




CLOSED CASE SUMMARY

ISSUED DATE: JUNE 24, 2024

FROM: DIRECTOR GINO BETTS, JR. 
OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

CASE NUMBER: 2023OPA-0555

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

Allegation(s):		Director's Findings
# 1	5.001-POL-11 Employees Will Be Truthful and Complete in All Communication	Not Sustained - Unfounded (Expedited)

This Closed Case Summary (CCS) represents the opinion of the OPA Director regarding the misconduct alleged and therefore sections are written in the first person.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Complainant alleged that Named Employee #1 (NE#1), a parking enforcement officer, was dishonest when he issued him a parking ticket.

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

This case was designated as an Expedited Investigation. This means that OPA, with the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) agreement, believed it could issue recommended findings based solely on its intake investigation without interviewing the named employees. As such, OPA did not interview the named employee in this case.

On February 2, 2024, OIG certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION:

The Complainant filed an OPA complaint alleging that NE#1 wrote a false parking ticket. Specifically, the Complainant suggested that the photographs included with his parking ticket did not depict his vehicle. The Complainant also denied ever being in the area where the parking ticket was issued.

OPA reviewed the parking enforcement court packet. NE#1 ticketed a Subaru Outback for a "72-hour" violation (SMC 11.72.440). NE#1 marked the vehicle on December 6, 2022, photographed it, ticketed it, and requested it be towed on December 13, 2022. The photographs showed that the front license plate was inside a spray-painted license plate cover. The photographed license plate was illegible.

After the Subaru Outback was impounded, the tow company noticed that the license plate did not match the VIN displayed on the VIN plate. The VIN matched those referenced in an Edmonds Police Department report for a stolen vehicle (later, the report was just for stolen license plates).

An SPD officer inspected the Subaru Outback and determined it had false license plates manufactured from photographs of the Complainant's license plate number. The Subaru Outback also had a false VIN in the windshield window.



ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Named Employee #1 - Allegation #1

5.001-POL 11. Employees Will Be Truthful and Complete in All Communication

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 falsely ticketed his vehicle.

Department employees must be truthful and complete in all communications. SPD Policy 5.001-POL-11.

NE#1's photographs showed that the vehicle had a false license plate, displaying the Complainant's license plate.¹ NE#1 wrote a valid parking ticket. The problem was that the vehicle—evidently stolen—bore a false license plate matching the Complainant's. The OPA investigator spoke with the Complainant and assisted them with canceling the ticket.

Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained - Unfounded (Expedited)**

¹ The photographs taken by the SPD officer who inspected the Subaru Outback after it was impounded showed the license plate number more clearly than the photographs taken by NE#1.