



OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number OPA#2015-0923

Issued Date: 02/02/2016

Named Employee #1	
Allegation #1	<u>Seattle Police Department Manual</u> 5.140 (2) Bias-Free Policing: Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing (Policy that was issued 01/01/15)
OPA Finding	Not Sustained (Inconclusive)
Final Discipline	N/A

Named Employee #2	
Allegation #1	<u>Seattle Police Department Manual</u> 5.140 (2) Bias-Free Policing: Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing (Policy that was issued 01/01/15)
OPA Finding	Not Sustained (Inconclusive)
Final Discipline	N/A

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

The named employees were working in a two-officer patrol car. The officers noticed a vehicle stopped next to them at an intersection. The named employees ran the rear license plate of the vehicle. The license plate had been reported stolen. The named employees initiated a traffic stop to contact the driver, the subject. The named employees believed that they had reasonable suspicion to detain the subject for possession of stolen vehicle plates. They handcuffed the subject during their investigation. The named employees discovered that the front and rear plates not only did not match, but both plates did not belong to the vehicle. The

rear plate had been reported as stolen, while the front plate was most likely an unreported stolen plate. The vehicle itself was registered to the complainant, who is a friend of the subject. The named employees determined that the subject had no knowledge that the vehicle plates were stolen or that the plates had been switched. The subject was released from the scene and both license plates were taken into evidence.

COMPLAINT

The complainant alleged that the named employees conducted biased policing when they pulled over the subject for stolen plates. The complainant stated the subject was driving her vehicle and the plates were not reported stolen. The complainant further alleged the officers wrongfully took the license plates from her car.

INVESTIGATION

The OPA investigation included the following actions:

1. Review of the complaint voicemail
2. Interview of the complainant
3. Search for and review of all relevant records and other evidence
4. Review of In-Car Videos
5. Interviews of SPD employees

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The evidence showed that the named employees did run the plate of the vehicle next to them in stopped traffic. The passenger officer stated that it was routine for him in the role of a passenger in a two-officer patrol car to run plates while the driver officer focused on patrol vehicle operation. There is no other information in the OPA investigation to determine why the named employees initiated a records search of the vehicle driven by the subject. Once the plate returned as stolen, the named employees detained the subject while investigating the circumstances. Once the facts were determined, the subject was released. The actions of the named employees were reviewed on scene by a patrol sergeant.

FINDINGS

Named Employee #1 and #2

Allegation #1

There is no evidence to substantiate or refute the allegation of bias policing involving the named employees. Therefore a finding of **Not Sustained** (Inconclusive) was issued for *Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing*.

NOTE: The Seattle Police Department Manual policies cited for the allegation(s) made for this OPA Investigation are policies that were in effect during the time of the incident. The issued date of the policy is listed.