obtain any and all footage from the jail regarding Deputy Hamilton on May 26, 2016. I was advised by Sergeant Smith the jail footage only went back eleven days and would not go back any later than 11:00 PM on May 27, 2016.

Also on the evening of June 15, 2016 I received a text message from Deputy Hamilton that he had dropped off his resignation at the Sheriff's Office.

When I arrived at work Thursday June 16, 2016 I located Deputy Hamilton's resignation and forwarded it to Sheriff Brown and Captain Tate.

Also on Thursday June 16, 2016 I was contacted by Ms. Alderman. Ms. Alderman advised she would provide a statement and requested I meet her at Deputy Hamilton's residence later that evening. At approximately 3:30 PM I met with Ms. Alderman and obtained a sworn taped statement. According to Ms. Alderman, she got off work at 9:00 PM. Ms. Alderman explained that Hannah Porter had agreed to watch her child at her apartment. When she arrived at Judy Lucas Apartments, she saw Jessica Adkins in the parking lot and they began talking. She then went to Jessica's apartment (E-3). Ms. Alderman explained that she had been arguing with Deputy Hamilton earlier and was not answering any text messages or phone calls from him. Later that evening while



at Jessica's apartment, she heard knocking on the door and Deputy Hamilton asking where Ms. Alderman was. Jessica told Deputy Hamilton she was not there and he kept talking to her through the door. The next thing Ms. Alderman knew deputies were at the apartment complex. Ms. Alderman stated she had not wanted to talk to Deputy Hamilton that evening but had since made up. Ms. Alderman added Deputy Hamilton had a key to her residence and did not have any problem with him going inside her residence. Ms. Alderman also added she did not notice anything damaged in her residence. Ms. Alderman also indicated she believed Hannah Porter overreacted in calling 911 because she (Hannah) could have gotten her into trouble with her lease. Ms. Alderman also added Hannah Porter does not like Deputy Hamilton because since she had been dating Deputy Hamilton, Deputy Hamilton has indicated to her (Christina) that he did not like Hannah

On Monday June 20, 2016 I spoke to Hannah Porter on the telephone. Ms. Porter declined to provide a sworn taped statement, but did indicate Deputy Hamilton woke her up and was "acting crazy" inside the apartment. Deputy Hamilton then went to Apartment E-3 and began beating on the door and window wanting to know if Christina was there. Ms. Porter called 911 and law enforcement arrived.

Also on Monday June 20, 2016 I received the body cam footage from Deputy Wade Strickland. The body camera footage does not show any interaction with Deputy Hamilton and only shows Deputy Hamilton talking with Hannah Porter.

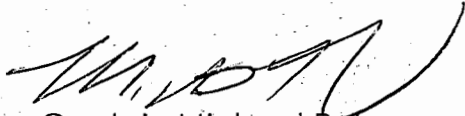
On Monday June 27, 2016 I spoke with Jessica Adkins on the telephone. Jessica agreed to come to the Sheriff's Office the next day to provide a statement.

On Tuesday June 28, 2016 I met with Jessica Adkins at the Sheriff's Office and obtained a sworn taped statement. According to Jessica, was sitting on her porch when she saw Christina pull up. She and Christina were sitting on her porch and when Deputy Hamilton pulled up on his personal vehicle, they went inside Ms. Adkins residence. She saw Deputy Hamilton unlock the door and go inside Ms. Alderman's residence. Deputy Hamilton then came over to her apartment and began beating on the door and window for approximately 30 minutes to one hour wanting her to come to the door.

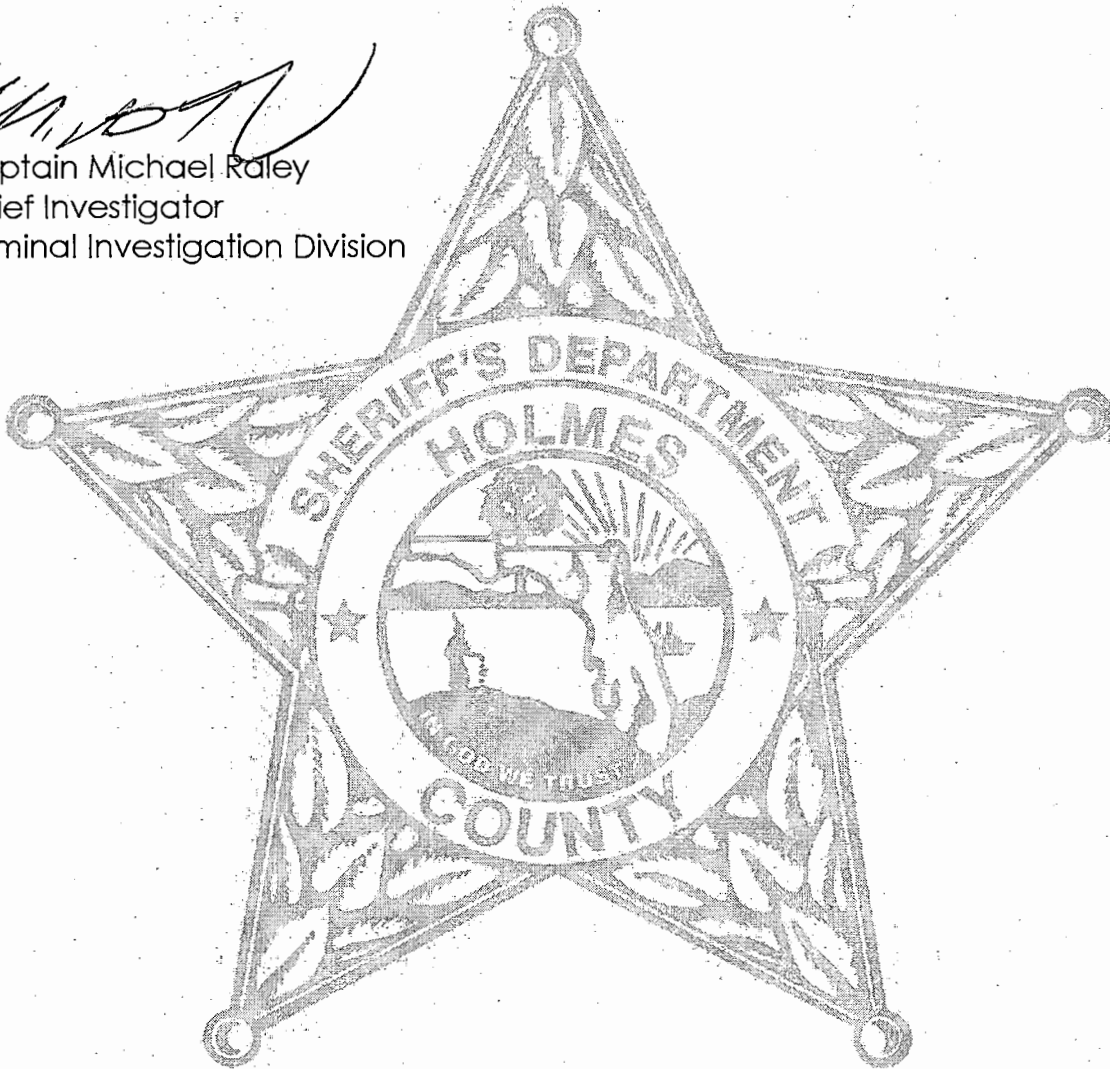
HCSO SOP 1.4.2 states "Personnel shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect most favorably on the department. Conduct unbecoming Sheriff's personnel shall include that which tends to bring the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the person as a member of the Department or that, which tends to impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or personnel. Employees shall at all times conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect a favorable image on themselves and the Holmes County Sheriff's Department."



After reviewing all facts and evidence from the investigation, the allegation of violation of HCSO SOP 1.4.2 (Conduct Unbecoming) is sustained. Deputy Hamilton's actions on the evening of May 26, 2016 did not reflect a favorable image on him or the Holmes County Sheriff's Office and brought disrepute on himself and the Holmes County Sheriff's Office. This is based upon the 911 call and statement of Hannah Porter, Jessica Adkins and Christina Alderman along with the reports of Deputy Wade Strickland, Deputy Donnie Justice and Captain John Tate.



Captain Michael Raley  
Chief Investigator  
Criminal Investigation Division





## HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Date: June 2, 2016

To: Deputy Shane Hamilton

I have reviewed all facts and evidence accumulated during the internal investigation which is now completed concerning the DCF investigation into alleged child abuse.

On April 19, 2016 The Holmes County Sheriff's Office received an abuse report from the Florida Department of Children and Families alleging you, Deputy Shane Hamilton had spanked your paramours 2 year-old child leaving a bruise. DCF forwarded the allegation to their Jackson County office to avoid any conflict. Deputy Hamilton, you were currently on administrative leave in regards to an officer involved shooting since April 12, 2016. At my recommendation, you were to remain on administrative leave pending the outcome of the DCF investigation to determine if a criminal or internal investigation would be needed.

Captain Raley spoke with DCF CPI Anissa Cottongin, who indicated the report was closed with physical injury not sustained. As you are aware I requested a copy of the report to confirm the findings to determine if an internal or criminal investigation is warranted.

On May 23, 2015 Deputy Hamilton, you provided Captain Raley with a copy of the DCF investigative report. Based on the findings of physical injury not sustained, I am releasing you from administrative leave and placing you back to regular duty.

Regretfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Brown".

Sheriff Tim Brown

**850-547-4421 – PHONE**

**850-547-2290 - FAX**



# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## INVESTIGATIVE REPORT



**To: Chief Deputy Michael Raley**

**Internal Investigation Case Number: IA17-04**

**Classification: Dereliction of Duty Insubordination**

**Subject Member: Corporal William Byram**

**Complainant: Sergeant Segers**

**Date Initiated: 7/25/2017**

**Final Report Date: 7/28/2017**

**Case Investigator: Sergeant Greg Johnson**

---

On July 26, 2017 I was ordered by Capt. Michael Raley to conduct an internal investigation regarding the allegation Cpl. William Byram allegedly violated HCSO standardized operating procedure 1.4.2 (Unbecoming Conduct) and HC Jail Standard Operating Procedure 6091.45(A)3 (Failure to report for duty/Absent without leave).

On July 26, 2017 Sergeant Ryan Segers submitted a report that reflects the following;

On July 25, 2017 at approximately 2:15 pm I, Sergeant Segers received a phone call from Cpl. Byram who advised that he would not be at work tonight. I asked him why and he stated it was an emergency. I asked Cpl. Byram if everything was ok and what was wrong. Cpl. Byram stated to be honest, I do not have any power to my house and I am going to my father-in-law's to borrow \$73.00, to turn it back on. I told Cpl. Byram, Ok but could he come in to work after he got the power back on. Cpl. Byram stated he might could but if he didn't get the money, he was going to have to get a motel for his wife and kids to sleep in. I told him that would be ok and thanks for calling me. Cpl. Byram did not call me back to inform me on his situation.

On July 26, 2017 Correctional Deputy Frank Turbeville submitted a report that reflects the following;

On July 25, 2017 at approximately 12:21 p.m. I, Transport Deputy F. Turbeville, received several texts from Cpl. W. Byram stating that he had no money and his power was out. Among the text he stated that he was going to rob a store to provide for his family. During the progression of the afternoon I received several more texts from Cpl. Byram threatening harm to

others. I advised him not to do anything stupid. Out of concern from Cpl. Byram's wellbeing I advised my supervisors, Sgt. L. Lee of this situation as well as Sgt. R. Segers, and Capt. M. Moore.

Capt. M. Raley contacted me later in the afternoon asking me if I heard from Byram and I advised him that I had not. Capt. Raley advised me that if I heard from Byram to let him know. At approximately 9:29 p.m. Cpl. Byram text me asking why I had talked to Capt. Raley. I advised him that I had talked to Capt. Raley because I was worried about him and his family. This incident happened in Washington and in Holmes County.

Correctional Deputy Frank Turbeville submitted screen shots of the text messages that he received from Cpl. William Byram on July 25, 2017.

- "I find some way to get something done I'm going to Holmes County or Washington and rob a store. That's all I can do now for my family"
- "That's ok my family will have power and what they need. I might be in prison but my family will have what they need."
- "Right now I don't care if Mike Moore or defers fires me I want be coming in for awhile. I fixing to go Rob me a tom thumb."
- "My Kids and wife going to have power. Cause I'm getting the money and then I'm going to put a bullet in that woman at the power company."
- "When the cops get me I'm going to tell them my meds is not working."
- "I'm going to kill me someone."
- "I never called him back. But I'm going to the power company in the morning. There not going to like what I see or do."
- "I'm fixing to make the news my kids and wife are hungary"

On July 27, 2017 Capt. Michael Raley submitted a report that reflects the following;

On Tuesday July 25, 2017 at approximately 10:30 PM I, Capt. M. Raley was contacted by Deputy Turbeville that Cpl. Byram had contacted him wanting to know what he had told me. I then contacted the Washington County Sheriff's Office and requested they conduct a welfare check on Cpl. Byram. I was later contacted by WCSO Dep. Jared Lee. Dep. Lee advised he had spoken with Cpl. Byram and he (Byram) told him he was just venting and was not serious. I then spoke with Cpl. Byram and he again told me things had just gotten out of hand. I informed Cpl. Byram to be in my office the next morning.

On Wednesday July 26, 2017 at approximately 9:00 AM Cpl. Byram came to the Sheriff's Office. I gave Cpl. Bryam a notice of internal investigation for violation of HCSO SOP 1.4.2 (Unbecoming conduct) and HC Jail SOP 6091.45(A)(3) (Failure to report for duty). I also gave Cpl. Byram information regarding the Employee Assistance Program. Cpl. Byram stated he had

not reported for work because he had been under a lot of pressure and had only been venting when he sent the text messages.

The Holmes County Jail Standard Operating Procedure 6091.45 states the following:

**DERELICTION OF DUTY INSUBORDINATION**

A. Dereliction of duty on the part of any employee prejudicial to the proper performance of the functions of the Agency is cause for disciplinary action and/or dismissal. Dereliction of duty includes, but is not limited to:

9. Displaying a reluctance to properly perform assigned duties, or acting in a manner tending to bring discredit upon him or herself, the Detention Center or the Agency, or failing to exercise diligence and display interest in pursuit of duties.

The Holmes County Sheriff's Office standard operating procedure states the following:

**HCSO SOP 1.4.2 Unbecoming Conduct**

Personnel shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect most favorably on the department. Conduct unbecoming Sheriff's personnel shall include that which tends to bring the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the person as a member of the Department or that, which tends to impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or personnel. Employees shall at all times conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect a favorable image on themselves and the Holmes County Sheriff's Department.

After reviewing all facts and evidence from the investigation, the allegation of violation of violation of HCSO SOP 1.4.2 Unbecoming Conduct and Holmes County Jail Standard Operating Procedure 6091.45 (Dereliction of Duty Insubordination) is sustained. Cpl. William Byram did act in a manner tending to bring discredit upon himself and the Holmes County Sheriff's Office. This based on the text messages between Cpl. William Byram and C.O. F. Turbeville. During these conversations Cpl. Byram conducted himself in an unprofessional manner and acting in a manner tending to bring discredit upon himself and the Holmes County Sheriff's Office. This is based on copies of the text messages, the report given by C.O. Turbeville, the report submitted by Sgt. R. Segers, and the report submitted by Capt. M. Raley.



Sergeant Greg Johnson  
Criminal Investigation Division

# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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January 10, 2017

To: Carl Stoldt

On January 9, 2017 Captain Raley was contacted by Investigator Jeff Snell of the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. Investigator Snell advised they were investigating an incident in which they received reports of a subject impersonating a law enforcement officer and you were the suspect. Investigator Snell also advised you had been stopped by their agency and were driving a vehicle that matched the description and the victims identified you as the suspect. Captain Raley then informed me of this information. This is a violation of HCSO SOP 1.4.2 (Unbecoming Conduct).

As of this writing, January 10, 2017 you are being separated from your position as an Auxiliary Law Enforcement Officer with the Holmes County Sheriff's Office and you will return all property belonging to the Holmes County Sheriff's Office in a timely fashion.

Also you may provide a written response to this decision. If you choose to do so it will be placed in your personnel file.

Regretfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tate", written over a horizontal line.

Sheriff John Tate



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**Date:** January 4, 2017

**To:** Sheriff John Tate

**From:** Capt. Michael Raley

**Subject:** Corrections Deputy Zach Neitsch

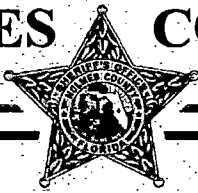
**Reference:** Inquiry into allegations of improper strip search

On the evening of Thursday December 15, 2016 I was contacted at home by Corporal Frank Turbeville. According to Corporal Tuberville, he had two inmates allege to him they had been strip searched in front of other inmates and wanted to file a grievance under PREA. I informed Corporal Turbeville to allow the inmates to write out their statements and I would follow up with an interview.

On Friday December 16, 2016 I informed Sheriff Tate of the allegations. Sheriff Tate and I met with Corrections Deputy Neitsch at the Sheriff's Office. According to Deputy Neitsch, he and Corrections Deputy Riley Pate decided to search the trustee pod because of a shortage of sheets in laundry. As they entered the pod, they ordered the trustees to get against the wall. Deputy Pate began searching the bunks and Deputy Neitsch began strip searching the inmates. Deputy Neitsch had stripped searched Inmate Jackson and Inmate Kelley when Corporal Moore entered the pod and saw the strip searches. Corporal Moore informed Deputy Neitsch that any strip search would be conducted out of view of other inmates. Deputy Neitsch stated he realized he had erred and was sorry. Deputy Neitsch was informed I would be interviewing the inmates and he could possibly receive discipline.

Later on Friday December 16, 2016 I traveled to the Holmes County Jail and interviewed several inmates. A sworn taped statement was obtained from Inmate Jacob Kelley. According to Inmate Kelley, on the evening of December 12, 2016 C/D Pate and C/D Riley had entered the trustee pod and ordered the inmates to get against the wall. While C/D Pate was searching the bunks, C/D Neitsch ordered Inmate Jackson to strip for a search and Inmate Jackson refused and asked if they could perform the strip search behind in the bathroom. C/D Neitsch told Inmate Jackson he would take his gain time and take his trustee status if he didn't comply. Inmate Jackson complied and C/D Neitsch ordered Inmate Jackson to strip again. C/D Neitsch told Inmate Jackson it wasn't good enough and ordered Inmate Kelley to squat and cough again. Inmate Kelley performed a strip search at which time Corporal Moore entered the pod and told C/D Neitsch not to strip search inmates in view of other inmates. No other inmates objected to the searches not made any comments at the time. Inmate Kelley stated other inmates stated it was a PREA incident. Inmate Kelley stated C/D Neitsch pat searched the inmates that were ahead of him and

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Inmate Jackson. Inmate Kelley also stated Corporal Moore took Inmate Jackson back out into the hall with C/D Neitsch to talk to him about the situation. Inmate Kelley stated he wanted to talk with a lawyer regarding the incident. Inmate Kelley also described an incident approximately 6 to 8 weeks prior where C/D Neitsch and C/D Pate strip searched the trustee pod in the open.

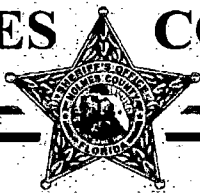
Later on Friday December 16, 2016 I obtained a sworn taped statement from Inmate Robert Vermillion, Inmate Jerome Derrell Works, Inmate Robert Platt and Inmate Nicholas Cox. All of the inmate's statements corroborated Inmate Kelley's statement. Inmate Vermillion described the strip search as inappropriate. Inmate Vermillion described the process as the inmate dropping their pants and squat and cough with no other clothing or body parts searched.

Later on Friday December 16, 2016 I met with Inmate John Patrick Jackson and obtained a sworn taped statement. Inmate Jackson's statement corroborates Inmate Kelley's statement regarding the strip search. Inmate Jackson went on to say when Corporal Moore called him into the corridor with C/D Neitsch to talk with him about the incident. Cpl. Moore asked Inmate Jackson what it would take to keep Captain Braxton about the incident. Inmate Jackson told Cpl. Moore he would like 10 extra days gain time and Cpl. Moore told him he couldn't do that but he could get him some food. Inmate Jackson stated he was scared he would be set up by another officer. Inmate Jackson also thought about incident would fall under PREA. Inmate Jackson stated he felt sexually violated, however he denied any sex act or penetration. Inmate Jackson also alleged C/D Neitsch singled him out and harasses him because they knew each other from school. Inmate Jackson also alleged Cpl. Moore tried to bribe him by offering to bring him food instead of reporting the incident to Captain Braxton. I asked Inmate Jackson if he wanted to be transported to another facility and he stated he would consider being housed in the Washington County Jail.

On Monday December 19, 2016 I contacted Washington County Jail Administrator Karla Brock and arranged for Inmate Jackson to be transported to the Washington County Jail for housing. Later that evening I was contacted by C/D Thelma Mahan who advised Inmate Jackson refused to be transferred. C/D Mahan also had obtained a written request from Inmate Jackson requesting no further action be taken in the matter.

On Thursday December 29, 2016 I traveled to the Holmes County Jail to speak with Inmate Kelley and Inmate Jackson. I advised Inmate Kelley that based on all statements and HC Jail SOP no PREA violation occurred. Inmate Kelley advised he was satisfied with the outcome of the investigation.

Later on December 29, 2016 Inmate Jackson arrived at the jail from his work squad and no male Correction Deputies were present to strip search him to enter the jail. I volunteered to conduct the search to avoid waiting. Inmate Jackson entered the booking shower room



and removed his boots and shirt. While I was gathering Inmate Jackson's boots and shirt, Inmate Jackson dropped his pants, squatted and coughed then pulled up his pants and began to get dressed. I asked Inmate Jackson what he was doing and he explained that was how strip-searches were done. I then explained the proper procedure for Inmate Jackson and conducted a proper strip search (ie, checking all clothing, visually checking all parts of the body). I then informed Inmate Jackson based on all of the statements and HC Jail SOP no PREA violation occurred. Inmate Jackson advised he was satisfied with the outcome of the investigation and wished to continue his sentence at the Holmes County Jail.

### Holmes County Jail SOP's

Holmes County Jail SOP 6769 covers Sexual Assault Preventions.

#### **6769.10 DEFINITIONS FROM PREA 2003**

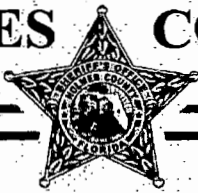
- A. Nonconsensual sex acts—Contact of any person without his or her consent or of a person who is unable to consent or refuse; between the penis and the vagina or the mouth and the penis, vagina or anus; of penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person by hand, finger, or other object.
- B. Abusive sexual contact—Contact of any person without his or her consent, or of a person who is unable to consent or refuse; and intentional touching, either directly or through clothing or the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh or buttocks of any person.
- C. Staff sexual misconduct—Any behavior or act of a sexual nature directed towards an inmate by an employee, volunteer, official visitor or agency representative. Romantic relationships between staff and inmate are included.
- D. Staff sexual harassment—Repeated verbal statements or comments of a sexual nature to an inmate by an employee, volunteer, official visitor or agency representative, including: demeaning references to gender or derogatory comments about body clothing; profane or obscene language or gestures.

Holmes County SOP 6722 cover Inmate Search Procedures. Strip Search procedures are covered.

#### **6722.30 STRIP SEARCHES**

- A. As used in this section, the term "strip-search" means having an arrested person remove or arrange some or all of his or her clothing so as to permit a visual inspection of the genitals, buttocks, anus, breasts, or undergarments of such person.
- B. No person arrested for a traffic, regulatory, or misdemeanor offense, except in a case which is violent in nature, which involves a weapon, or which involves a controlled substance, shall be strip searched unless:

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1. There is probable cause to believe that the individual is concealing a weapon, a controlled substance, or stolen property; or
  2. A judge at first appearance has found that the person arrested cannot be released either on recognizance or bond and therefore shall be incarcerated in the county jail.
- C. Those who do not meet the criteria established will be given the opportunity to bathe and change into a facility issued uniform in a secure area.
- D. No one shall order a strip search within the agency or facility without obtaining the written authorization of the supervising officer on duty.
- E. A person of the same gender as the arrested person and on premises where the search cannot be observed by persons not physically conducting or observing the search pursuant to this section shall perform the strip search. Any observer shall be of the same gender as the arrested person.
- F. Once the strip search is completed a report indicating the reason as well as the finding for the search shall be submitted to the Jail Administrator.
- G. All non-traffic felonies and those who meet the criteria stated above will be strip-searched.
- H. The accepted procedure for conducting a strip-search is:
1. Once the inmate is taken to an appropriate area (i.e. booking room shower), he or she will be ordered to remove their clothing. The corrections officer will make a thorough examination of the clothing.
  2. Do not begin a search of the clothing until all clothing is removed, otherwise distractions may occur. When searching the inmate's clothing, the following procedures should be observed:
    - a. Examine all products.
    - b. Check all linings, cuffs, waistbands, seams, and other sewn areas.
    - c. Turn clothing inside out to complete the examination.
    - d. Examine inside the shoes and soles and heels.
  3. The corrections officer will visually search the inmate for contraband hidden on his or her body. This search also will include looking for lice, needle tracks, previous suicide attempts and recent personal injury or infections that should be brought to the attention of the Medical Staff. Some aspects of the search may be unpleasant, but they are all necessary and must be very thorough.
    - a. Examine casts and bandages. The cast, whether legitimate or phony, provides an excellent hiding place for contraband.
    - b. Examine artificial limbs and false teeth. This may be very embarrassing to ask an inmate to remove an artificial device to be inspected, but security and sanitation are more important than sensitive feelings.
    - c. Have the inmate thoroughly run his or her fingers through their hair.
    - d. Examine with adequate light the inmate's armpits, feet and hands. Examine the groin and rectum area. Have the inmate bend over and spread their buttocks.



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- e. Examine mouth, ears, and nose. Have the inmate move his tongue so that it is possible to see if he or she is hiding pills or contraband under the tongue.
4. Note any injury or evidence of medical deficiency or potential problem such as body lice, abrasions or sores, and make entry of recent cuts or bruises for immediate attention by the Medical staff.

### Conclusion

Based on the statements of Inmate Jackson, Inmate Kelley, other inmate witnesses, and C/D Neitsch, there is no evidence of any PREA violation by C/D Zack Neitsch and the allegation of a PREA violation is unfounded. No sexual act, either consensual or non-consensual, or staff misconduct or harassment was found to have occurred. While Holmes County Jail SOP 6722.30 specifically does not indicate strip searches are to be conducted in private, it does state they will be conducted in "an appropriate area (ie booking room shower)", therefore the strip searches in view of other inmates would be viewed as a sustained violation of Holmes County Jail SOP 6722.30. Also based on the statements of the interviewed inmates and Inmate Jackson conduct during the strip search by this officer, strip searches procedures have been not been properly conducted and are ineffective.

Captain Michael Raley  
Chief Investigator

# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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April 17, 2017

To: Ashley Burnham

On April 14, 2017 you were arrested by the Orlando Police Department for the charge of Battery Domestic Violence. Based on your arrest, this is a violation of Holmes County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedures 1.4.5 (Conformance to Laws).

As of this writing, April 17, 2017 you are being separated from your position as an Auxiliary Deputy Sheriff with the Holmes County Sheriff's Office and you will return all property belonging to the Holmes County Sheriff's Office in a timely fashion.

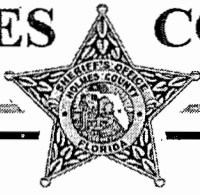
Also you may provide a written response to this decision. If you choose to do so it will be placed in your personnel file.

Regretfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tate", written in a cursive style.

Sheriff John Tate

# HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



## SHERIFF JOHN TATE

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**To: Sheriff John Tate**

**Internal Investigation Case Number: IA18-03**

**Classification: Vehicle Accident involving a fatality**

**Subject Member: Deputy Zach Neitsch**

**Date Initiated: 3/24/2018**

**Final Report Date: 9/28/2018**

**Case Investigator: Lieutenant Greg Johnson**

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On September 28, 2018 I, Lt Johnson was assigned to conduct an internal investigation for the below stated vehicle crash. I was advised in writing that the state attorney and the Florida Highway patrol have concluded an independent investigation. Their independent finding did not result in any criminal prosecution or finding of fault on the part of Deputy Nietsch. A copy of both reports will be attached to this investigation.

On Saturday March 24, 2018 Deputy Zach Neitsch submitted the following report:

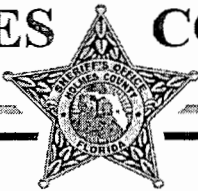
On 03/24/2018 I was out at the Holmes County Jail on Lonnie Lindsey Drive when a call comes out in reference to a possible death on Trailer Park Drive. Deputy Cory Guster was dispatched to the call and I advised Dispatch I would be in route as back up. I then got into my patrol car and drove out of the parking lot of the Jail onto Lonnie Lindsey Drive traveling Westbound towards Thomas Drive. I initiated the lights and sirens on my patrol car for an emergency response. I then turned right onto Thomas drive traveling North on Thomas Drive. I then went around the curve beside Holmes CI and then was traveling Westbound on Thomas Drive going down the Westbound Lane. I then approached the intersection of Hospital Drive when a vehicle pulled into the path of my patrol car coming from the eastbound lane turning onto Hospital Drive. I then attempted evasive maneuvers and slammed on my brakes. My patrol car then collided with the other vehicle. I then got out of my patrol car when both vehicles came to final rest. I immediately radioed what occurred into dispatch. I noticed I had a lot of pain coming from my right foot. I hobbled over to the other vehicle to check on the driver's status and she was unresponsive. I was unable to get her passenger side door open to render aid due to it being damaged from the crash. Other patrol units, Fire, and EMS arrived on scene shortly after the wreck. I was then transported to the Hospital in a patrol unit.

The only violation of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office policy and procedure which I am aware of is that Deputy Neitsch was not wearing his seat belt at the time of crash. (See section 5.2 policy and procedures). This violation is sustained. A review of Deputy Neitsch's personnel file reflects him receiving a letter of council on March 3, 2018 for unsatisfactory performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Greg Johnson'.

Lieutenant Greg Johnson

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To: Sheriff John Tate

**Internal Investigation Case Number:** IA19-01

**Classification:** Failure to follow Holmes County Jail Policies and Procedures

**Subject Members:** Detention Specialist Stephen R Jenkins, Sgt. Young, Cpl Sellers, Inmate Joshua J Long, Inmate Donald Groover, Inmate Casey Epley, Inmate Clyde Hunter.

**Date Initiated:** 01/28/2019

**Final Report Date:** 02/07/2019

**Case Investigator:** Sergeant Gary Harris, Criminal Investigations Division

---

Sheriff Tate,

On 01/28/2019 I was ordered by Major Michael Raley to conduct an internal investigation on Detention Specialist Stephen Jenkins. The investigation was ordered as a result of Inmate Hunter stating to Sgt. Young and or Cpl. Sellers that some of the actions taken by Detention Specialist Jenkins were in appropriate and were possible violations. After looking at video obtained from the Holmes County Jail, it has been determined that several violations of policy and procedures pertaining to interaction with inmates had occurred all of which were involving Detention Specialist Jenkins. This incident occurred during the weekend of 01/18/2019 between the hours of Midnight and 6:00 am.

On 01/22/2019, Jail Administrator, Captain Roy Wade, officially notified Detention Specialist Jenkins via letter that he would be under an internal investigation. Captain Wade delivered the letter to Specialist Jenkins which then signed the letter acknowledging receipt. Captain Wade provided me with a copy of each letter given to Jenkins which included an alleged violation of standard operating procedures, and a notice of internal investigation.

Lieutenant Clint Smith provided me with video surveillance from the Rear Control room as well as the Pods from the Holmes County Jail covering 01/18/2019 and 01/19/2019, and Major Raley provided me with sections 6011 and 6091.10 of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures. These sections give the policies and procedures for the supervision of inmates as well as interactions with inmates.

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After viewing several hours of the video surveillance, reading the reports, and talking with Captain Wade, the following is what I discovered during my inquiry into these incidents.

Detention Specialist Jenkins reported for nightshift (1800hrs-0600hrs) on 01/18/2019. Jenkins was assigned to rear housing while other officers were assigned to the booking area. Jenkins is seen on video numerous times having interactions with the inmate in question, Joshua Long. This is consistent with all statements that Cpl Sellers and Sgt. Young obtained from inmates Groover, Epley, and Hunter regarding violations.

According to the policies and procedures of the Holmes County Jail provided to me by Major Raley, in section 6091.10 Interaction with Inmates:

(A-2.) Employees shall not become socially involved with an incarcerated inmate.

(A-3.) Employees shall not compromise Detention Center security as a result of communication or interaction with inmates.

I discovered in my inquiry that at certain times during Jenkins shift, he would give a certain sign, such as a flash of light from his flashlight, to get the attention of the inmates. At one-point inmate Long is seen motioning to someone as to ask the question, Am I supposed to exit this Pod? The camera footage did not pick up who inmate Long was talking to but it is believed to be Specialist Jenkins because he had exited his post and was making a round through the hallway. Shortly after Jenkins arrives back to his post, inmate Long is seen exiting his Pod and arriving at Jenkins post at the control room.

While at Jenkins post, Jenkins is seen on camera giving inmate Long coffee and allowing Long to disseminate coffee to other inmates inside his pod, as well as other holding cells. At one-point Jenkins and inmate Long is standing at the doorway of the control room and seem to be having a very lengthy conversation. Jenkins is seen looking out at inmate Long and looking back inside the control room as if he was checking to see if anyone would be watching the cameras from booking. This incident occurred for quite sometime until Long freely goes back to his cell in Pod C. This incident clearly violates 6091.10 (A2) (A3).

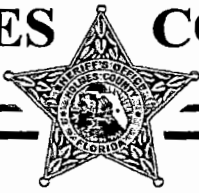
It is my understanding after talking with Captain Wade, the doors to the Pod where Long was coming from could have been unlocked for the inmates to possibly roam freely such as Long did. This would be a violation of 6091.10 (A3). This incident did occur during the watch of Detention Specialist Jenkins.

After reviewing all the facts and evidence in this case, the allegation that Detention Specialist Jenkins did, in fact, violate the policies and procedures of the Holmes County Jail as it pertains to the Interaction with Inmates found in section 6091.10 of the policies and procedures is sustained. Although Jenkins stated to Sgt. McNeal during his interview that he didn't know that he wasn't supposed to have contact with the inmates, it's clearly defined in section 6091.10, where it states that employees shall not become socially involved with incarcerated inmates. It is also clear that security in the Holmes County Jail was compromised due to the fact that inmate Long was able to come and go seemingly as he pleased with the doors being unlocked.

On 12/26/2018 Steven Jenkins was given a copy of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures to read and signed his signature stating that he would do so.

On 01/30/2019 Major Raley made contact with Specialist Jenkins and asked him to meet with me on 02/01/2019 at 10:00 am at the Sheriff's Office, in reference to the internal investigation. On 02/01/2019

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Specialist Jenkins did not show up like he was asked to do. It should be noted that Specialist Jenkins never called to say that he wasn't going to show up as well.

On 02/04/2019 Major Raley informed me that Specialist Jenkins had submitted his resignation letter via email on this same day. This internal was concluded on 02/07/2019.

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**To:** Major Michael Raley

**Internal Investigation Case Number:** IA19-02

**Classification:** Failure to follow Holmes County Policies and Procedures

**Subject Members:** Deputy Justin Sims

**Date Initiated:** 02/28/2019

**Final Report Date:** 03/05/2019

**Case Investigator:** Sergeant Jason Stafford, Patrol Division

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Major Raley,

On 02/28/2019 you ordered me to conduct an internal investigation on Deputy Justin Sims. The investigation was ordered as a result of an altercation between Deputy Justin Sims and his wife, Bonifay Police Officer Betty Sims. It is alleged that during the course of this altercation Deputy Sims displayed and discharged a firearm. The incident occurred in the evening hours of February 26th, 2019 and continued into the morning hours of February 27th, 2019. The incident involves a possible violation of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures, specifically, conduct unbecoming an Officer.

On 02/28/2019 I conducted an interview with Officer Betty Sims in regards to the incident. Officer Sims gave a sworn taped statement on what she could remember from the incident. Officer Sims stated an argument occurred between her and Deputy Justin Sims after she noticed a pill was missing from some of his medication. Officer Sims stated that during the argument that occurred at their residence of 2166 Jim Bush Rd, Deputy Sims walked out and got into a vehicle wanting to leave. Officer Sims stated as she was begging Deputy Sims not to leave, he told her to move and then fired three rounds out of the driver's side window into the dirt with a pistol. Officer Sims then advised she asked Deputy Sims not leave to which he agreed. Officer Sims advised after this incident, Deputy Corey Guster, his girlfriend, Deputy Sims and she went out to eat in Panama City. Officer Sims advised that while they were on the way home, she was somewhat intoxicated and got "mouthy". Officer Sims advised during the time Deputy Sims shot the gun, she was not in fear by his actions. Earlier in the day

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and prior to this incident, I received information that Officer Sims reported to several people Deputy Sims pulled a gun on her, threatened to kill her and himself. When I asked Officer Sims about this, she stated this was not correct.

On 02/28/2019 I conducted an interview with Deputy Corey Guster who was present with Officer Sims and Deputy Sims on the day of 02/26/2019. Deputy Guster gave a sworn statement of the events of that night. Deputy Guster advised when they got to the Sims residence, Deputy Sims was outside and Officer Sims was inside. Deputy Guster stated he could tell there was tension between them, and was told they had been arguing throughout the day. Deputy Guster stated while on the way to Panama City, Officer Sims and Deputy Sims were cutting up and seemed fine. Deputy Guster stated they went to Hooters to eat, Officer Sims and Deputy Sims ordered a pitcher of beer and while eating and drinking, began arguing. Deputy Guster stated the argument got worse, and Deputy Sims got up, left the table and advised he was going to the car. Deputy Guster then stated Officer Sims kept drinking until they left. On the way home, according to Deputy Guster, the arguing became increasingly heated, until at one point, Deputy Sims pulled the vehicle over at Highway 79 and Pipkin Rd. Deputy Guster stated both exited the vehicle and Deputy Sims "squared up" to each other nose to nose in a fighting position. Deputy Guster exited the vehicle and got in between them to break them up. The arguing continued as Deputy Sims was trying to get Officer Sims back in the vehicle. Deputy Guster was able to get them both back in the vehicle and they continued north on Highway 79. Deputy Guster advised the arguing continued and they pulled over again at Lighthouse Assembly of God Church on Highway 79. Deputy Guster advised everyone got out of the vehicle, Deputy Sims threw everyone's stuff out of the vehicle and sped off continuing north. Deputy Guster made contact with Dispatcher Cricket Hall to come pick them up. Once Dispatcher Hall arrived, Deputy Guster tried to get Officer Sims to get in the vehicle, but she kept trying to go out into the Highway. When Deputy Guster could not get her in the vehicle, he called Sheriff John Tate.

Deputy Guster advised during the course of the arguing on the way back from Panama City, Officer Sims made several statements that Deputy Sims threatened to shoot her and shoot himself. When Deputy Sims exited the restaurant to go his vehicle, Deputy Guster stated Officer Sims told him Deputy Sims had threatened to shoot her and himself several times throughout the day. Deputy Guster stated during the arguing on the way home when Officer Sims stated Deputy Sims threatened to shoot himself and her, Deputy Sims stated "now you know that isn't true". Deputy Guster also recalled Officer Sims told him Deputy Sims pulled a gun on her, held it to her head and threatened to kill her and himself, while they were at their residence.

On 02/28/2019 I conducted an interview with Catherine Austin, girlfriend of Deputy Guster, who was present with Deputy Sims, Officer Sims and Deputy Guster on 02/26/2019. A sworn taped statement was given by Catherine Austin of the events of that night. Catherine stated while at the restaurant the arguing between Deputy Sims and Officer Sims worsened. Catherine stated when Deputy Sims got mad and walked outside, Officer

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Sims started to drink more. Catherine stated when she went to the bathroom with Officer Sims, Officer Sims told her Deputy Sims headbutted her in the nose, which was the reason she was wearing makeup. Officer Sims also stated to Catherine that Deputy Sims pulled a gun on her, turned it on himself and threatened to kill himself. Catherine stated on the way home she was sitting in the back with Officer Sims, trying to keep her in the vehicle. Catherine stated she noticed they were going fast and when she looked, she noticed they were going approximately 120 mph. Catherine stated when she asked Deputy Sims to slow down, he snapped and started cussing at them. Catherine advised they pulled over just inside Holmes County so Officer Sims could use the bathroom and the arguing continued between Officer Sims and Deputy Sims. Catherine also confirmed Officer Sims made multiple statements about Deputy Sims pulling a gun on her.

On 03/01/2019 I conducted an interview with Deputy Greg Gordon who gave a sworn taped statement and responded to a call from dispatch to assist a Holmes County Deputy at Lighthouse Assembly of God Church on 02/26/2019. Deputy Gordon stated once on scene he saw multiple people in the church parking lot. Deputy Gordon advised one of the subjects were Officer Sims. Deputy Gordon advised when he was alone talking with Officer Sims, she stated her husband was abusing her physically by hitting her and it had been going on for a while. Officer Sims also stated to Deputy Gordon that her husband Justin Sims had held a gun to her head and said he would kill her then kill himself after he killed her. Officer Sims also made statements that she deserved to be hit on she deserved to be called fat. Deputy Gordon did state that Officer Sims was intoxicated during the time he talked to her.

On 03/01/2019 I conducted an interview with Deputy Jeremy Abbott who gave a sworn taped statement and responded to a call from dispatch to assist a Holmes County Deputy at Lighthouse Assembly of God Church on 02/26/2019. Deputy Abbott stated once on scene he saw Officer Sims and dispatcher Cricket Hall on the ground. Deputy Abbott advised that has he got out of the car they both stood up and Cricket Hall advised him that she was trying to prevent Officer Sims from going into the Highway to prevent her from harming herself and she was intoxicated. Deputy Abbott then advised he spoke with Officer Sims and asked her what was going on. Officer Sims stated to Deputy Abbott that "he has done things to me, I really don't want to say". Deputy Abbott advised he asked her again what was going on and Officer Sims responded by saying how would you feel if your significant other put a gun to your head. Deputy Abbott stated he asked when this happened and Officer Sims stated she didn't want to say anything else and didn't want to get him in trouble. Officer Sims kept stating she deserved this over and over. Deputy Abbott then advised that he spoke with Deputy Guster's girlfriend Catherine. Catherine advised Deputy Abbott that Officer Sims told her that Deputy Sims had been abusive to her, calling her fat and also made statements that Deputy Sims put a gun to her head.

On 03/03/2019 I conducted an interview with Chasity Hall (Cricket) in reference to the events on 02/26/2019 and including Officer Sims and Deputy Sims. Chasity Hall gave a sworn taped statement. Chasity Hall stated

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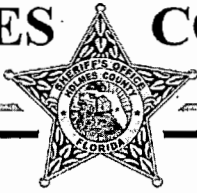
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that she got called by Deputy Guster in reference to Officer Sims and Deputy Sims having a verbal altercation. Chasity Hall stated she met them at the Lighthouse Assembly of God Church, Chasity Hall stated that Officer Sims, Deputy Guster and Catherine Austin got out of the vehicle and Deputy Sims drove off. Chasity Hall then stated during her interaction with Officer Sims, she stated there were a lot of things people didn't know and that some point during the day a gun was pulled out and put to her head and shots were fired in the ground. Officer Sims stated to Chasity Hall that it was her husband Deputy Sims. Chasity Hall advised that Officer Sims was highly intoxicated.

On 03/03/2019 I conducted a interview with Theresa Cooper and a sworn taped statement was gave by Theresa Cooper in reference to the incident involving Officer and Deputy Sims on the night of 02/26/2019. Theresa Cooper stated that she got a phone call around midnight from Chasity Hall saying that there were some issues and was called to pick some people up. Theresa Cooper stated she then drove to the Lighthouse Assembly of God Church where her and Chasity Hall tried for approximately an hour to get Betty Sims in the car to sleep it off. Theresa Cooper stated that during the time of trying to get her in the car. Officer Sims made statements that her husband had pulled a gun on her during the morning and held it to her head then shots were fired.

On 03/04/2019 Deputy Sims was provided notice by Major Michael Raley at 10:04 A.M. to come to the Holmes County Sheriff's Office on the following day (03/05/2019) and time of 10:00 A.M. to speak with me.

On 03/05/2019 I conducted an interview with Deputy Justin Sims. Deputy Sims was advised of the Holmes County Sheriff's Office Member/Subject Administrative rights form "Garrity Notice." Deputy Sims gave a sworn taped statement of the events involving him and his wife Officer Sims. Deputy Sims advised that during the day him and his wife got into a verbal altercation about some of his medication. Deputy Sims advised that during the argument he went to leave and got into his vehicle and at which time his wife Officer Sims stood in front of the vehicle. Deputy Sims advised he asked her several times to let him leave and she stood in front of the vehicle about 5 feet away hollering at him. Deputy Sims stated that his general stress relief is going out and shooting his weapon at a target. Deputy Sims advised that during the argument he chose to shoot down at a pole under the carport. Deputy Sims advised that she then moved from the car and he pulled out, Officer Sims then walked to the driver side and begged him not to leave that they had company coming over. Deputy Sims advised he agreed to stay. Deputy Sims then stated that during the time in Panama he got upset that she wouldn't eat and didn't want her to get drunk. Deputy Sims then advised he went out to his vehicle and waited for them to finish to prevent an argument. Deputy Sims then stated they left to go home and Officer Sims was arguing saying one minute he loved her and one minute he didn't. I then



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asked Deputy Sims about accusations made in his presences of him pulling a gun on her and threatening to kill her then himself. Deputy Sims advised that it wasn't true and those statements were made because she was drunk. I then asked Deputy Sims about Officer Sims making the accusations of him pulling a gun on her threatening to kill her and himself. Deputy Sims advised Officer Sims never said it once coming back from Panama. However that above statement from Deputy Sims contradicts the statements of both witnesses in the vehicle Deputy Guster and Catherine Austin.

After reviewing all the evidence, speaking with all witnesses, and speaking with Deputy Sims, the allegation that Deputy Sims violated Holmes County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedure 1.4 #2 which reads, ***"Personnel shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect most favorably on the department. Conduct unbecoming Sheriff's personnel shall include that which tends to bring the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the person as a member of the Department or that, which tends to impair the operation or efficiency of the Department or personnel. Employees shall at all times conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect a favorable image on themselves and the Holmes County Sheriff's Department."*** is sustained.





HOLMES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



AFFIRMATION:

I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the subject of the investigation of any of the rights contained in F.S. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes.


The contents of this report are true and accurate based on my personal knowledge, information and belief.

Jason Stafford  
Printed name of investigator/detective

[Signature]  
Signature of investigator/detective

Sworn and subscribed to pursuant to F.S. 92.525

This 6<sup>th</sup> day of March 2019

 **JEANA C PRESCOTT**  
MY COMMISSION # FF220509  
EXPIRES April 14, 2019  
(407) 398-0153 FloridaNotaryService.com

[Signature] My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_  
Notary