



South Carolina

STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

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December 4, 2024

MEMORANDUM OF INTERVIEW

TO: File 2024-03590

FROM: Special Agent Austin Mills

RE: Interview of Sheriff Chuck Wright

COUNTY: Spartanburg

Name: Charles "Chuck" Wright

Address: [REDACTED] Spartanburg, SC, 29303

Phone: [REDACTED]

On November 22, 2024, Special Agent (S/A) Austin Mills and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) S/A Justin Newsome interviewed Sheriff Chuck Wright at the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office (SCSO). At Sheriff Wright's request, Captain (Capt.) Brandon Letterman was also present during the interview. The interview was audio recorded. *Agent's Note: The interview summarized in this Memorandum represents the synopsis of the interview and is not verbatim transcripts unless otherwise indicated.* Sheriff Wright provided the following information: Sheriff Wright was aware of the Post and Courier news article regarding purchases made using his Spartanburg County credit card. Sheriff Wright described Capt. Letterman as who he requested approval from to spend money. *Agent's Note: Capt. Letterman replaced Mark Barry as the Administrative Captain in January of 2024.* Sheriff Wright said



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that he used a county provided credit card for work related purchases and relied on the credit card statements as documentation of purchases. Sheriff Wright thought that he could use the credit card for anything work related and that purchases over five hundred dollars required approval by the finance department. Steve Strickland, a helicopter pilot, also had access to the credit card.

Sheriff Wright said that charges at hotels were for stays during training he attended and that he had made purchases for the flight team. Sheriff Wright thought that a September 2019 hotel stay in Memphis, Tennessee was for an employee's stay during training. Sheriff Wright thought that a June 21, 2022, charge at a Hampton Inn in Spartanburg was to house an informant utilized by SCSO narcotics investigators. Sheriff Wright said that he had made small personal purchases with the county credit by mistake and then provided cash to Lisa Estes in order to reimburse the purchase. *Agent's Note: Estes was the Senior Administrative Assistant to the Administrative Captain. Estes was responsible for accounts payable. She was interviewed on January 15, 2025. See Lisa Estes memorandum of interview for a summary of that interview.*

Sheriff Wright said that he had his personal and county credit cards saved on his county phone for purchases. Sheriff Wright played a game on his county phone which resulted in multiple Apple charges to his county credit card which he intended to be charged to his personal credit card. Sheriff Wright wrote a check for \$1,100 to Spartanburg County as reimbursement for those charges. Sheriff Wright thought that "there has to be" enough sheriff's office official use to account for approximately \$10,000 in additional Apple purchases. Sheriff Wright said that former Captain Steve Cooper would know what applications caused the additional charges. Sheriff Wright thought that the \$1,100 check covered all of his personal purchases that he was aware of. Capt. Letterman said that the \$1,100 was calculated based upon charges in September 2024 which appeared on the October 2024 credit card statement. Sheriff Wright said that he did not pay attention to the credit card statements until the Post and Courier article was published.

Sheriff Wright said that he used the county credit card to purchase meals when at training but did not typically use it for meals while in Spartanburg. Sheriff Wright said that his personal and county credit cards were the same color and had led to him using the county card on accident

before. Sheriff Wright said that he would pay for any accidental purchases he made. Capt. Letterman said that the county credit card statements were paid for with the state drug fund account. In the past, Estes paid for individual purchases with specific accounts. Sheriff Wright said that he understood the credit card was permitted for buying gas, meals during training, and supplies for deputies. Sheriff Wright said that the credit card was not for “personal stuff” but there may have been small personal charges from times when he had used the wrong card. Sheriff Wright said that he gave Estes money to reimburse those purchases on the occasions that he realized his mistake.

Sheriff Wright did not “have a clue” why there were charges for Pure Flix and thought they were fraudulent. Sheriff Wright said that he had a Pure Flix subscription at his house but thought that his wife had set up the account. Sirius-XM charges were for Sheriff Wright’s work truck. Sheriff Wright did not know what Pure Clean Keto and True Fitness Online were and had not purchased them in his personal time. *Agent’s Note: While Sheriff Wright took a smoke break, Capt. Letterman said that the only application he knew of with an official use which would have a recurring charge was Casper, which the narcotics unit used. Casper was not purchased through Apple. Capt. Letterman said that Sheriff Wright had only asked him for permission to purchase Fore Flight and an optic for his pistol.*

Sheriff Wright recalled looking at an application for FitOnTheRun.com but did not remember making a purchase on it. Sheriff Wright did not know what True Fitness or True Fitness Attire was. Purchases at C & C Ammunition and T & K Outdoors were for official use and included a pistol mounted optic and firearms training. Sheriff Wright said that he called Capt. Letterman for approval of any large purchases. Sheriff Wright thought that a purchase at Gibson & Barnes was a flight suit for a SCSO pilot. Purchases at Common Thread Embroidery, Harrison’s Workwear, and Hat Flow, were clothing for official SCSO use. A \$582 purchase at Scuba Shop was equipment for the SCSO dive team. Purchases at Best Buy, Tractor Supply, Academy Sports, and Ace Hardware were items for official SCSO use. Sheriff Wright was unsure what a \$75 purchase at Verdin’s Farm and Garden was for but suspected he had used the wrong card to purchase corn. A purchase at Christian Supply was for books on leadership that were given to SCSO employees. Purchases at Vic Bailey Ford were for SCSO vehicles. Sheriff Wright said

that wish.com purchases were accidental. A purchase at Art Lounge was for SCSO employee awards and retirement gifts. Sheriff Wright said that he never intentionally used the county credit card to make a personal purchase. *Agent's Note: Capt. Letterman advised the credit card bills were exclusively paid for with money from the sheriff's office state drug fund account in recent months, but specific purchases had previously been paid for by other accounts when appropriate.*

The Chaplain's Benevolence Fund (CBF) was a 501(C)(3) account which was managed by Pastor Amos Durham. The purpose of the CBF was to assist SCSO employees in need. Requests for assistance were typically made to Durham, and he would usually provide a check but sometimes provided cash. If cash was given, Durham documented it. Sheriff Wright had received cash from Durham and given it to SCSO employees. Sheriff Wright described the form of CBF assistance as, "99% of the time it's a check...very small amount of cash." Sheriff Wright said that he did not know the balance of the CBF account and could not withdraw funds from it. Sheriff Wright thought that Durham could provide up to \$500 in CBF assistance without approval from anyone else.

Sheriff Wright said that he did not have evidence to the SCSO evidence room or "dope fund." Sheriff Wright said that, to avoid accidental purchases in the future, he would use a procurement card or keep receipts. In concluding the interview, Sheriff Wright said, "I've never purposely taken any money out of the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office that I knew I shouldn't do. I've never done nothing like that, and I won't."