

SYRACUSE POLICE DEPARTMENT
Inter-Departmental-Memo

TO: Chief Kenton Buckner

DATE: 12May21

FROM: D/C R. Trudell

SUBJECT: Police Officer Brandon Hanks

Chief,

On or about Monday, 22Mar21 Deputy Chief McGork provided me with a video of P.O. Brandon Hanks that had allegedly been posted by P.O. Hanks to a social media platform. The video appeared to be P.O. Hanks recording himself as he addressed certain people in the community that had criticized him for being a police officer. During the video, in which P.O. Hanks indicates he is a police officer, P.O. Hanks says something to the effect "I don't want your opinion if you ain't got shit". Upon being made aware of the video by D/C McGork I brought the existence of the video to the attention of Lt. Patti who is P.O. Hanks' command officer and asked him to conduct an investigation into it. Over the next several days Lt. Patti conducted his investigation and determined that P.O. Hanks had indeed posted the video to social media. At the completion of the investigation (within the next 7 days) Lt. Patti and I conferred about the findings. It was my opinion that posting the video to social media was a borderline violation of Department policy and we agreed at that time to handle the video posting by counseling P.O. Hanks at the Unit level which did in fact take place.

At some point the following week, I do not have the exact date, D/C McGork provided me a typed word document dated 26Mar21 with 11 bullet points regarding concerns with P.O. Brandon Hanks and his associations to the criminal element. The word document had no author and was not signed and was accompanied by several photographs which appeared to be social media postings by P.O. Hanks to Facebook. It was my understanding although I do not know if it was specifically stated that the word document came from Capt. Gay. In conversing with D.C. McGork about the word document I

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learned that the document was created in response to Lt. Patti requesting that P.O. Hanks be allowed to do a 30 day transfer to GVTF in SID to enhance his career. It was apparent that the author of the word document was attempting to prevent P.O. Hanks rotation in GVTF from occurring by citing and listing the "concerns". In looking over 11 listed bullet points I noticed references to several social media posts, an older picture of P.O. Hanks with an individual I know to be William Brooks and several references to past events or concerns that I, Capt. Baratta and Lt. Patti had with P.O. Hanks. The word document was not accompanied with a completed investigation or supporting documentation to the alleged concerns aside from four pictures of P.O. Hanks in social media.

Upon receiving the word document and pictures I notified you of the situation and based on our conversation I requested a memo from Capt. Gay through D/C McGork officially documenting the concerns over P.O. Hanks doing a rotation in SID/GVTF. I also provided the document and pictures to Lt. Patti and asked that he look into the bulleted points. I was clear that I was concerned with the questionable social media posts and that he and P.O. Hanks needed to address those specifically. I was already aware that many of the other points in the memo and word document were previously addressed and handled accordingly.

On Thursday, April 8th I received a memorandum from Capt. Gay which was dated 04/08/2021 and was authored and signed by him. The memo is attached to this file for your review. Upon receiving Capt. Gay's signed memo I provided it to Lt. Patti for inclusion into the overall case file so that Lt. Patti could use it in his investigation.

Over the course of the next month Lt. Patti completed an in depth investigation into Capt. Gay,s word document, signed memo and attached photographs. This investigation included obtaining memos from Sgt. Kritzer, P.O. Hanks and from Lt. Patti himself. In addition to locating and preserving video and photographs. On Monday, May 10th I received Lt. Patti's completed investigation file. In reviewing the file, I determined that many of the items or bullet points (5,6,7,8 and 9 of the word document) that were listed by Capt. Gay were older and/or could have been easily determined to be unfounded or already addressed with Capt. Gay contacting P.O. Hanks' background investigator, Capt. Baratta, Lt. Patti or

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me. Instead, no investigation was completed at all and a list of accusations were made requiring Lt. Patti and myself to address them. Furthermore, I have concerns about the manner in which all of this was brought to light and a "case" built against P.O. Hanks to essentially prevent him from going to SID/GVTF. I think the manner in which the videos and pictures were solicited in an anonymous fashion without a documented source or any degree of investigation prior to accusation is concerning.

There were two items in Capt. Gay's memo that Lt. Patti could not address. The first item being number 1 on page 2 of Capt. Gay's memo which involved P.O. Hanks being tagged in social media post by Quashaun Blunt. Capt. Gay states that these post may have been brought to the attention of Lt. Milana at the time and addressed. On 12May21 I Spoke with Lt. Milana on this issue and he was not aware of any specific issue that was brought to his attention during P.O. Hanks' FTO period. He recalls social media posts being circulated informally around the police department members involving P.O. Hanks on social media but nothing was done by him. P.O. Hanks addresses this item in his memorandum. The second item, labeled as 2 in Capt. Gay's memo indicts that P.O. Hanks was involved in a traffic stop in which he was in a car that was stopped with "others" believed to be gang members or convicted criminals who were drinking. There is no date, time, location or names provided. Capt. Gay indicates that a 10.1 was written to Lt. Turo. I conducted a search of P.O. Hanks Office of Professional Standards file through Lt. Izzo and the results of that were negative for any memorandums detailing this incident.

I do find that after L.T. Patti's extensive investigation, P.O. Hanks has posted several videos and pictures to social media that are violations of Department policy. Those social media posts specifically being photographs 3 and 4 and video 1 as listed in this file. I requested that Lt. Patti complete a Disciplinary Action Report regarding these three items and that report is attached. I am recommending that P.O. Hanks receive a written reprimand for the violations. I am recommending a written reprimand because I firmly believe that P.O. Hanks was put "through the ringer" in answering questions regarding his loyalty and integrity regarding circumstances that were already addressed and could have been easily obtained prior to making accusations. This inquiry was only

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initiated in response to P.O. Hanks wanting to learn new skills and go to SID/GVTF for 30 days. I suspect that we would not have heard anything on this had P.O. Hanks not made the request to go to SID/GVTF and I am unaware of this type of inquiry being done for any other 30 day transfers to any unit. As a byproduct of this there were determined to be violations of the Department's social media policy, however, those posts could have been handled appropriately through the chain of command minus the inquisition. The level of informal discipline and humiliation that P.O. Hanks has gone through should be a factor in determining the appropriate official discipline P.O. Hanks should receive.

In closing, P.O. Hanks grew up in the Syracuse Community and as such he had associations in the past that should not be held against him now. Those associations are not current and did not occur while he has been a police officer. Furthermore, P.O. Hanks has conducted himself with a high degree of professionalism and work ethic minus the social media posts for which he was counseled and will be potentially disciplined. I concur with Lt. Patti and find that all of the other bulleted points in Capt. Gay's word document and memorandum have been addressed already or are unfounded. As previously stated, I also believe that the manner in which Capt. Gay and unknown parties conducted this inquiry needs to be fully investigated and addressed appropriately.

Respectfully submitted by,

D.C.K. Trudell #505
D/C R. Trudell

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