



# SUNRISE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Daniel J. Ransone  
Acting Chief of Police

10440 W Oakland Park Blvd  
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## Internal Affairs Complaint Report Narrative

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### I. INTRODUCTION:

**Subject Employee:** Officer Erik Mathers

**Complainant:** [REDACTED]

**Witnesses:** [REDACTED]

**Narrative:**

[REDACTED] and his ex-wife, [REDACTED], have had a tumultuous relationship which is documented in a myriad of domestic disturbance reports from various Sunrise Police Officers. In addition to the domestic incidents, there are several documented police information reports, one of which was authored by Officer Erik Mathers. On December 23, 2021, Officer Mathers responded to 12674 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Place and met with [REDACTED]. She requested police assistance after discovering that [REDACTED] had changed the entry code to the front door of their residence and [REDACTED] was locked out. [REDACTED] was not present during this incident. Officer Mathers offered legal advice and documented the incident under SPD Case 42-2112-052688. The incident was also memorialized on Officer Mathers' Body Worn Camera.

Stemming from the domestic incidents, [REDACTED] began communicating with our Records Unit, requesting the reports and BWC footage from each documented case, including the aforementioned case handled by Officer Mathers. On April 8, 2023, [REDACTED] sent an email to former Chief of Police Anthony Rosa expressing his desire to file a formal complaint against Officer Mathers. In a follow up email from [REDACTED], he alludes to a statement made by Officer Mathers which was captured on his BWC during his interaction with [REDACTED] on December 23, 2021. [REDACTED] believes that Officer Mathers' statement is a violation of our Policy and Procedure.

The *Investigative Narrative* section outlines the details of my investigation into the matter and my conclusions with respect to any policy violations are found in the *Investigative Findings & Disposition* section.



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### II. INVESTIGATIVE NARRATIVE:

#### PROLOGUE:

██████████ and his wife, ██████████, reside at 12674 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Place in the City of Sunrise. The call history for their residence includes 47 calls for service since January 2020. Of the 47 calls for service, 11 are Domestic Disturbance / Domestic Violence calls involving Mr. and Mrs. ██████████. The calls for service also include numerous Police Information reports.

Beginning in January 2022, ██████████ initiates email communication with the Sunrise Police Department's Records Division, specifically corresponding with Records Supervisor A. Gonzalez. ██████████ requests the Body Worn Camera footage and report for case 42-2112-052688 and 42-2112-052697. Both cases are assigned to Officer Erik Mathers. Over the course of the next several months, emails are exchanged between ██████████ and Records Supervisor Gonzalez. ██████████ makes several Public Records Requests and is subsequently provided with the information he requested. Among the Public Records Requests are the aforementioned BWC and reports from cases 52688 and 52697, BWC Policy and Procedure, and finally all BWC footage from all calls for service from 2020-2023. It should be noted that in the last PRR for all BWC footage from all calls for service from 2020-2023, ██████████ specifically states calls for service from 12664 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Place, which is not his correct address.

On April 8, 2023, ██████████ authored an email to former Police Chief Anthony Rosa stating, *"I'd like to file a formal complaint against Officer Mathers. What's your procedure?"* Chief Rosa promptly responds and includes Internal Affairs personnel on the email thread. In response, ██████████ replies, *"Mathers video. To quote 'just tell them he hit you you first'. :)"*.

Deduced from this response, it was clear that ██████████ wished to lodge a complaint against Officer Erik Mathers for the quoted statement he presumably made on BWC.

On April 10, 2023, I attempted to contact [REDACTED] via his listed phone numbers and was unable to reach him. A message was left informing him to please contact me back.

On April 19, 2023, I attempted to contact [REDACTED] on his cell phone as well as his office phone. I was able to speak with his administrative assistant and was informed that he was unavailable, but that he would leave a message for [REDACTED] to contact me back. This was to no avail as [REDACTED] did not contact me back.

On June 27, 2023, I again attempted contact with [REDACTED] on his cell phone and was again unable to reach him. A voice message was left informing him to please contact me back.

On June 29, 2023, I sent an email via my official Sunrise PD email to [REDACTED].

On July 5, 2023, [REDACTED] responded to my email with the following:

*Mr. Reardon –*

*I'd be glad to discuss. When are you free?*

*Regards,*

[REDACTED].

On July 10, 2023, I responded to [REDACTED] email informing him of my schedule and also informing him that I will make time for him at his convenience to properly document his complaint.

After sending this email, I have had no other communication with [REDACTED] and he continues to refuse to correspond with me or contact me back.

On July 14, 2023, I sent a Notice of Compliance to [REDACTED] via the United States Postal Service Certified Mail. This notice requested that [REDACTED] contact me within seven days of receipt in order to provide insight into his complaint. The notice also stated that if [REDACTED] elected not to provide a statement, the complaint would still be fully investigated.

[REDACTED] was afforded seven days to contact me, and in addition I provided an additional 28-day grace period for him to contact me. After this time period had elapsed, I chose to move forward without a statement from [REDACTED].

On August 10, 2023, I moved on to initiating contact with [REDACTED]. I attempted to contact her via her cell phone and received no answer. Unfortunately, [REDACTED] voicemail box was full and I was unable to leave a message. I made a follow up call the next day, August 11, 2023, and was able to speak with [REDACTED]. I provided a short brief of the nature of the complaint and my investigation thus far and [REDACTED] immediately recalled

the event in question as well as the actions of Officer Mathers during the call. Without prompting, [REDACTED] stated that Officer Mathers was extremely helpful, kind and courteous during the call for service in 2021. [REDACTED] also stated she knew exactly why this was happening and that [REDACTED] was trying to get Officer Mathers in trouble. Finally, [REDACTED] stated that at no time during their interaction did Officer Mathers say anything that was unprofessional, nor did he give her the notion that he was insinuating that she should “lie” in order to obtain a restraining order. [REDACTED] went on to state that she would be happy to provide a statement, but would need to do it via phone as she has two small children and would not be able to make time to meet in person. A phone interview was scheduled for Monday, August 14, 2023.

On August 14, 2023, I attempted to contact [REDACTED] on several occasions throughout the day, but was unable to reach her. I also attempted to leave a voice message after each unanswered call, but her voice mailbox was “full” and would not allow me to leave a voice message.

On August 15, 2023, I again attempted to contact [REDACTED] on several occasions, and was still unable to reach her. [REDACTED] voice mailbox was still full and would not allow me to leave a message.

On August 16-17, 2023, I was again unable to reach [REDACTED].

On August 18, 2023, I gave Sergeant Eric Fernandez an Official Notice of an Internal Affairs Investigation to issue to Officer Erik Mathers. Later that day, I spoke with Officer Mathers, and he promptly responded to the PSB to meet with me and provide a statement.

I interviewed Officer Mathers in the Internal Affairs office and took a sworn, recorded Statement. Officer Mathers received the entire case file before he provided his statement, and he did not bring an attorney or representative to the interview. Officer Mathers stated that he recalled the date in question and the specifics of the call for service with [REDACTED].

Officer Mathers stated that his sole purpose was to provide information and assistance to [REDACTED] regarding her domestic situation and the proper way to file a restraining order. Officer Mathers knew of the tumultuous domestic violence history of the [REDACTED] household, and his concern was raised to a higher level now that the two share a child in common.

I then turned Officer Mathers’ attention to his comment, which is the crux of this complaint, and I directly asked him to elaborate and explain the reasons as to why he said what he said. Officer Mathers stated that he was trying to convey to [REDACTED] that there would be no reason for her not to seek an injunction for protection if she was indeed a victim. Officer Mathers was also trying to convey that time was of the essence, and he was also trying to

impress upon [REDACTED] that although [REDACTED] *may* have evidence of an alleged unreported battery against him, this alone **does not** preclude her from petitioning for a restraining order.

I then direct Officer Mathers' attention to the following BWC excerpt from his interaction with [REDACTED]:

“As long as you're not being the aggressor and you're literally telling us that, you know, literally telling the truth, basically then you're able to obtain a restraining order.”

Officer Mathers affirms the above statement by adding, “As long as she is truthful and she, um, is in fear or is a victim, then there's no reason why she should not get a restraining order.”

Officer Mathers states that he never said, “just tell them he hit your first.”

Officer Mathers does acknowledge that aspects of what he was trying to convey to [REDACTED] became lost in translation. However, he emphatically stated that he would never suggest or instruct anyone to make up an allegation.

Finally, Officer Mathers affirms that he intended to provide information to [REDACTED], and he in no way advised her to mislead the courts into obtaining a restraining order or to make untruthful allegations.



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### III. INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS and DISPOSITION:

If [REDACTED] allegations are true, Police Officer Erik Mathers would have violated the following Sunrise Police Policy and Procedure:

#### Chapter 19 – Code of Conduct and Ethics:

- *19.6.3.6. Members shall not commit an act that, brings discredit upon the Department or otherwise impairs the operational efficiency of the Department or an act that prohibits or impairs the ability of Department personnel to perform their assigned duties.*

However, I am unable to substantiate [REDACTED] allegation. The following are the factors which led me to such conclusion:

Deconstructing this complaint down to its most basic form, it represents one's own interpretation of words said by another and the meaning those words convey. [REDACTED] took obvious exception with the way Officer Mathers conveyed information to [REDACTED] during a call for service on December 23, 2021. [REDACTED] was not present during the interaction between Officer Mathers and [REDACTED], and formulated his complaint two years after the fact, upon obtaining and viewing Officer Mathers' BWC from the interaction.

As the assigned investigator, I must view what was said by Officer Mathers through a lens of objective reasonableness and impartiality. I must also determine how much weight [REDACTED] 3<sup>rd</sup> party interpretation holds when compared to the evidence gleaned from [REDACTED] and Officer Mathers, who were active and present in the interaction. I framed my conclusion by drawing facts from the following questions:

- Was Officer Mathers' behavior proper and did he comport himself in a professional manner?
- How did [REDACTED] interpret the words of Officer Mathers?
- From Officer Mathers perspective – What did he mean to convey during the interaction?

- Were there any negative impacts or repercussions sustained by any external party, specifically [REDACTED], as a direct result of the words spoken by Officer Mathers during the interaction?

The following is an excerpt from Officer Mathers Body Worn Camera detailing the portion of the interaction that I presume [REDACTED] wished to complain about:

[REDACTED] *The other thing is probably a month before giving birth to her mm-hmm. <affirmative>, there was a domestic violence he has on video coming from her and he didn't file any charges or anything like that. Okay.*

**Officer Erik Mathers** *II I'm sorry. You said before she was wanting what?*

[REDACTED] *There was a video on here. Okay. Where it shows me hitting him. Okay. And cops are called then. Right. But he didn't file domestic violence.*

**Officer Erik Mathers** *That's good.*

[REDACTED] *Could you do that now? I mean, is that gonna like maybe screw me away with the restraining order? That's,*

**Officer Erik Mathers** *I mean, I don't know. I've never, we only give you information so we don't, um, I don't know the, like I don't sit down with women. Right. Usually and see the process of what they ask. Yeah. But I would get the restraining order before he decides to do that. Okay. You know, he, maybe he deleted it or something. Was that on his phone? Yeah. He, maybe he doesn't delete it. All right.*

[REDACTED] *He's one of those techy guys.*

**Officer Erik Mathers** *But you know what, you could've said that he was attacking you and you was defending yourself and then that's the part he got on film. I know Rob was here one time. He was trying to get you arrested. Yeah.*

[REDACTED] *Oh yeah. That still happened since*

**Officer Erik Mathers** *Day. That didn't fly*

[REDACTED] *Even the day before yesterday. He was trying to do*

**Officer Erik Mathers** *The same thing. Yeah. As long as you're not being an aggressor and you're literally telling us that you No,*

[REDACTED] *But yesterday he said he, I scratched him. I guess his scratch was, he was, he took my phone. So I was literally trying to grab it from him. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and I guess I scratched him. I don't know. I, so that's why he called the cops.*

## IV: CONCLUSION

Based upon the following facts and circumstances, I concluded that Officer Mathers acted within Policy and Procedure and did not violate Chapter 19.6.3.6.

The complainant, [REDACTED], was afforded ample time to contact me to provide a statement. [REDACTED] was also notified via phone, email, and USPS Certified Mail that I was trying to reach him to obtain his statement. Unfortunately, [REDACTED] refused to contact me or set up a time and place for him to provide a statement. As such, I continued my investigation and provided [REDACTED] with written notice that my investigation would continue without his statement. As a result of [REDACTED] unwillingness to cooperate, the only evidence he provided in support of his claim was an email stating that he wanted to file a complaint against Officer Mathers and a second email that incorrectly quoted Officer Mathers.

I contacted [REDACTED] and informed her of the allegation levied against Officer Mathers by her ex-husband. [REDACTED] recalled the incident and immediately came to Officer Mathers' defense. According to [REDACTED], Officer Mathers acted very politely and professionally. [REDACTED] recalled the specifics of the interaction with Officer Mathers, and at no time did she believe that Officer Mathers was instructing her to lie, misrepresent the truth, or make false allegations. [REDACTED] believes [REDACTED] is trying to get Officer Mathers in trouble to fortify or justify his divorce defense.

At the end of our phone conversation, I informed [REDACTED] that I would need to obtain a sworn statement attesting to the details she provided. [REDACTED] stated that she could provide a statement over the phone the following day. Unfortunately, [REDACTED] is now unreachable and unavailable to provide a statement. Despite my best efforts to reach her, I have been unable to contact [REDACTED] since our initial phone conversation. As such, the decision was made to utilize our abovementioned conversation as a guideline instead of a taped statement.

During Officer Mathers' sworn statement, he immediately recalled the incident. After thoroughly reviewing the case file, Officer Mathers stated that his intent during his interaction with [REDACTED] was to advise her as she was potentially a victim of domestic violence. Officer Mathers stated that during their interaction, he was trying to convey that [REDACTED] could still potentially obtain a restraining order, even though she may or may not be named as the aggressor in a previous incident that may have been captured on film. Officer Mathers stated that he was not trying to insinuate to [REDACTED] that she should fabricate events or make false allegations. Looking back on the interaction with 20/20 hindsight, Officer Mathers stated that he could have benefited from clarifying the delivery of his words but was steadfast in his unwavering belief that the intent behind the words was pure, without malice, and that they were being taken out of context by [REDACTED].

After carefully weighing the evidence presented, I find that the words of Officer Mathers were simply that; words. The words of Officer Mathers impacted neither party nor benefited either party. His words did not result in any arrests. His words did not lead to any filed restraining



orders. His words in this specific interaction did not cause any reports to be generated indicating that [REDACTED] was the aggressor in a domestic violence situation. Nor any indicating that [REDACTED] was a victim directly related to the words spoken by Officer Mathers on December 23, 2021, during a call for service documented under case 42-2112-052688.

In conclusion I find no wrongdoing by Officer Erik Mathers. This investigation is classified as:

**EXONERATED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Reardon, Sergeant, Internal Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
P. Brian Katz, Lieutenant, Internal Affairs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Alexander, Deputy Chief

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel J. Ransone, Acting Chief of Police

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Date