

Office of Professional Standards

Case Disposition

Office of Professional Standards Case Number IA-20-009

Date: September 10, 2020

Employee: Deputy Michael Douglas *1440 / 522

Allegations: R&R 30.06 – Reporting

EXONERATED

Investigation discloses that an incident occurred but was lawful and proper.

SUSTAINED

Investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to support the allegations in the complaint.

UNFOUNDED

Investigation indicates the acts complained of did not occur or were not committed by members of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office.


NOT SUSTAINED

Investigation discloses insufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegations made by the complainant.

Comments:



Sheriff Lewis



Captain Brown

INDEX

A. IA-20-009

B. Deputy Michael Douglas

C. [REDACTED]

D. [REDACTED]

E. [REDACTED]

F. Excerpt of [REDACTED] Interview with HSI

G. Screen Shot of Text Message from Deputy Douglas to [REDACTED]

H. Emails from Inv. J. Bastoni



Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Internal Affairs Investigation

IA-20-009

Employee(s) Involved:

Deputy Michael Douglas *1440 // 522

Complainant(s):

Captain Tim Brown

Incident Location:

4 McGee St. Greenville S. C.

Allegations and Findings:

R&R 30.06 – Reporting

Evidence on File:

Video Audio Photographs Other



Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Hobart Lewis, Sheriff

AN ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

To: Sheriff Hobart Lewis
From : Office of Professional Standards
Date: September 10, 2020
Re: IA-20-009

Summary

On August 26, 2020 I received an email from Inv. J. Bastoni, Human Trafficking Investigator. Inv. Bastoni is presently assigned to the Homeland Security Investigations task Force. Inv. Bastoni requested to meet with me in reference an ongoing Homeland Security Investigation that may involve Deputy Michael Douglas. Inv. Bastoni stated he is presently investigating an alleged sex ring involving Thornblade Community. Inv. Bastoni stated he has discovered that one of the targets of his investigation, [REDACTED] may have connections with Deputy Michael Douglas.

Inv. Bastoni stated he has discovered that [REDACTED] made a sexually explicit video and sent the video to a sixteen year student at EastSide High School. [REDACTED] has also had sexual relations with several sixteen year old students at East Side High School. Inv. Bastoni stated through an interview, with [REDACTED] he has discovered that Deputy Douglas had knowledge of the sexually explicit video and the sexual relations with the students but did not report the activities.

Investigation

On August 26, 2020 Inv. Bastoni met with the Office of Professional Standards concerning Deputy Douglas. Inv. Bastoni stated he along with Homeland Security Agents had interviewed [REDACTED] about his wife, [REDACTED] Inv. Bastoni provided an excerpt from the interview with [REDACTED] In the interview with Homeland Security [REDACTED] stated Deputy Douglas knew of the sexually explicit video because his [REDACTED] had possession of a copy of it and [REDACTED] had viewed the video. [REDACTED] also alleged that Deputy Douglas also knew of the sexual relations [REDACTED] had with sixteen year old students and failed to report it to anyone.

Inv. Bastoni stated he felt that [REDACTED] would be willing to speak with the Office of Professional Standards. I made phone contact with [REDACTED] and he agreed to come to the LEC and meet with the Office of Professional Standards. On August 27, 2020 [REDACTED] came to the Office of Professional Standards. [REDACTED] was advised the interview would be recorded (video/audio) and he stated he understood. Phyllis Lewis was also present for the interview. The following are excerpts from that interview:

- [REDACTED] and his wife [REDACTED] have known Deputy Michael Douglas since 1986 or 1987. They have all been close in the baseball community and Eastside High School.
- [REDACTED] has admitted to [REDACTED] she has had sexual relations with two of the Eastside High School baseball players that were sixteen years old at the time of the affairs [REDACTED] also admitted to [REDACTED] that she had sent a video of [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] one of the players. [REDACTED] sent the video to [REDACTED] during late 2017 or early 2018 when he was 16 years of age [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] the first affair with [REDACTED] was at a baseball

tournament in Myrtle Beach. [REDACTED] stated the affair continued after the tournament. [REDACTED] also admitted the activities to their [REDACTED] who is presently 17 years old. During 2017 – 2018 [REDACTED] told other players about the affair.

- On June 23, 2020 [REDACTED] began receiving anonymous text messages from [REDACTED] concerning [REDACTED] sexual activities. [REDACTED] stated he received three such texts from this number in a four day period. [REDACTED] stated the text messages stated that the [REDACTED] at Eastside High School, [REDACTED], and others parents knew about [REDACTED] sexual activities.
- On June 23, 2020 [REDACTED] confronted [REDACTED] with the above allegations and she admitted to them.
- Several days later [REDACTED] learned that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] already knew and had recently learned of the information.
- [REDACTED] discovered that [REDACTED] had received confirmation of the allegations during a breakfast meeting with Deputy Douglas approximately a week or so prior to June 23, 2020.
- [REDACTED] stated he learned about the breakfast meeting from [REDACTED] who lives in the Columbia area.
- [REDACTED] stated he spoke with [REDACTED] and Deputy Douglas about the breakfast meeting and is still unsure which one requested the meeting.
- On July 4, 2020 [REDACTED] had a conversation with Deputy Douglas and told him “you had a conversation with my [REDACTED] without talking to me. You told my [REDACTED] about [REDACTED] doing vile things”. [REDACTED] stated Deputy Douglas began apologizing (1500 on the interview).

- Deputy Douglas told [REDACTED] he (Deputy Douglas) knew about everything going back two or three years.
- Deputy Douglas told [REDACTED] he had seen the [REDACTED] video and had discussed the video with [REDACTED] (1700 on the interview).
- Deputy Douglas told [REDACTED] that he knew one member of the baseball team was sharing the video, but he didn't think it would be appropriate for him (Deputy Douglas) to go to the teammate so; he (Deputy Douglas) had [REDACTED] to go to the teammate.
- [REDACTED] stated the breakfast meeting with Deputy Douglas was prior to June 23, 2020 and he first confronted Deputy Douglas approximately a week after the breakfast.

- During the interview with the Office of Professional Standards [REDACTED] stated due to the fact that Deputy Douglas was a Greenville County Deputy he asked him to look into the phone number the anonymous text messages had come from.
- [REDACTED] stated he provided Deputy Douglas with the anonymous phone number on July 4, 2020. On July 6, 2020 at 5:10pm [REDACTED] received a text message from Deputy Douglas which stated "ran that number through [REDACTED] phone with no match. Absolutely no history with it at the Sheriff's Office. Never been recorded as a victim, never called 911. I asked the tech guys and they believe it's a burner phone or a bounce number. I tried sucks" (2523 on interview).

NOTE: [REDACTED] read the text out loud from his phone during the interview. I asked him if he would be willing to email me the text and he said he wanted to speak with his attorney first.

- [REDACTED] stated he has been contacted by [REDACTED] a friend of [REDACTED] and she has advised him that [REDACTED] is still in contact with Deputy Douglas. [REDACTED] stated this leads him to believe that Deputy Douglas is covering for [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] stated he is upset with Deputy Douglas due to the fact that Deputy Douglas is law enforcement, knew about this and did not contact anyone.
- [REDACTED] expressed concerns about talking with the Sheriff's Office because Deputy Douglas has told him that he (Deputy Douglas) and Sheriff Lewis are very close and that they had "rode together".
- I asked [REDACTED] if he had any reason to believe that Deputy Douglas was involved in any of the activities that were discussed during the interview and he stated he did not.

On September 3, 2020 [REDACTED] emailed me a screen shot of the text message he received from Deputy Douglas. The following is the text message:

New iMessage Cancel

To: Mike Douglas



Got it

Sun, Jul 5, 10:11 AM

I'll research that number tomorrow. Ran it through [redacted] phone. No match.



Mon, Jul 6, 5:10 PM

Ran that number through [redacted] phones. No match. Absolutely no history with it at the sheriffs office. Never been recorded as a victim or suspect. Never called 911. I asked the tech guys. They believe its a burner phone or a bounce number. I tried man. Sucks.



Based on the above message, I contacted Brenda Langston by phone and she was unable to find where Deputy Douglas had checked the phone number, [REDACTED] in V connect. I was also unable to locate where Deputy Douglas had used any Sheriff's Office resources to determine if the phone number had ever called 911.

On September 9, 2020 Deputy Michael Douglas came to the Office of Professional Standards for an interview. Deputy Douglas was advised the interview would be recorded (video/audio). Deputy Douglas was provided with A Garrity advisement and a Notification of Formal Complaint form and he read and signed both forms. Inv. Bailey was also present for the interview. The following are excerpts from the interview:

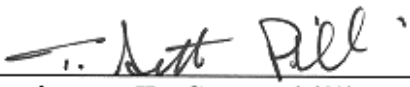
- Deputy Douglas was asked about [REDACTED] and he stated he has known her since childhood.
- Deputy Douglas has heard rumors about the video involving [REDACTED] in the last month or so but has never seen the video.
- Deputy has also heard rumors about [REDACTED] having sexual relations with students but stated he did not believe the rumors.
- Deputy Douglas confronted [REDACTED] about the rumors of her having sexual relations with a student but she denied the rumors.
- Deputy Douglas never discussed the rumors about [REDACTED] with her husband, [REDACTED]
- On July 4, 2020 [REDACTED] contacted Deputy Douglas and questioned him about speaking with his [REDACTED] about the rumors pertaining to [REDACTED] Deputy Douglas told [REDACTED] he never discussed the rumors with [REDACTED]
- Deputy Douglas stated he has been a mentor to [REDACTED] at the request of [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] does not know this.


- Deputy Douglas stated [REDACTED] did ask him to check out a cell phone number that had been sending him [REDACTED] anonymous text messages about [REDACTED]. Deputy Douglas stated he had checked the phone number on V connect and found nothing.
- Deputy Douglas stated he heard about the Thornblade investigation from Fitsnews but, he has no other knowledge about the investigation.
- Deputy Douglas stated if he had seen the video “that’s something you would have to do something about”.

Conclusion

During the interview of Deputy Douglas no indicators of deception were observed. Deputy Douglas appeared to be completely honest and forthcoming with any information requested by investigators. It is the opinion of the Office of Professional Standards that the allegations against Deputy Douglas are unfounded.

Respectfully Submitted,


Investigator T. Scott Phillips


Investigator A. L. Bailey


Sergeant T. R. Motes


Captain Tim Brown



Sheriff

Hobart Lewis
Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Garrity Advisement

You are being questioned as part of an official investigation of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. You will be asked questions specifically directed and narrowly related to the focus of this investigation.

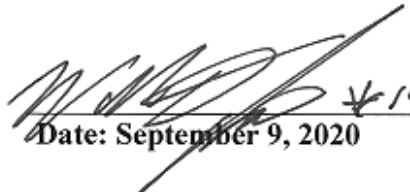
An employee does not have the right to the assistance of counsel during questioning pursuant to this rule. Questioning shall be completed within a reasonable time and under circumstances devoid of intimidation or undue coercion. The interview may be recorded to ensure accuracy.

You are entitled to all the rights and privileges guaranteed by the laws and the Constitution of the United States and the State of South Carolina and you do not automatically waive your constitutional privilege against self-incrimination in questioning.

If you refuse to testify or answer questions you will be subject to disciplinary action that could result in your dismissal from the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. You are not to discuss any detail of this investigation with anyone; with the exception of members of the Office of Professional Standards, the Chief Deputy, and the Sheriff. Every employee may be compelled to submit to examinations including but not limited to polygraph examinations and medical or laboratory examinations.

If you do answer, any statements or results from any examination or any evidence that is gained because of such statements or examinations cannot be used against you in a subsequent criminal proceeding (barring incidents of perjury or obstruction of justice).


Investigator Scott Phillips


Date: September 9, 2020





Greenville County Sheriff's Office
Office of Professional Standards

Notification of Formal Complaint

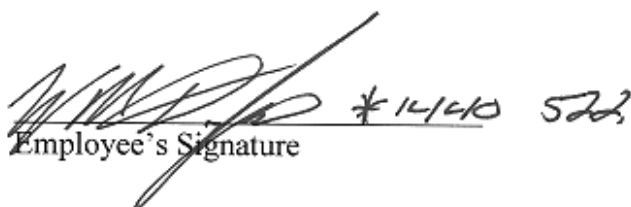
To: **Deputy Michael Douglas**
From: Office of Professional Standards
Subject: **IA- 20-009**
Date: **September 9, 2020**

This is to advise you that a formal complaint has been received and recorded by this office. This complaint is regarding an incident which occurred on 8/26/20

in **Greenville SC** in which you were acting as an official representative of the Sheriff's Office. You are directed to refrain from discussing any aspect of this incident/investigation with any individuals who are not members of the Office of Professional Standards. Failure to comply with this directive will result in disciplinary action regardless of the results and findings of this complaint.

You will be informed of the findings at the conclusion of this investigation.

I have received a copy of this form and I understand it completely.


Employee's Signature

Date/Time: September 9, 2020

[REDACTED]

Official statement.

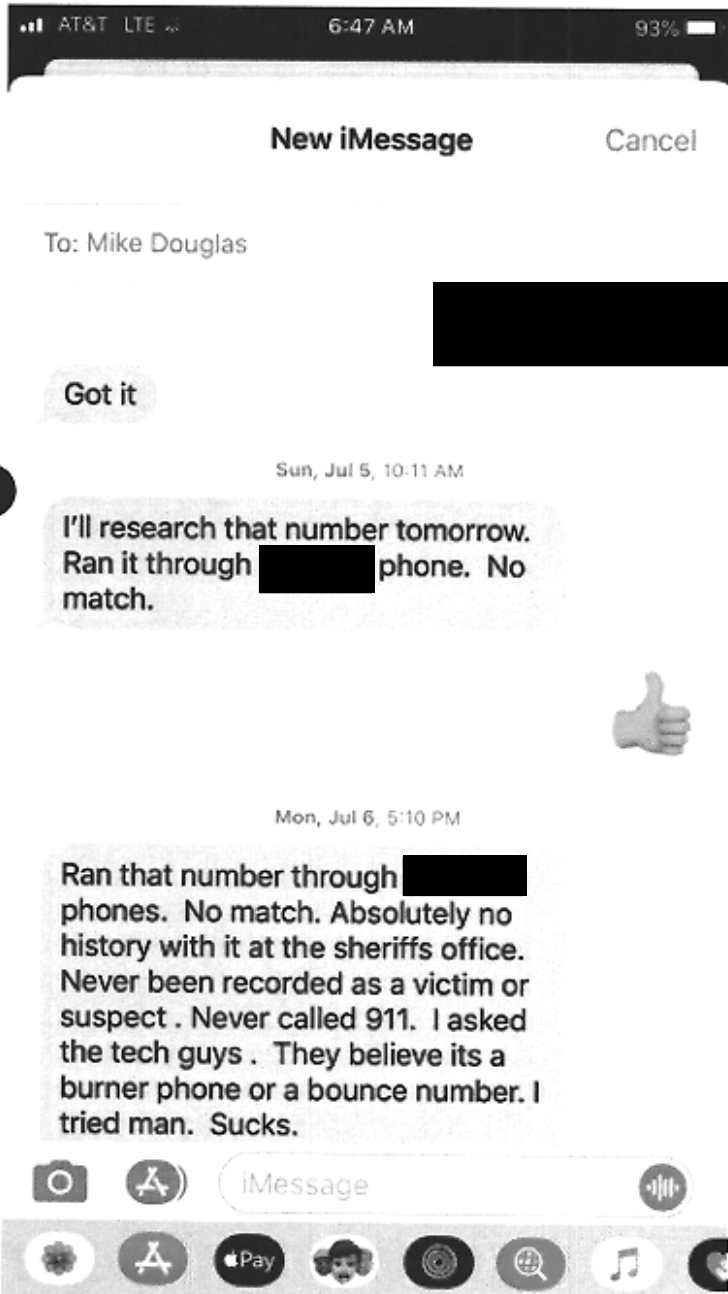
Michael Douglas-Greenville County Sheriff's Deputy with a [REDACTED] on the team. Knew of video and where it came from because his [REDACTED] showed it to him. Knew of only fans site. He talked to [REDACTED] about the video. [REDACTED] accused [REDACTED] of abuse and said he would beat her again if Michael told him about the video or the sex with the kids. He did not report the distribution of pornography to minors, the sex with a minor, or the allegation of abuse. Michael Douglas also traced the anonymous text number for [REDACTED] and later for me and was not able to get the identity.

Phillips, Scott

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2020 2:23 PM
To: Phillips, Scott
Subject: Text

CAUTION: This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Hello Scott, my apologies for the delay on this request.



Phillips, Scott

From: Bastoni, Jonathan
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 8:31 AM
To: Phillips, Scott
Cc: Kirian, Lyle
Subject: HSI Investigation

Scott,

I would like to set up a time to come in and speak with either you or someone else in your office. Homeland Security Investigations is planning on questioning a current Deputy in connection with an ongoing investigation. At this time the Deputy is not suspected of any criminal wrong doing but is believed to have knowledge of the incident. I feel it is my responsibility to make OPS aware of the details of the investigation and to make it clear that I will be excusing myself from any direct involvement of interviews with SO personnel.

I also have copied my supervisor onto this email so that he is aware of what is going on as well.
Please let me know when we can talk about this in person.

Jonathan Bastoni

Human Trafficking Investigator
Greenville County Sheriff's Office /
TFO Homeland Security Investigations

(864) 923-2280 cell

(864) 235-0519 office

jbastoni@greenvillecounty.org

www.gcsso.org

Phillips, Scott

From: Bastoni, Jonathan
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 11:56 AM
To: Phillips, Scott
Subject: Re: HSI Investigation

[REDACTED]
The other agent has [REDACTED] phone number and I'll get it when he gets back.

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 26, 2020, at 9:25 AM, Phillips, Scott <TPhillips@greenvillecounty.org> wrote:

Will do

From: Bastoni, Jonathan
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 8:31 AM
To: Phillips, Scott
Cc: Kirian, Lyle
Subject: HSI Investigation

Scott,

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Jonathan Bastoni

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jbastoni@greenvillecounty.org
www.gcsso.org

Phillips, Scott

From: Bastoni, Jonathan
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 2:24 PM
To: Phillips, Scott
Subject: Fwd: Information

Below is [REDACTED] contact info. The anonymous text number he had run is [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Bastoni, Jonathan P (CTR)" <Jonathan.P.Bastoni@associates.ice.dhs.gov>
Date: August 26, 2020 at 2:22:24 PM EDT
To: "Bastoni, Jonathan" <jbastoni@greenvillecounty.org>
Subject: FW: Information

CAUTION: This email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, Aug 26, 2020, 2:20 PM
To: Bastoni, Jonathan P (CTR) <Jonathan.P.Bastoni@associates.ice.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Information

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This document may contain confidential and sensitive U.S. Government information and is not for release, review, retransmission, dissemination or use by anyone other than the intended recipient. Please notify the sender if this email has been misdirected and immediately destroy all originals and copies of the original. Any disclosure of this document must be approved by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, Aug 26, 2020, 2:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Information

I have a name for you. [REDACTED] He was a baseball player at Eastside that recently transferred and I have been provided information that it was because he was tied up in this. I was given the information of the kid and that he transferred and [REDACTED] confirmed to me who it was.

[REDACTED]

Phillips, Scott

From: Bastoni, Jonathan
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 4:05 PM
To: Phillips, Scott
Subject: Re: Investigation (OPS)

No the way it has worked out we are trying to find another former east side student first and have not been able to find him yet. Do what you need to. I don't think it will mess us up either way. Also, FYI I believe it is [REDACTED] is the one leaking info to Fits News. They had some very specific info about our meeting with him

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 2, 2020, at 3:19 PM, Phillips, Scott <TPhillips@greenvillecounty.org> wrote:

Any word yet on talking to the guy in Columbia? We have not pulled the deputy in yet.