



Sheriff Carlton Speed

Banks County Sheriff's Office
160 Windmill Farm Road • Homer, Georgia 30547

DATE: June 24, 2020

TO: IA File # 2001 (External Agency Investigation-Rabun Co.)

FROM: Captain Casey Brouwer

BCC: Major Matt Allen
Captain Carissa McFaddin

SUBJECT: Sergeant Cody Sanders, Rabun County Sheriff's Office

Below is a summary of the interview of Sgt. Cody Sanders of Rabun County Sheriff's Office by Major M. Allen and Captain C. McFaddin which took place on June 17, 2020:

Captain McFaddin began by asking Sanders if he was aware of a complaint against Capt. R. Hunter. Sanders said that he was not aware of the specifics of the complaint, but he had a suspicion that it had to do with Sgt. S. Harvey because Sgt. Harvey had suddenly turned in all of his equipment in the middle of the night and because Capt. Hunter was "supposedly on vacation". He said that he had not been told anything about the investigation. Capt. McFaddin asked if Sanders was aware of any recent issues between Hunter and Harvey. Sanders said that he was not. He further stated that he felt that Hunter had always taken up for Harvey and he knew that they had worked together at Baldwin [Police Department], so he felt that they were very close.

Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders if he had ever had any issues with Harvey. Sanders laughed and said that he had not. However, he did state that he believed he was incompetent and that he "doesn't do a very good job on a lot of things". Sanders said that he and Harvey did get along for the most part, but he felt that Harvey has a very annoying personality. He further stated that Harvey is a good guy and he doesn't have any issues with him, but he just could not stand to be around him for more than a few minutes at a time. Likewise, Sanders said that he doesn't know of any other employees having issues with Harvey.

Capt. McFaddin asked if Sanders has had any issues with Capt. Hunter. Sanders said that he has not. He further stated that "Richard" (which is the title he continued to use for Captain Hunter) has always had his back and that he does a great job. He said that there have been comments

regarding his drinking, but Sanders said that he felt that even mentioning that was “a low blow” toward Hunter. He said that Hunter and he talk almost daily, although they had not spoken since Hunter has been on “vacation”. He went on to explain that he believes that Hunter’s drinking is the way that he deals with the stresses of the job. He said that he does know of others who have complained that Hunter called them intoxicated. He stated that Hunter has called him while intoxicated as well, but it has never been anything that affected his job.

Maj. Allen asked Sanders if Hunter had ever given him an official instruction while intoxicated that he had disregarded due to the intoxication. Sanders said that the only time he could think of (he stated that he “wouldn’t even consider it an “incident””) was a time that Hunter had called him to ensure that he had everything that he needed while he was working a suicide. He said that Hunter was asking him if he needed to send anyone else in to assist. Sanders said that he told Hunter that he had more investigative experience than anyone else in the Patrol Division and that he was fine. Maj. Allen asked how Sanders knew that Hunter was intoxicated at the time he had called. Sanders laughed and said that Hunter’s voice changes to a more nasal-sounding tone when he has been drinking.

Maj. Allen asked Sanders if Harvey had confided in him concerning issues that he had experienced with Hunter. Sanders said that he could not think of any time that he had. He said that they typically did not talk very much. He said that the most recent talks he had with Harvey were regarding an officer-involved vehicle crash that had affected him mentally. Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders if he knew any of Harvey’s history from past experiences. Sanders said that he really didn’t know much about him personally, but stated that he has known him in “one capacity or another” for quite some time. He said that he didn’t “really know” Harvey until he came to work at Rabun County Sheriff’s Office.

Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders for his definition of the climate/culture of the agency. He asked if Capt. McFaddin meant the time up until about a week-and-a-half ago or when “you could feel the...”. Sanders paused. Capt. McFaddin clarified that she meant the normal climate. Sanders said that the climate was “laid back” and that everybody, for the most part, gets along. He said that he wouldn’t describe it as family-like and that “you have your clicks” but he said that everyone seems to have a good working relationship. He said that the overall climate hasn’t really changed “with all this” (referring to the investigation at hand), but you can just tell that “somethings fixing to come down the pipe”. He said that no one really wants to see anyone that work with get in trouble, but he believes that integrity is very important in law enforcement and so, whether or not he is friends with someone, things need to be handled.

Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders about the use of “sexual banter”, showing videos, and sexually-oriented jokes were the norm within the agency. Sanders said “Yeah” and went on to describe how he believed that those in law enforcement tend to have a sense of humor that tends to be crude. He said that, similarly to his previous mention of alcohol use, he believes that the use of a crude sense of humor is one of the ways that those in law enforcement cope with the stresses of

the job. He further stated that he wouldn't say that any one person in the agency is any worse than the others when it comes to "dirty jokes, or memes, or things of that nature". He further stated that he didn't know that his agency had any more or less than any other agency. He said that every agency he had worked with had some level of that humor. He said that he understands that you have to be careful as to in whose company you "do that sort of stuff". Referring to that type of humor, Sanders stated "I think we have an issue, but I think everyone has that issue; we always need to strive to be more professional... I don't think we're any worse or any better than anyone else."

Maj. Allen asked Sanders if he had any discussion with anyone else regarding the reason that he and Capt. McFaddin were at the agency. Sanders said that he had not, but that Sheriff Nichols had mentioned sending something "to the outside agency" and that comment had made him wonder, but that the sheriff would not share any details with him. He further said that there were "all sorts of rumors going around." He said those included Hunter being fired or quitting, Harvey being fired or quitting, and Hunter and Harvey being involved in a physical altercation. He said that he had continuously told other employees that Hunter was on vacation and was "burning [PTO] time". He said that he continued to tell that version to maintain morale within the agency. He said that everyone was talking about what was going on, but no one really knows anything other than that it deals with Hunter and Harvey.

Maj. Allen asked Sanders if he and John (Inv. Ulm) had spoken regarding Hunter. Sanders said that he and Ulm had only had very limited contact/conversations. Maj. Allen asked if Sanders had had any conversations with Ulm regarding Hunter's drinking or anything. Sanders said that he didn't think that he and Ulm had ever had a serious conversation about anybody at the Sheriff's Office.

Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders if (going back to the topic of sexual banter) he had known that to be something that took place between Hunter and Harvey or others. Sanders said that, typically if Hunter has engaged in that sort of talk, it has been in response. He said that he had even had that type of conversation with Hunter. He said that there was recently a sexual harassment class (which Sanders said he had missed), and that he had noticed a difference in Hunter from when he had worked with him before. However, he stated "Yeah, we all "shit talk" back and forth both ways."

Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders if he had ever known Hunter to discuss his wife or anyone else's wife in a sexual manner. Sanders responded "Not in an on-duty capacity: no." Capt. McFaddin clarified that she did not mean anything that had happened while on-duty, but just in general. Sanders said that he and Hunter had both talked about their wives when they were off-duty. Capt. McFaddin attempted to clarify whether the off-duty talk was sexual in nature. Capt. McFaddin further said that she was just attempting to establish whether that was a common thing with Hunter. Sanders responded "not necessarily, no. I mean, he's made comments in regards to his wife..." Sanders went on to describe a time in which he had been bitten on the arm by a

spider, and he needed to go see Hunter's wife to receive medical attention. He said that he and Hunter were discussing how the procedure would be painful. He said that he had told Hunter that "If she does it topless it would probably make it hurt less." He continued by stating that Hunter had never been inappropriate about Sanders' wife. He said that previously mentioned conversation is about as far as it goes. He stated that they just have that close of a relationship.

Capt. McFaddin asked if Hunter has Sanders' wife's phone number. Sanders said that he didn't think he would, other than if he retrieved it from his employee file. Capt. McFaddin asked if it was a common thing for Hunter to have his employees' wives' numbers. Sanders said that he may if he had been friends with the wives before due to the small size of their community. He said that it would be odd for Hunter to have his wife's number. Capt. McFaddin asked if Sanders had ever heard any other deputies complain about something sexually-oriented that Hunter had said to them. He said he had not. Capt. McFaddin asked the same question about Harvey. Sanders said that he had not.

Capt. McFaddin asked Sanders if he recalled a recent case—in which Harvey had arrested a subject for the possession of THC oil and someone had a fever which led to suspicions of the possibility of an occurrence of COVID-19—in which Harvey had called him, possibly while he was around Hunter. Sanders said he did. Sanders went on to describe the incident. None of the details of which had any connection to the issues at-hand.

In closing, Sanders said that he hated that it had come to the point of the investigation at-hand. He stated "Everybody has strengths and weaknesses." He said that he knew, based upon the questions asked, that he was not to mention anything about the interview to others, and he further stated that he believed that he could piece together what had happened. He stated "People make mistakes. Things happen. People throw things out of proportion and, you know, Richard [Hunter] is great at what he does...and I would hate to see something happen to him based on something getting blown out of proportion: He's a hell of a guy and he does a good job, and that's just my feelings..."

The interview with Sanders was concluded.