



## CLOSED CASE SUMMARY

ISSUED DATE: APRIL 29, 2025

FROM: INTERIM DIRECTOR BONNIE GLENN  
OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

CASE NUMBER: 2024OPA-0408

### Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

#### Named Employee #1

Allegation(s):		Director's Findings
# 1	8.300 – Use of Force Tools, 8.300-POL-6 Vehicle-Related Tactics, 5. Vehicle-Related Tactics, c. Vehicle Pinning	Not Sustained - Training Referral

#### Named Employee #2

Allegation(s):		Director's Findings
# 1	8.300 – Use of Force Tools, 8.300-POL-6 Vehicle-Related Tactics, 5. Vehicle-Related Tactics, c. Vehicle Pinning	Not Sustained - Training Referral

#### Named Employee #3

Allegation(s):		Director's Findings
# 1	8.400 – Use of Force Reporting and Investigation, 8.400-POL-1 Use of Force Reporting and Investigation, 4. Sergeants Will Review Use-of-Force Incidents	Not Sustained - Training Referral

***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:

Named Employee #1 (NE#1) and Named Employee #2 (NE#2) were involved in a vehicular pursuit with Community Member #1 (CM#1), who reportedly committed an armed carjacking. Named Employee #3 (NE#3), a sergeant, investigated the pursuit. The Complainant, an SPD lieutenant, alleged that NE#1 and NE#2 lacked the required training to execute vehicle pinning. The Complainant also alleged that NE#3 inadequately investigated the pursuit.

### ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

On March 28, 2025, the Office of Inspector General certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

### SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION:

#### **A. OPA Complaint**

On October 18, 2024, the Complainant submitted an OPA complaint outlining several allegations. He first alleged that NE#1 and NE#2 engaged in an authorized pursuit but made two attempts to terminate it using vehicle pinning tactics, despite lacking the necessary training for such tactics. He then alleged that NE#3 failed to document the vehicle



pinning tactics, failed to screen the incident with the Force Investigation Team (FIT) when CM#1 was taken to a hospital while wearing a neck brace, and failed to classify the incident as type II<sup>1</sup> in the absence of a FIT callout.

OPA investigated the complaint by reviewing the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) call report, incident and supplement reports, in-car video (ICV), body-worn video (BWV), use-of-force reports, vehicle pursuit reports, and training records. OPA also interviewed the named employees.

### **B. Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) Call Report**

On September 7, 2024, at 9:31 AM, CAD call remarks noted, "GUN[.] VIA VOIANCE SPANISH, SUSP[ECT] STOLE VEH[ICLE] WITH GUN 2 MIN[UTE]S AGO. [LAST SEEN NORTHBOUND]."

### **C. In-Car Video (ICV) and Body-Worn Video (BWV)**

ICV captured NE#1 and NE#2 driving in their patrol vehicles while conducting an area search for the suspect vehicle (Vehicle #1). NE#2 located Vehicle #1 and began to follow it while adhering to traffic rules. After an officer confirmed via radio that there was probable cause for armed carjacking, NE#3 authorized a pursuit via radio. Officers, including NE#1 and NE#2, initiated a pursuit, but CM#1 eluded the officers.<sup>2</sup> During the pursuit, CM#1 veered into a vegetated area beside the road. NE#2 positioned his patrol vehicle at the front of Vehicle #1, while NE#1 approached from the rear. CM#1 reversed, scraping against a patrol vehicle's push bar and colliding with the front of NE#1's patrol vehicle.



*The image above was taken from NE#1's ICV.*

CM#1 drove away and continued to elude the officers. The officers maintained their pursuit until CM#1 drove onto a sidewalk adjacent to a building and stopped. Smoke emanated from Vehicle #1. NE#2 radioed, "Crash out. Hold the air."

<sup>1</sup> Type II is force that causes, or is reasonably expected to cause, physical injury requiring medical treatment greater than basic first aid. SPD Policy 8.050.

<sup>2</sup> Eluding occurs when an officer operating an authorized police vehicle issues by hand, voice, emergency lights, or siren a visual and/or audible signal to the driver of a vehicle to stop, and, after a reasonable time to yield in response to the officer's signal, the driver increases speed, takes evasive actions, and/or refuses to stop. SPD Policy 13.031-POL-1 (effective May 19, 2023).



*The image above was taken from NE#2's ICV.*

NE#2's patrol vehicle impacted the rear passenger's side of Vehicle #1. NE#2 opened his driver's side door. Immediately afterward, NE#1's patrol vehicle impacted the rear driver's side of Vehicle #1.



*The image above was taken from NE#1's ICV. NE#2 is on the right.*



*The image above was taken from NE#2's ICV. NE#1 is on the left.*

NE#1 drove forward, causing Vehicle #1 to move to the right and position itself directly in front of NE#2's patrol vehicle. CM#1 raised his hands as Vehicle #1 moved forward and collided with the mailbox.





*The image above was taken from NE#1's ICV. NE#2 is on the right.*



*The image above was taken from NE#2's ICV. NE#1 is on the left.*

NE#2 drove forward and impacted the rear of Vehicle #1, causing Vehicle #1 to propel forward and topple the mailbox.



*The image above was taken from NE#1's ICV. NE#2 is on the right.*

CM#1 exited Vehicle #1 and knelt with his hands raised. Officers then handcuffed CM#1.

BWV captured NE#3 responding to the scene, where officers briefed NE#3 on the pursuit. NE#3 Mirandized CM#1, who was seated on a patrol vehicle's push bar and wearing a neck brace. CM#1 expressed lower back pain and claimed



to have swallowed three blue pills. NE#1 then briefed NE#3 on the pursuit, explaining that he applied “positive contact” against Vehicle #1 because CM#1 attempted to flee. NE#1 further clarified that he had pinned Vehicle #1. NE#3 then spoke with a lieutenant over the phone to screen the incident, noting that there were two officer-involved collisions where NE#1 and NE#2 had pinned Vehicle #1. She mentioned that this was her first case involving a pursuit. Afterward, NE#3 returned to NE#1 and NE#2 and instructed them to include in their report that they had completed the e-learning for the Emergency Vehicle Operator Course (EVOC).<sup>3</sup> She told them that the incident did not involve a collision but rather involved pinning, a pursuit-ending tactic.

#### **D. Sergeant’s Type I<sup>4</sup> Use-of-Force Report**

NE#3’s type I use-of-force report documented firearm pointing as the only force used during the incident. Specifically, NE#3 wrote that NE#1, NE#2, and another officer aimed their firearms at CM#1 at the end of the pursuit. NE#3 wrote that CM#1 told her that he had back pain due to the collision and swallowed three blue pills. NE#3 wrote that CM#1 was evaluated on scene by the fire department and then transported to Harborview Medical Center.

NE#3 did not reference the officer-involved collisions or the vehicle pinning in her report.

#### **E. OPA Interviews**

##### Named Employee #1

On January 16, 2025, OPA interviewed NE#1. In describing the first collision, he said he applied his brakes when CM#1 reversed into his patrol vehicle. In describing the second collision, he said he used his patrol vehicle to apply force against Vehicle #1 upon seeing CM#1 attempting to flee. He believed this tactic effectively ended the pursuit. He emphasized the significant threat that CM#1 posed to the public, particularly due to his possession of a firearm in an area with many pedestrians. He acknowledged that SPD’s vehicle pinning policy had recently been revised, requiring officers to have completed live vehicle pinning training to be authorized to execute such tactics. However, he believed the EVOC e-learning he completed in 2020 was adequate. He also noted that he had returned from vacation before the updated policy was implemented. He said he initially documented his use-of-force in a type I report but was subsequently instructed by another sergeant to document it in a type II report.

##### Named Employee #2

On March 13, 2025, OPA interviewed NE#2. In describing the first collision, he said he positioned his patrol vehicle in front of Vehicle #1 to obstruct CM#1’s path and unintentionally contacted Vehicle #1 lightly before CM#1 reversed and fled. In describing the second collision, he said his patrol vehicle lightly contacted the rear of Vehicle #1, a tactic aimed at preventing CM#1 from reversing and fleeing. He denied any intention to pin Vehicle #1, clarifying that he moved his patrol vehicle forward slowly and shifted it into park upon contact with Vehicle #1 to prevent its movement. He admitted to lacking training in vehicle pinning tactics. He said he initially documented his use-of-force in a type I report but was subsequently instructed by another sergeant to document it in a type II report.

---

<sup>3</sup> NE#1’s and NE#2’s training records showed that they had completed multiple e-learning modules on EVOC but did not participate in any training involving the practical application of vehicle pinning in a controlled, real-world environment.

<sup>4</sup> Type I is force that causes pain or injury not requiring anything greater than basic first aid. SPD Policy 8.050. Type I force includes, among other things, pointing a firearm at a subject and vehicle pinning. SPD Policy 8.400-POL-1.



---

**Named Employee #3**

On January 14, 2025, OPA interviewed NE#3. She acknowledged that NE#1 and NE#2 used vehicle pinning to prevent CM#1 from fleeing. She said she did not screen the incident with follow-up teams, such as FIT, because there were no significant injuries reported, eliminating the need for a FIT callout. She noted that CM#1 was responsible for his own crash, rather than NE#1 or NE#2. She said she began documenting the incident but subsequently went on family and medical leave about a week later, preventing her from completing the necessary documentation.

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

**Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1**

***8.300 – Use of Force Tools, 8.300-POL-6 Vehicle-Related Tactics, 5. Vehicle-Related Tactics, c. Vehicle Pinning***

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 and NE#2 lacked the required training to execute vehicle pinning.

Vehicle pinning is a trained tactic involving a sworn employee using a police vehicle, or vehicles, to keep a stationary vehicle in a specified position and from leaving the scene, where there is constant forward pressure (not ramming)<sup>5</sup> applied by the police vehicle(s) to the stationary vehicle, and there are no gaps between the vehicles. SPD Policy 8.300-POL-6(5)(c). Vehicle pinning is prohibited for sworn employees unless they have been trained in the tactic. *Id.* The practical application of vehicle pinning training goes beyond a classroom setting and includes performing the learned maneuvers in a real-world setting in a controlled environment with an instructor present and where the training has been added to the sworn employee's training record. *Id.* Sworn employees trained to use a vehicle pinning tactic may only use the tactic to prevent the suspect vehicle from fleeing so it is not a risk to the public, prevent the subject from using the vehicle as a weapon against sworn employees or other community members, or control the suspect vehicle when it is temporarily immobilized. *Id.*

NE#1 and NE#2 used vehicle pinning to terminate the pursuit.<sup>6</sup> They both acknowledged their intent to prevent CM#1 from fleeing. Their patrol vehicles contacted Vehicle #1, where there was constant—albeit brief—forward pressure. NE#1 applied forward pressure against the left side of Vehicle #1, causing it to move directly in front of NE#2. NE#2 then applied forward pressure against the rear of Vehicle #1, propelling it forward and causing it to topple a mailbox. Their constant, but brief, forward pressure directly caused Vehicle #1 to move in two different directions, kept Vehicle #1 stationary in its final position atop a mailbox, and prevented CM#1 from fleeing. Such conduct constituted vehicle pinning rather than ramming, as they did not strike Vehicle #1 for the purpose of “interrupting or incapacitating” it. However, in review of the totality of the circumstances, NE#1 and NE#2 both thought they had completed the necessary EVOC training, in error, since it lacked the practical training application. Also, the new vehicle pinning policy had just been revised on September 1, 2024, just eight days prior to this incident on September 9, 2024. Furthermore, neither party willfully violated the policy, nor had any prior pinning violations. Therefore, OPA finds, based on the totality of the circumstances, that there was not a willful violation by either NE#1 and NE#2 and recommends this allegation be not sustained; however, a training referral is warranted.

Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Training Referral.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ramming a vehicle is the intentional use of a patrol vehicle to strike a suspect vehicle for the purpose of interrupting or incapacitating the suspect vehicle. SPD Policy 8.300-POL-6(5)(f).

<sup>6</sup> NE#1 and NE#2's chain of command, which included a lieutenant and captain, both reviewed this incident and determined 'pinning' occurred in concurrence with OPA.



- **Training Referral:** NE#1's chain of command should discuss OPA's findings with them, review SPD Policy 8.300-POL-6(5)(c) with them, have them complete or scheduled for the requisite EVOC practical training application, if possible, and provide any other retraining and counseling it deems necessary. Any retraining and counseling should be documented and maintained in Blue Team.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Training Referral**

**Named Employee #2 – Allegation #1**

***8.300 – Use of Force Tools, 8.300-POL-6 Vehicle-Related Tactics, 5. Vehicle-Related Tactics, c. Vehicle Pinning***

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Training Referral.

- **Training Referral:** NE#2's chain of command should discuss OPA's findings with them, review SPD Policy 8.300-POL-6(5)(c) with them, have them complete or scheduled for the requisite EVOC practical training application, if possible, and provide any other retraining and counseling it deems necessary. Any retraining and counseling should be documented and maintained in Blue Team.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Training Referral**

**Named Employee #3 – Allegation #1**

***8.400 – Use of Force Reporting and Investigation, 8.400-POL-1 Use of Force Reporting and Investigation, 4. Sergeants Will Review Use-of-Force Incidents***

The Complainant alleged that NE#3 inadequately investigated the pursuit.

Sergeants will review reportable use-of-force incidents and either (1) classify the investigation as type I or II, as appropriate, or (2) call the on-call FIT supervisor to screen, among other things, any contact with the neck, causing or reasonably likely to cause injury or loss of consciousness, ramming, or a pursuit intervention technique. SPD Policy 8.400-POL-1(4).

NE#3's review of the pursuit was deficient in several respects. First, NE#3 did not include in her use-of-force report that NE#1 and NE#2 used vehicle pinning, which constituted reportable force. See SPD Policy 8.400-POL-1 (classifying vehicle pinning as type I force). Second, under NE#3's direction, all named employees documented the incident in a type I use-of-force report. CM#1 reported lower back pain and swallowing three blue pills, wore a neck brace supplied by the fire department, and was transported to Harborview Medical Center. These factors should have elevated the review to type II. See SPD Policy 8.400-POL-1 (classifying medical treatment of an injury requiring more than basic first aid as a type II incident). Finally, NE#3 should have screened the incident with FIT, as the neck brace on CM#1 should have indicated a potential neck injury resulting from the force applied.

However, several mitigating factors suggest that NE#3's review did not constitute misconduct. First, NE#3 was captured on BWV saying that she did not believe the officer-involved collisions constituted force. Instead, she believed NE#1's and NE#2's pinning constituted a pursuit-ending tactic rather than force, which explains her omission of vehicle pinning in her report. Second, NE#3 demonstrated diligence during her investigation into the incident. BWV captured her interviewing the involved officers at the scene and screening the incident with a lieutenant over the phone. Third,



---

she told the lieutenant that this was her first pursuit case as a sergeant. Finally, she told OPA that she was unable to complete the required documentation for the incident because she went on family and medical leave about a week later. Given these factors, which highlight NE#3's inexperience with pursuit cases and her lack of familiarity with reporting and screening requirements, a training referral is warranted.

Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Training Referral.

- **Training Referral:** NE#3's chain of command should discuss OPA's findings with them, review SPD Policy 8.400-POL-1(4) with them, and provide any other retraining and counseling it deems necessary. This retraining and counseling should include force classifications for vehicle-related tactics, reporting requirements, and FIT screenings. Any retraining and counseling should be documented and maintained in Blue Team.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Training Referral**