



# SUNRISE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Daniel J. Ransone  
Chief of Police

10440 W Oakland Park Blvd  
Sunrise, Florida 33351  
(954) 764-4357

## Internal Affairs Complaint Report Narrative

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### I. INTRODUCTION:

**Subject Employee:** Officer Otisha Browning-Smith

**Complainant:** Chief Ransone

**Witnesses:** Detectives Haggard, Bulzone, Campanelli, Officer Troccoli, Lieutenant Bates

**Narrative:**

On August 2, 2023, Officer Troccoli spoke with Lieutenant Bates concerning a meeting he had with Human Resources. The meeting was to discuss his recent status change to Non-Binary, Gender-Fluid” (NBGF). During that phone conversation, Officer Troccoli told Lieutenant Bates that he (Troccoli) was told Officer Browning-Smith was spreading private information about him, specifically that he was NBGF. Officer Troccoli also stated Officer Browning-Smith posted an offensive video about NBGF on her personal social media account.

Officer Troccoli felt that he was being targeted and singled out by Officer Browning-Smith because of his NBGF status. As a result, Chief Ransone initiated an Internal Affairs Complaint.

The Investigative Narrative section outlines the details of my investigation into this matter and my conclusion with respect to any policy violations will be found in the Investigative Findings and Disposition section.



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### III. INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS and DISPOSITION:

If Chief Ransone's allegations are true, Officer Browning-Smith would have violated the following policies/directive:

*Departmental Directive #15-01: Social Media*

*IV. 2. C. Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this Department, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Department.*

*19.6.3.20. Members will not criticize the Department or a fellow member when the criticism is reckless, obscene, unlawful, not based on fact, or tends to impair the efficiency or effectiveness of the organization, or the ability of supervisors to maintain discipline.*

*3.6.1.14. Members shall ensure that the authority commensurate with their position will always be utilized in the best interest of the Department and that it shall not be abused in any way.*

### IV: CONCLUSION

On August 2, 2023, Officer Troccoli notified Lieutenant Bates that he felt harassed and "targeted" by fellow employee, Officer Otisha Browning-Smith. As a result, Chief Ransone opened an Internal Affairs Investigation into this matter.

During Officer Troccoli's statement, he detailed three separate incidents he said Officer Browning-Smith deliberately targeted him. See the three incidents outlined below.

*Incident 1:*

During the month of May, former police employee, Carl Haller, had a court hearing related to his ongoing criminal case. As part of his hearing, there were five (currently employed) officers that were listed on Mr. Haller's witness list. Officer Troccoli was among the five officers.

On the date of the court hearing, Officer Browning-Smith sent a group text message to an unspecified group of fellow officers (presumably in a PBA member text chat), stating Officer Troccoli (along with the other four) was present in the courtroom and listed on the witness list. Officer Troccoli was in fact on the witness list, but he was *not* in the courtroom. According to Officer Troccoli, he was not even in the building.

For context purposes, Mr. Haller was suspected of committing criminal child pornography related offences, and the text was about his related criminal case. So, the offensiveness idea of the text was that Officer Troccoli was in the courtroom supporting or as Officer Browning-Smith said to "defend" an accused pedophile, of sorts.

Officer Browning-Smith acknowledged she sent the text message (and the content) based on information she received from a third party, who was in the courtroom. She stated the text message was incorrect, and she intended to say that the five officers were listed on the witness list, only.

*Incident 2:*

On August 2, 2023, Officer Browning-Smith entered the CID bullpen and approached Detectives Haggard, Bulzone, and Campanelli at their desks. According to the detectives, Officer Browning-Smith told them, Officer Troccoli was NBGF in a "surprised or shocking" manner. Detective Bulzone stated, "That she had, like, news that was, like...shocking". The conversation was brief with little discussion amongst them after such.

Officer Browning-Smith did not recall who told her, but said she knew it to be true. All three detectives said Officer Browning-Smith did not make fun of Officer Troccoli, nor did she use any derogatory names. During her statement, she confirmed the above and when I asked her to recall the conversation, she stated, "...I know it had something to do with, um, he's gay or whatever. I – like don't even care".

*Incident 3:*

On August 2, 2023, Officer Browning-Smith posted a video specific to NBGF on her personal Facebook page. She acknowledged posting/sharing this video. The video could be described as "comical". Officer Troccoli described the video as "poking fun at non-binary individuals"

and he felt the video was intentionally posted to mock his current status, since Officer Browning-Smith had been telling co-workers about his status change just hours prior.

Officer Browning-Smith was “Facebook friends” with at a minimum, Officer Troccoli’s girlfriend (Colleen McCarthy) at the time she posted the video. Prior to her statement, Officer Browning-Smith thought she was also “friends” on Facebook with Officer Troccoli, at the time. In other words, Officer Browning-Smith believed she was Facebook friends with Troccoli and McCarthy at the time she posted the video.

On August 2, 2023, Officer Troccoli spoke with Lieutenant Bates and notified him of the second incident prior to even being aware of the video being posted. Officer Troccoli told him that he wanted the incident to be investigated.

At the completion of the investigation, there was no dispute by all parties involved, that Officer Browning-Smith sent the text message in May, that she told the CID Detectives Officer Troccoli was NBGF, and that she posted a video about NBGF people on Facebook.

## **In Summary:**

### **I find the following concerning the allegations of:**

*19.6.3.20. Members will not criticize the Department or a fellow member when the criticism is reckless, obscene, unlawful, not based on fact, or tends to impair the efficiency or effectiveness of the organization, or the ability of supervisors to maintain discipline.*

*3.6.1.14. Members shall ensure that the authority commensurate with their position will always be utilized in the best interest of the Department and that it shall not be abused in any way.*

First, let us address the text message in May. There is no dispute in who sent the text message, since Officer Browning-Smith took responsibility, the issue lies in the content alone. The contentious portion of the text says, “Officers that were there and on the witness list to defend Haller at the hearing were the above people”. The five officers’ names were included, Officer Troccoli being one of them.

In Officer Browning-Smith’s sworn statement, I asked why she sent information she knew to be incorrect and she replied:

*“I don’t know if I messed up the text or whatever...that’s not what I meant”.*

I further clarified the text message did not reflect her intent and she stated:

*“And my intent was to say that we should be held to a higher standard. That we don’t interfere with those kind of things. We’re police officers. And we’re supposed to protect the public. We should have stayed out of it”.*

I am left with determining if she intentionally lied in the text message or if she truly typed portions of the message in error. As I peeled the layers back, it’s clear she did create the text by entering each and every letter, which created her words, and thus, her message as a whole. She intentionally typed the word “and” when stating they were on the witness list *and* in the courtroom. I find it unlikely the content of the message was not intentional since each letter was selected by her, the author. Additionally, she also typed (Deputy Mayor) “Douglas had a hearing today for one of his clients and he was there. So the city knows the FOP was there”. This statement is another acknowledgement that she intended to write the officers were in the courtroom.

Nevertheless, giving her statement some creditability, I find it more likely there was a misunderstanding in the “telephone game” being played with her and the person in the courtroom. I believe the factual details were lost by the time they made it to her text message or she did not clarify the details prior to sending the text message. Even Officer Browning-Smith could not explain where the breakdown occurred.

Another factor to consider, is who Officer Browning-Smith sent the text message to. According to Officer Troccoli, the text message was sent to “a bunch of PBA members and members of command”. As a PBA representative, Officer Browning-Smith does bear some responsibility to ensure the information disseminated under the PBA umbrella, is factually correct and not mere gossip.

Therefore, I find that Officer Browning-Smith did intentionally send the text message and the content held within. It was her responsibility to ensure the information was correct and at the least, send a follow-up text with the corrected information once she was informed of the error. Even if Officer Browning-Smith did not intentionally lie in the text message, the outcome was equally detrimental (even if minor) to all five officers listed.

Based on the totality of the circumstances, this investigator finds the listed policy violations:

## **SUSTAINED**

Specific to the second incident, Officer Browning-Smith said she learned Officer Troccoli was NBGF at National Night Out (August 1) and then she heard it being discussed again amongst

Road Patrol officers on or before August 2. I asked if she knew the information to be true, and she stated:

*“I think I asked. And I got a nod yes. I m I – I can’t – cause I – really don’t care. Like it was nothing to me...So whoever I asked they must have confirmed- firmed...I can’t even remember ‘cause I – I didn’t e I didn’t eve care like...”.*

Officer Browning-Smith then chose to share this information with three “work friends” and according to two of them, she did so in a sensational manner. Officer Browning-Smith acknowledged sharing the information even with her vague memory of the encounter. She told me numerous times that her “best friend is gay”, and I assume this was shared in an attempt to minimize or normalize the conversation. Although, it could be argued, with a “gay best friend”, she would be more sensitive to sharing such personal information.

When Officer Troccoli chose to update his personal status with the Police Department, he did so via email on 7/11/23. It was sent to one person and the circle with who it was shared, was small, which was at Officer Troccoli’s request. It left all curious how such delicate information could have leaked so quickly and so widespread as Officer Browning-Smith described. Ironically, Officer Browning-Smith’s recollection of both incidents of his status being discussed, were limited.

Although the facts shared are indeed true, there was no benefit to anyone including the Department, by sharing such intimate details about a fellow employee. At a minimum, it impaired the efficiency of the organization since it made Officer Troccoli feel targeted and left him wondering how such delicate information was leaked so freely. Officer Browning-Smith knew Officer Troccoli sent an email to update the Police Department of his status change, so it leaves one to wonder if she also knew Officer Troccoli had requested his privacy to be respected.

Even with all the above said, it is not uncommon to have idle chat amongst co-workers at their workplace; in fact, it could be considered commonplace. However, in this instance, Officer Browning-Smith’s conversation made it back to Officer Troccoli and it was not received well.

Considering Officer Browning-Smith role/position in our Police Department and her service as a PBA representative, I do believe she is held to a higher standard. She must be more deliberate and thoughtful in her choices, especially when they involve fellow employees. She should always conduct herself in a professional manner and be cautious with her word selection and social media posts, even in her private life.

Based on the totality of the circumstances, this investigator finds the listed policy violations:

## **SUSTAINED**

**Concerning the third policy violation, I find the following:**

*Departmental Directive #15-01: Social Media*

*IV. 2. C. Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this Department, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Department.*

The third incident that Officer Troccoli described, was the posting of a NBGF video on Officer Browning-Smith's personal Facebook page. Officer Browning-Smith acknowledged she posted the video on or around the date she spoke to the detectives, in fact, on the day of her interview (with me) it was still posted. It was established that she was "friends" on Facebook with at least Officer Troccoli's live-in girlfriend (Officer McCarthy) and possibly with him. Officer Browning-Smith is also friends with multiple people from work on her personal Facebook page. Officer Troccoli felt as if the video was "poking fun at non-binary individuals" and in combination with the other two incidents, he felt "targeted".

When analyzing this directive, it was obvious Officer Browning-Smith "impaired working relationships of this Department" and disrupted the "harmony among coworkers" by posting this video. At a minimum, Officer Troccoli found the video offensive and was made to feel uncomfortable at his workplace.

Although Officer Browning-Smith stated she did not post the video to be offensive or controversial, that is exactly how it made Officer Troccoli feel. Like the other two incidents, even if that was not her intent, it was the outcome.

Additionally, having known about Officer Browning-Smith's conversation with the detectives, Lieutenant Katz spoke with Officer Browning-Smith on 8/2/23. He reminded her that sharing such personal information about Officer Troccoli is not advised and that she should refrain from spreading it any further. Officer Browning-Smith chose to post or leave posted the video on her Facebook page even after speaking with Lieutenant Katz. The video has a posting date of "August 2".

As an employer, we want to respect all of our officers' personal lives and have the least involvement possible. However, when an officer's actions in their private life leak into the workplace, it is the obligation of the Department to ensure all employees have a safe and harassment-free, workplace.

Based on the totality of the circumstances, this investigator finds the listed policy violation:

## **SUSTAINED**

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Sgt. Jessica Stewart, Internal Affairs

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Date

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Lt. P. Brian Katz, Internal Affairs

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Date

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Richard Alexander, Deputy Chief

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Date

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Daniel J. Ransone, Chief of Police

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Date



J Stewart  
Sgt. Jessica Stewart, Internal Affairs

12/29/23  
Date

[Signature]  
Lt. P. Brian Katz, Internal Affairs

1/4/24  
Date

[Signature]  
Richard Alexander, Deputy Chief

1/10/24  
Date

[Signature]  
Daniel J. Ransone, Chief of Police

1/16/2024  
Date



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## Internal Affairs Complaint Report Narrative

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### II. INVESTIGATIVE NARRATIVE:

On **August 2, 2023**, Officer Troccoli spoke with Lieutenant Bates concerning a meeting he had with Human Resources. The meeting was to discuss his recent status change to “Non-Binary, Gender-Fluid” (NBGF). During that phone conversation, Officer Troccoli told Lieutenant Bates that he (Troccoli) was told Officer Browning-Smith was spreading private information about him, specifically that he was NBGF. Officer Troccoli also stated Officer Browning-Smith posted an offensive video about NBGF on her personal social media account on the same the day and he felt as if it was directed at him.

On **August 4, 2023**, Chief Ransone authorized an investigation into the above matter.

On **August 24, 2023**, I took a taped sworn statement from **Officer Troccoli**. He told me about his phone conversation with Lieutenant Bates on 8/2/23. Officer Troccoli stated Lieutenant Bates was checking on him after his scheduled meeting with Human Resources. During that call, he told Lieutenant Bates that he received text messages stating Officer Browning-Smith was talking about his recent personal status change in the Criminal Investigations Division (CID). Specifically, that he now identified as NBGF.

Officer Troccoli was asked who this was said to, he provided the names Detective Haggard, Bulzone, and Campanelli. I then asked if he could elaborate on what was said, he replied:

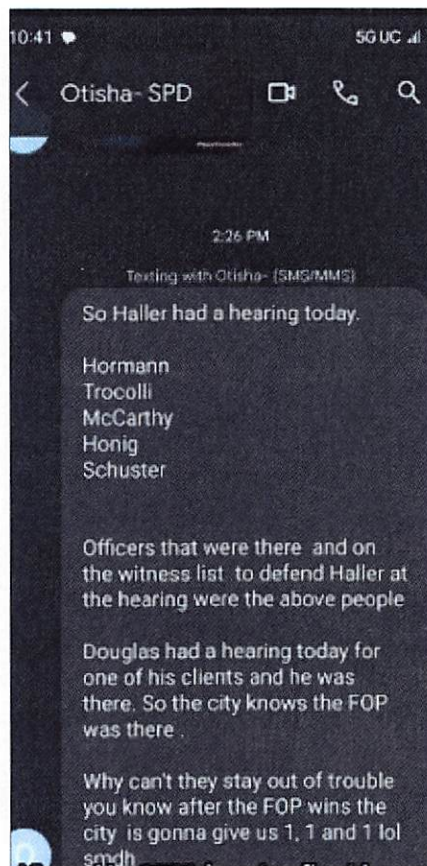
*“She went to those detectives and asked if they knew that I, uh, was now, uh, wanted to be categorized as NBGF. And began to, I guess, poke fun and basically target and try to humiliate me about it”.*

Officer Troccoli was told that Officer Browning Smith shared this information in a “joke” manner and the intent was to make fun of him.

Officer Troccoli said that even if she shared his personal status change as “informational” it was not her right since he had “specifically requested” his status change to remain private. His intention was only for the people on the original email string to be aware of his status change.

According to Officer Troccoli, later that night, Officer Browning-Smith posted a video on her private Facebook page “poking fun at non-binary individuals”. Officer Troccoli’s girlfriend saw the video and showed him since she was friends with Officer Browning-Smith on Facebook. He felt the video was “100%” poking fun at NBGF. See Evidence.com for the actual video.

Officer Troccoli then told me about an issue back in May 2023. A former Sunrise Officer, that Officer Troccoli had a personal friendship with, had a scheduled court date in May 2023. The Officer is suspected of egregious crimes and as a result it has caused division within our Department. On the day of the court date, Officer Browning-Smith sent a text message to a group of PBA members stating Officer Troccoli and 4 other officers were sitting in the court room, as witnesses, in support of the former officer. Officer Troccoli said this was a “complete lie” and he felt it was done to “bash my name”.



I then asked if he was friends with Officer Browning-Smith and Officer Troccoli stated they used to be zone partners and they were friendly but he is not sure what happened recently. When asked why he thought Officer Browning-Smith would do this, he was not sure but thought it was “targeting” and expressed his feelings of being “uncomfortable, pissed, and violated”.

On **September 7, 2023**, I took a taped sworn statement from **Detective Haggard**. He said on 8/2/23, Officer Browning-Smith approach him, Detective Bulzone and Detective Campanelli and told them that Officer Troccoli now “classifies himself as non-binary”.

Detective Haggard said Officer Browning-Smith told them in a very matter of fact way like she was just sharing information. Officer Browning-Smith did not call him any derogatory names or poke fun at him.

On **September 7, 2023**, I took a taped sworn statement from **Detective Bulzone**. He stated that on 8/2/23 he was seated at his desk inside CID when Officer Browning-Smith walked in and said she had some news to tell us. Also present were Detectives Haggard and Campanelli. Officer Browning-Smith proceeded to then say that Officer Troccoli was “declaring himself non-binary”.

I then asked how she presented the information, and Detective Bulzone stated it was presented as shocking news. She did not laugh, poke fun or call him any derogatory names. According to Detective Bulzone the conversation was brief and ended shortly after it began.

On **September 7, 2023**, I took a taped sworn statement from **Detective Campanelli**. He stated that on 8/2/23, Officer Browning-Smith was in the CID bullpen, in Detective Haggard and Bulzone’s cubicle when he walked over to join the conversation. He was not sure at first what they were talking about but then realized. Officer Browning-Smith stated that Officer Troccoli sent an email or two over to City Hall stating he identified as a non-binary person.

I asked if she shared this information as a joke or poking fun and he responded, “no, it was more of a surprise statement, like shock value, like can you believe this”. He went on to state that she did not use any derogatory terms or laugh at him.

Detective Campanelli said he was surprised at first and then there was a brief conversation between them, discussing if it was even true at all. The conversation ended not long after and Officer Browning-Smith left the area.

On **September 8, 2023**, I took a taped sworn statement from **Lieutenant Bates**. He told me that on 8/2/23 he called Officer Troccoli to have a follow-up conversation with him about a recent meeting with HR. During that conversation, Officer Troccoli said to Lieutenant Bates

that he was told earlier in the day, Officer Browning-Smith was discussing his sexual orientation in CID with three detectives. Specifically, his recent status change to GFNB.

Officer Troccoli seemed “both angry and emotionally upset” since he asked for this status change to be kept confidential. Lieutenant Bates offered him a few options on how to handle it, and Officer Troccoli asked for it be handled formally.

The following day, 8/3/23, Lieutenant Bates went to Chief Ransone and told him what had transpired.

On **October 5, 2023**, Officer Browning-Smith was given her 5-day notice. We decided to meet on 10/11/23.

On 10/11/23, I took a taped sworn statement from **Officer Browning-Smith**. We first discussed the text message in May 2023, listing Officer Troccoli as one of the officers in court and on the witness list for former employee, Carl Haller. Officer Browning-Smith acknowledged she sent the text message and the content but argued that she typed in error. She intended to say Officer Troccoli was on the witness list for the case, not in the actual courtroom. Her intention was not to be misleading. Officer Browning-Smith also acknowledged she was not in the courtroom but was told by someone who was present, that Officer Troccoli’s name was on the witness list and he was there.

We then discussed the three detectives she spoke with on 8/2/23. I asked Officer Browning-Smith about her friendship with them, she said she was friendly with all of them but spoke with Detective Haggard the most. She classified their friendship as “work friends” and that she does not socialize with them outside of work. I then asked if she considered them confidants and she responded:

*“I’m confident in what I tell them, if we have conversations they’re going to give me the best advice”.*

We then discussed the conversation with the three detectives and I asked her to tell me what was said, her response:

*“I don’t remember a lot of what brought us there or whatever. But I remember some of the conversation. Because it meant absolutely nothing to me that I have to remember it. Um, I know it has something to do with, um, he’s now gay or whatever. I like, don’t even care”.*

*“The whatever he decided to change his status or whatever. And I think Bulzone said something to the effect of “Well why do you think he did that?” And I said “Probably to try and sue the city or something”. Nobody, uh, cares why –why he did that. We all have a*

*standard here. We are all officer, detective, sergeant, chief. And I say, that's what people (unintelligible) call us. No one is gonna walk in these doors and say, "may I speak with gay officer so and so". Cause were not gonna have that. We are not gonna do that".*

Officer Browning-Smith said she does not remember using the word non-binary but could have. It just means gay to her. She stated that she did not call him any derogatory names or make fun of him. She also told me her best friend is gay.

When asked where she heard this information, she claimed to have heard it being discussed at National Night Out and then again on Road Patrol. I then asked if she knew the news to be true and she responded:

*I think I asked. And I got a nod yes. I'm I can't I can't -cause I really don't care. Like it was nothing to me... So whoever I asked they must have confirmed...I can't even remember cause I didn't e-I didn't even care. Like...".*

I then asked her why did she choose to share this information and she responded:

*"Oh my God. I don't know cause I can't tell you what prompted the conversation. Because if it was something worthy of holding in my brain. And then I w-I would remember it. But it was absolutely nothingness."*

Next, we moved into the Facebook post, specifically the video that she shared to her personal page about NBGF. She acknowledged it was on her page. She said that it was not posted to make fun of him but that she just happened to shared a video on the same day that she had told detectives that Officer Troccoli was NBGF.

I asked if it was just a coincidence and she said:

*"Coincidence had nothing to do with it. It's like putting on my left shoe and my right shoe. I do not care. I have a best friend that's gay. Her girlfriend works upstairs in dispatch. I'm with her every other day. I don't care. This means nothing."*

She then later agreed it was a complete coincidence. I then asked if she thought that video could be offensive to anyone and she said, "I don't. Because my best friend is gay and she laughed at it". Officer Browning-Smith was then asked if the three incidents involving Officer Troccoli were intended to deliberately humiliate or target him and she replied no.

Officer Browning-Smith stated she was friends with Officer Troccoli and Officer McCarthy on social media at one point but not currently.

At the conclusion of our statement, I asked Officer Browning-Smith if she had anything else to add. She provided her personal opinion of Officer Troccoli and his girlfriend, Officer Colleen McCarthy. See the transcript for further.