



VOLUSIA SHERIFF'S OFFICE

MICHAEL J. CHITWOOD, SHERIFF

Office of Chief Deputy Brian M. Henderson - Internal Affairs

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

REPORT NUMBER: IA 23-001

PERIOD COVERED: December 27, 2022 – January 05, 2023
DATE REPORTED: January 12, 2023
SUBJECT(S) NAME: Deputy Christian Eckberg, #9268
INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Sergeant Ben Gordon, #7744

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

On January 05, 2023, Sergeant Hachenberger was contacted by VSO Training Coordinator Levi in reference to significant issues involving Deputy Christian Eckberg. The concerns were in reference to tardiness, problems following standard operating procedures, and possible moral ethics violations. TC Levi provided Sergeant Hachenberger with details that outlined an instance where Deputy Eckberg lied to her about his work schedule and location on January 04, 2023. This was after it was discovered Deputy Eckberg was absent from work without providing proper notification. According to TC Levi, this was not the first issue she had with Deputy Eckberg as it relates to tardiness. As such, Sergeant Hachenberger completed a supervisor inquiry detailing the information presented.

OFFENSES:

GO-026-02.IV.C.5.g – Failure to Follow General Order, Standard Operating Procedure, or Order – Employees shall adhere to all official general orders, standard operational procedures, and orders, and shall faithfully execute all the duties and responsibilities of their assigned position.

GO-026-02.IV.G.2.a – General Proficiency – VSO personnel are required to possess a sound working knowledge of the policies and procedures established by general orders and standard operating procedures.

GO-026-02.IV.C.3.a - Absence from Duty without Proper Notification – Employees shall report for duty in accordance with their assigned work schedules and shall not be absent from duty without supervisor’s authorization or having made proper notification. Employees who are unable to report for duty due to illness or other emergency shall cause notification of their supervisor not less than one hour prior to scheduled reporting time, whenever possible.

GO-026-02.IV.C.3.c - Tardiness – Employees shall promptly report for duty properly prepared at the time and place required by assignments or orders.

GO-026-02.IV.C.5.a - Leaving Assigned Work Area – Employees shall remain at or in assigned work areas or District during working hours, unless otherwise authorized by a supervisor.

GO-026-02.IV.D.8.a - Untruthfulness – Employees shall not knowingly make false or untrue statements except as authorized in the performance of duties and as necessary to maintain covert operations during investigation of criminal activities.

GO-022-16.IV.A.4.a – Employees are Required to Report – Employees shall report to their assigned worksite when scheduled or summoned, and if necessary, be prepared to stay for an extended period of time. Employees shall not evacuate from the area during a natural disaster or emergency. It is every employee’s responsibility to maintain contact with their supervisor or their designated point of contact and to know where and when they must report for duty. Employees who fail to stay in contact with their supervisor or fail to report to work when scheduled or summoned without the prior approval of their supervisor shall be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

INVESTIGATION:

On January 12, 2023, Chief Deputy Brian Henderson assigned the above incident to the Internal Affairs Unit. This report details the Internal Affairs investigation conducted by Sergeant Ben Gordon.

Sergeant Gordon obtained and reviewed the supervisor inquiry completed by Sergeant Hachenberger in reference to the incident authored under SI 23-001. The following are the contents contained within said inquiry.

On Thursday, January 5, 2023, Sergeant Hachenberger spoke with VSO Communications Training Coordinator Stephanie Levi concerning Deputy Christian Eckberg's attendance while assigned to the VSO Communications Center. Due to an injury sustained in July of 2022, Deputy Eckberg has been assigned a light-duty assignment at the Communications Center.

Training Coordinator Levi was contacted by Communications Supervisor Thomas Eggers on 12/27/2022, who explained Deputy Eckberg had not shown for his scheduled shift nor had he made any notifications of being late or being unable to respond for his shift. Shortly after being notified of the incident, Training Coordinator Levi spoke with Deputy Eckberg via telephone, who advised he had overslept and was running late. Training Coordinator Levi reminded Deputy Eckberg he is to notify the on-duty communications supervisor as soon as possible when running late and to check in with the communications supervisor once he arrives. Deputy Eckberg later arrived for his shift at 0941 hours.

On 01/05/2023, Training Coordinator Levi was again contacted by Communications Supervisor Eggers, who advised Deputy Eckberg did not show up for his shifts on 01/04/2023 and 01/05/2023, nor did he provide any notifications. Training Coordinator Levi spoke with Deputy Eckberg on 01/05/2023 at 1045 hours via telephone. Deputy Eckberg explained he was experiencing vehicle problems and was trying to find a way to work. Training Coordinator Levi counseled Deputy Eckberg a second time, explaining he is required to notify the on-duty communications supervisor if he is running late or is going to miss his shift. When Training Coordinator Levi asked Deputy Eckberg where he was on 01/04/2023, he advised he was "In and out of the comm center." Deputy Eckberg stated he was going back and forth between the Communications Center and the VSO Training Center to attend a mandatory Autism Awareness class. Training Coordinator Levi reminded Deputy Eckberg he is not to attend any training without prior approval from his Lieutenant and VSO Human Resources. While continuing to speak with Deputy Eckberg, Training Coordinator Levi told him the CAD system did not show he ever logged in on 01/04/2023. Deputy Eckberg then told Training Coordinator Levi he had lied and had not responded for his scheduled shift at the Communications Center, nor did he respond to the VSO Training Center for any training classes. Deputy Eckberg later arrived at the Communications Center for his shift at 1124 hours.

Deputy Eckberg's discipline history includes the following:

06/15/2021 - LOR Written Reprimand: GO-026-02.IV.D.6.i Careless Handling of Equipment and Vehicles

12/20/2021 – LOR Written Reprimand: GO-041-20.IV.H.4.b - BWC Required Activations: When and Where to Record Non-Emergency Response

It is Sergeant Hachenberger's recommendation this incident be reviewed by Command Staff for possible discipline.

Interview with Sergeant Thomas Hachenberger

On January 18, 2022, at approximately 1128 hours, Sergeant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Sergeant Hachenberger. Sergeant Gordon interviewed Sergeant Hachenberger at 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand, at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building. Sergeant Gordon, Andrew Calkins, and Sergeant Hachenberger were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Sergeant Hachenberger began the interview by addressing the fact that he is not the current supervisor in charge of Deputy Eckberg. According to Sergeant Hachenberger, he briefly supervised Deputy Eckberg for approximately a week before he was transferred to his light-duty assignment. During the timeframe of the dates in question, Sergeant Hachenberger did not have any direct contact with Deputy Eckberg, nor did he supervise him.

On January 05, 2023, Sergeant Hachenberger received a phone call from TC Levi. During the phone call, Sergeant Hachenberger recalled, "*she [TC Levi] had reached out and explained that on the 5th she was notified that he [Deputy Eckberg] didn't respond for his shifts the previous day on the 4th and that same day on the 5th. Stephanie explained he [Deputy Eckberg] had also been late for a shift or he didn't arrive for his shift on the 27th and they reached out to him and he arrived several hours later still late for his shift and then on the 4th and the 5th kind of the same thing but yeah he just didn't show up for his shifts.*"

Sergeant Hachenberger explained that TC Levi emailed him a synopsis of the incidents in question, which he transposed to the supervisor inquiry that was created in BlueTeam. Sergeant Hachenberger explained he never contacted Deputy Eckberg about the incidents and only spoke with him once recently due to a change in issued equipment.

Sergeant Hachenberger did not have any intimate knowledge of the details of the investigation and referred to TC Levi for specifics.

Interview with TC Trainer Stephanie Levi

On January 18, 2023, at approximately 1314 hours, Sergeant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with TC Levi. Sergeant Gordon interviewed TC Levi at 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand, at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building. Sergeant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and TC Levi were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

TC Levi is a part of Deputy Eckberg's current chain of command for his light-duty assignment. According to TC Levi, Deputy Eckberg is to report to either her or the floor supervisor for direction or work-related issues. TC Levi has been supervising Deputy Eckberg for the past few months when issues began to arise. TC Levi said that Deputy Eckberg's work had been "fine"; however, he had recent issues with his work attendance.

TC Levi recalled the incident that took place on December 27, 2023. TC Levi said, *"I was actually on vacation and I received an email from one of the floor supervisors asking what his schedule was because he hadn't shown up yet. So I called him on my work cell phone to see where he was. He did not answer the phone and then he called me back a few minutes later and said that he had already been at work since like 9:30 but never checked in with the supervisors. And at that point you know I reminded him about you have to call in as soon as you know you're going to be late or if you're calling out you've got to call out an hour before your shift and you know when you get there you need to check in with a supervisor."*

TC Levi advised Deputy Eckberg was supposed to be at work at 0800 hours; however, he did not log onto the computer until approximately 0940 hours that day. TC Levi verbally counseled Deputy Eckberg about proper time management and notifying his chain of command when he was late.

It should be noted Deputy Eckberg also mentioned to TC Levi that, at one point, he was having vehicle problems and was late because of it.

TC Levi was then asked about the details surrounding January 04, 2023, and January 05, 2023. When speaking about those dates, TC Levi recalled, *"we had just had shift change so it's newer supervisors on dayshift and some of them weren't familiar with Eckberg. One of the supervisors that was noticed that he hadn't been to work the day prior that it was missed the day prior, somehow, they didn't have his name on the breakdowns like they were supposed to. So the dayshift supervisors didn't realize that he wasn't supposed, that he wasn't there."* TC Levi was then corresponding with the floor supervisors about scheduling, and that is when she was notified about Deputy Eckberg's absence.

Upon being presented with the information, TC Levi then called Deputy Eckberg via cell phone. TC Levi said, *"I asked him [Deputy Eckberg] about the day prior to the 4th. I asked him where he was, and he told me that he was at work and that he was in between central and training. And I asked him what he was doing at Training, and he said that he had a mandatory autism awareness training. And at that point, I reminded him you can't go to trainings without approval from your lieutenant and HR because everything has to be approved. And then I you know he said that he forgot and he apologized for forgetting about getting approval and then I asked him I said well what time were you at Central?"*

We have a CAD command that I can run that shows whether he was logged in as an operator on our side or not. And he was never logged in and I told him that I said I ran the CAD command and you weren't logged in and that's when he admitted to lying that he had never come to work at all [referring to January 04, 2023]." At the end of the phone conversation, Deputy Eckberg told TC Levi he would be coming to work and arrived at the communication center at approximately 1124 hours.

After discovering the issue, TC Levi notified her chain of command and additionally spoke with Shannon Sibley, who is a Dispatch Operations Manager at the communication center. Once Deputy Eckberg arrived, he asked to speak with TC Levi. Deputy Eckberg, Manager Sibley, and TC Levi have a brief meeting about what transpired. TC Levi recalled, *"it was very brief it was him just apologizing and me reminding him that he has to call out for his shifts it's unacceptable and that I've already made notifications to his lieutenant and that it would be handled from their side moving forward and he you know I asked him if he was ok and what was going on and he basically said that he was having trouble getting out of bed in the mornings due to his injuries and being on light duty. And at that point we did refer him to EAP [employee assistance program] and to a local person that we use in the comm center that works with first responders."*

While speaking about EAP, TC Levi said, "He [Deputy Eckberg] wasn't really receptive to it" during their conversation, Deputy Eckberg said, "I'm not that bad."

Since the incident occurred, TC Levi has had little contact with Deputy Eckberg and has not discussed the issues any further.

Interview with Manager Sibley

On January 18, 2023, at approximately 1441 hours, Sergeant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Manager Sibley. Sergeant Gordon interviewed Manager Sibley at 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand, at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building. Sergeant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Manager Sibley were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

On January 05, 2023, Manager Sibley was notified about a matter that concerned TC Levi. According to Manager Sibley, TC Levi advised Deputy Eckberg lied to her in reference to his whereabouts on January 04, 2023. After Deputy Eckberg lied to TC Levi, he apologized for his actions and then wished to speak with TC Levi further when he arrived to work at the communication center. TC Levi asked Manager Sibley to sit in on the meeting, to which Manager Sibley agreed.

When speaking about the meeting, Manager Sibley said, *"we were sitting in there and he [Deputy Eckberg] came in and he wanted to apologize for lying about not being at work the*

previous day because he had told Stephanie that he was there and Stephanie was able to pull up the computer to see that he had never logged in that whole entire day. Dep. Eckberg said that he was sorry that he was going through a lot of things, that his injury is really kind of was getting to him and he wasn't in the right place and then we offered him the EAP phone number to call EAP." Manager Sibley stated, "he [Deputy Eckberg] was gonna try to do better and work on that so, work on showing up and being there and doing what he was supposed to do. So then he left and Stephanie and I had a conversation and she basically wrote an email of what happened."

Manager Sibley commented on the fact this was not the first issue with Deputy Eckberg and his attendance. Manager Sibley recalled, *"every once in a while, he [Deputy Eckberg] would show up late and he doesn't call or he doesn't check in. Whenever anybody comes in late you're supposed to check in with a supervisor just to let them know that you're there because the supervisors have other things and they're not really watching the doors or anything but he usually just goes and sits down and starts his working."*

Other than the issues mentioned, Manager Sibley was unaware of any other problems with Deputy Eckberg and has not spoken to him recently. Manager Sibley advised she did not have any further information relevant to the investigation.

Interview with Deputy Christian Eckberg

On January 27, 2023, at approximately 0924 hours, Sergeant Gordon conducted a sworn recorded interview with Deputy Eckberg. Sergeant Gordon interviewed Deputy Eckberg at 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand, at the Sheriff's Office Administration Building. Sergeant Gordon, Sergeant Calkins, and Deputy Eckberg were present for the interview. Below is a synopsis of the audio-recorded interview:

Prior to the beginning of the interview, Deputy Eckberg was provided a chance to review all documentation and material evidence pertaining to the investigation. Additionally, Deputy Eckberg was again made aware of the fact he was able to have an attorney or representative present during the interview. Deputy Eckberg advised he understood and wished to participate in the interview without any representation.

Deputy Eckberg began by acknowledging that his light duty schedule for the past several months was Monday through Friday, 0800 to 1600 hours. Deputy Eckberg is currently and was during the timeframe of the incidents assigned to the communication center located at 3825 Tiger Bay Rd, Daytona Beach.

Deputy Eckberg was asked about December 27, 2022, and what led to him being late to work on that date. Deputy Eckberg said, *"Just I woke up and I just I didn't have that, I didn't have that"*

energy or that will power to be like hey lets go after today it's gonna be a good day so I just kind of laid in bed and just stayed in bed." Deputy Eckberg was asked what time he went to work that day. Deputy Eckberg replied, *"I believe the 27th was the day that yeah I got in at 9:41. I believe I stayed in bed probably for about two hours after my alarm clock went off which is at 7:00, get ready head up there."*

When Deputy Eckberg arrived at work, he just sat down at a desk and started doing his "normal routine" and failed to notify the floor supervisor about his arrival. Deputy Eckberg was additionally asked if he understood what he was supposed to do if he was late for work or had to miss a day of work. Deputy Eckberg said, *"you call in an hour before your shift to notify the supervisor that you're not gonna be able to make it because of x, y, z whatever the reason may be."* By his own confession, Deputy Eckberg also failed to notify a supervisor that he would be late to work on December 27, 2022. Deputy Eckberg acknowledged that he knew he did not follow the correct protocol for tardiness and did not follow the standard operating procedures set forth in General Orders.

Deputy Eckberg was asked if a conversation occurred on that date with TC Levi. Deputy Eckberg advised he did and recalled the following, *"It was just a quick like hey I'm sorry I came in late I had issues with the car and everything like that and she notified me of the proper procedure of if you are going to be late because of whatever reason just reach out to the supervisor on deck and just let them know so they're not looking for you and everything like that."* Deputy Eckberg then confessed to lying about his vehicle having mechanical issues. When asked why Deputy Eckberg lied about being late, Deputy Eckberg said, *"Cuz it's hard as a man to be like hey we're supposed to solve people's problems but I'm having issues and to go to someone and be like hey I am kind of it's kind of hard for me to do things right now. Like especially because I'm former military and stuff like that so it's like going from two professions where we have to be hard men we have to make hard decisions we have to solve issues it's just it's really really difficult for me to sit there and be like hey let me go pour my heart out to someone and you know see if there's something I can do like let me go talk to someone instead of trying to fix my own issues."* Deputy Eckberg provided the reason for lying and tardiness stemmed from laziness and being unmotivated.

Deputy Eckberg then explained that since his injury, he has missed being a patrol deputy and the work associated with it. Deputy Eckberg confirmed that he has received information on EAP and has decided to utilize Veteran Affairs (VA) instead. Although choosing to use the VA, he has not made any appointments to receive services or care.

Deputy Eckberg was asked several questions pertaining to January 04, 2023, and January 05, 2023. According to Deputy Eckberg, a similar incident that occurred on December 27, 2022, also

occurred on January 04, 2023. On January 04, 2023, Deputy Eckberg did not respond to work, and he *“stayed in bed more or less the whole day.”*

On January 05, 2023, Deputy Eckberg was contacted by TC Levi, who asked him where he was at. Deputy Eckberg explained that he again was having a hard time motivating himself to get to work and was trying to get ready at his apartment when TC Levi called him. In reference to the phone call, Deputy Eckberg said, *“She called me she asked me where I was. She asked me about the day before why I didn’t show up and I told her that I was doing training and stuff like that which was untrue and then I kind of just told her briefly over the phone how I had been feeling and she asked me to come in and everything like that, told me that she would obviously notify my lieutenant and notify him what happened.”* Deputy Eckberg mentioned specifically he attended an autism awareness class when he said he was at *“training”* on January 04, 2023.

It should be noted, Sergeant Gordon contacted the Training staff and confirmed there were no autism awareness classes on January 04, 2023.

Deputy Eckberg then detailed what happened after he arrived at work around 1124 hours and the meeting with TC Levi and Manager Sibley. Deputy Eckberg recalled, *“we just had a conversation about what’s been going on exactly and she told me that she obviously reached out and stuff and it would go from there with you know the lieutenant sending off to IA and everything making you guys aware of what, kind of what happened.”* Deputy Eckberg confessed to TC Levi and Manager Sibley that he had lied and apologized for his actions.

Deputy Eckberg was asked what he would do differently after having time to think about his recent behavior. Deputy Eckberg commented, *“It would be mainly just owning my decisions and just biting the bullet and being a man about it just making the leap of faith and just reaching out to people and talking to someone and trying to work through the issues that are going on and just trying to resolve it because avoiding it doesn’t do anything.”* Deputy Eckberg agreed his behavior was not appropriate for someone in his position and diametrically opposed to the values held by the Volusia Sheriff’s Office. Deputy Eckberg showed remorse for his actions and agreed he made severe mistakes.

In closing, Deputy Eckberg was asked if he violated the following General Orders, and his responses are detailed below:

GO-026-02.IV.C.5.g – Failure to Follow General Order, Standard Operating Procedure, or Order	Yes
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GO-026-02.IV.G.2.a – General Proficiency	Yes
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GO-026-02.IV.C.3.a – Absence from Duty without Proper Notification	Yes
GO-026-02.IV.C.3.c – Tardiness	Yes
GO-026-02.IV.C.5.a – Leaving Assigned Work Area	Yes
GO-026-02.IV.D.8.a – Untruthfulness	Yes

On February 02, 2023, the Internal Affairs investigation was presented to Chief Deputy Brian Henderson and the executive command staff. Upon completion of the presentation, Chief Deputy Henderson sustained the aforementioned General Order violations against Deputy Eckberg:

GO-026-02.IV.C.5.g – Failure to Follow General Order, Standard Operating Procedure, or Order	Sustained
GO-026-02.IV.G.2.a – General Proficiency	Sustained
GO-026-02.IV.C.3.a – Absence from Duty without Proper Notification	Sustained
GO-026-02.IV.C.3.c – Tardiness	Sustained
GO-026-02.IV.C.5.a – Leaving Assigned Work Area	Sustained
GO-026-02.IV.D.8.a – Untruthfulness	Sustained

EXHIBITS:

- A. Report of Investigation
- B. Official Correspondence
- C. Blue Team Report
- D. Email Correspondence
- E. Timecard Information
- F. Training Records
- G. Transcript of Interview with Sergeant Hachenberger
- H. Transcript of Interview with Stephanie Levi
- I. Transcript of Interview with Shannon Sibley
- J. Transcript of Interview with Christian Eckberg
- K. Digital Evidence (Audio of Interviews)

WITNESSES:

Volusia Sheriff's Office

123 W. Indiana Avenue
DeLand, FL 32720

Training Coordinator Stephanie Levi

Manger Shannon Sibley

Sergeant Thomas Hachenberger

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing document and that the facts stated in it are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

AND

I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under the penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the suspect of the investigation of any rights contained in ss. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes.

DETECTIVE: [Signature] # 7744 DATE: 2/13/23

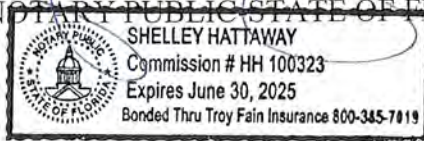
**Detective Sergeant Ben Gordon
Internal Affairs Detective Sergeant**

**STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF VOLUSIA**

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me by means of physical presence or online
Notarized this 13th day of February, 2023 by Sergeant Ben Gordon

[Signature]

SIGNATURE OF NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF FLORIDA



PRINT, TYPE, OR STAMP COMMISSIONED NAME OF NOTARY PUBLIC

PERSONALLY KNOWN OR PRODUCED IDENTIFICATION

TYPE OF IDENTIFICATION PRODUCED

APPROVED BY: [Signature] DATE: 02/13/2023

**CHIEF DEPUTY BRIAN HENDERSON
VOLUSIA COUNTY, FLORIDA**