



Billy Blume <madvideos@gmail.com>

Georgia ORA complaint

3 messages

John Smith <JSmith@law.ga.gov>

Fri, Feb 21, 2025 at 9:16 AM

To: "madvideos@gmail.com" <madvideos@gmail.com>

Cc: Kristen Settlemire <KSettlemire@law.ga.gov>, Ella Porter <eporter@law.ga.gov>

Dear Mr. Blume,

I hope you are doing well. I work with Ms. Settlemire on Open Records /Meetings Act complaints. She is out of the office until Monday and I do not have access to your particular portal complaint. However, if you can send me your request, response, and any other relevant documentation to your complaint, I am happy to begin to review to see if we can help and I will confer with Ms. Settlemire on Monday. Thank you for your assistance, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
John P. Smith
Assistant Attorney General



John Smith
Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General Chris Carr
Government Services & Employment
404-458-3379
jsmith@law.ga.gov
Georgia Department of Law
40 Capitol Square SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Billy Blume <madvideos@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 21, 2025 at 9:59 AM

To: John Smith <JSmith@law.ga.gov>

Good day Mr. Smith,

Thank you for reaching out. Below is the complaint I submitted in the portal. I also have a webpage with the video clips from the traffic stop and email chain with the Richmond County Sheriff's Office. The page contains all of the important facts.

Found here <https://shieldsofshame.com/hephzibah-georgia-traffic-stop-2-15-25/>

Attorney General of Georgia
Georgia Department of Law
40 Capitol Square SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Subject: Formal Complaint – Improper Withholding of Public Records

Dear Attorney General,

I am filing a formal complaint regarding the denial of my **Open Records Request** for body camera footage, incident reports, and officer history related to a **traffic stop on February 15, 2025, in Hephzibah, Georgia** involving officers **Matthew A. Cowdrey and Eric J. McCants**. I believe the cited exemptions were **misapplied** in an effort to conceal potential misconduct by these officers.

Challenging the Exemptions Cited

1. Misuse of O.C.G.A. § 50-18-72(a)(4) – “Pending Investigation”

You stated that **records are exempt because they pertain to a pending investigation**; however, you also stated that **the driver was released with a warning and no prosecution is pending**. How can this exemption apply when **no investigation exists**?

Additionally, I question whether **federal laws were violated** by these officers when they:

- **Placed the female driver in handcuffs**
- **Detained her in the back of a patrol car**
- **Searched her vehicle**
- **Deployed a K9 unit**

All of this was done under the **pretext of a window tint violation**.

Was the **tint meter calibrated**? What was the **exact reading**? Such details should have been recorded in an **incident report**, yet I was told none exists.

2. Misuse of O.C.G.A. § 50-18-72(a)(3) – “Confidential Source”

You also cited an exemption regarding **confidential investigative or prosecution material** that could **reveal a confidential source** or endanger someone's safety. However:

- **I filmed the entire incident myself.**
- The only person visible was **the driver**.
- Are you now claiming that **the driver is a confidential informant** because she was recorded on a public roadway?

This exemption does not apply and appears to be an **attempt to shield public records from scrutiny**.

3. Was the Driver's Detention and Search Lawful?

Handcuffing is considered a **use of force** and is only justified under the following conditions:

- **Officer safety concerns** (e.g., the driver was armed or aggressive). The driver in my footage **did not** appear hostile.
- **A lawful arrest** (e.g., outstanding warrants). You confirmed the driver was **released** without charges.
- **Reasonable suspicion of a more serious crime** beyond the tint violation. **What was the reasonable suspicion?**

Your office also stated that **no incident report exists**. Does this mean that officers are **conducting proactive stops with no accountability or documentation**?

4. Unlawful Denial of Body Camera Footage

I specifically requested **the full body camera footage from Officers Cowdrey and McCants between 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM on 2/15/25**. Instead of providing these public records, your office appears to be withholding them under a **blanket exemption. This is unacceptable.**

Additionally, I requested the **arrest history of these two officers**, which has also not been provided. These are **public records**, and failure to disclose them raises serious concerns about transparency.

5. Presence of an Unlisted Female Officer

Who was the **female officer** present at the scene? She is **not listed on the CAD report**. Was she operating under an **unreported assignment**, or has her involvement been deliberately omitted from records?

Demand for Compliance

I am **formally requesting** that your office **release the full body camera footage** as required under Georgia's Open Records Act. I also demand a written explanation as to why:

- No **incident report** was filed.
- The officers' **arrest history** was not provided.
- An **unlisted officer** was on scene.

Next Steps

I am copying this complaint to the **Georgia Attorney General's Office** and will be filing a **formal complaint on the AG's website. Your refusal to release these records constitutes a violation of public records laws and a potential cover-up of unconstitutional policing practices.**

To further demonstrate the lack of justification for these exemptions, I am providing my footage of the incident, which contradicts your claims. It can be viewed here:

👉 <https://shieldsofshame.com/hephzibah-georgia-traffic-stop-2-15-25/>

I expect a response and full disclosure of the requested records **within the timeframe required by law.**

Thank you
Billy Blume

[Quoted text hidden]

John Smith <JSmith@law.ga.gov>
To: Billy Blume <madvideos@gmail.com>

Fri, Feb 21, 2025 at 10:04 AM

Thank you for your response. We will review and be back in touch.

John Smith



John Smith
Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General Chris Carr
Government Services & Employment
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From: Billy Blume <madvideos@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 9:59 AM
To: John Smith <JSmith@LAW.GA.GOV>
Subject: Re: [Georgia](#) ORA complaint

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