

**VOLUSIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**

**REPORT NUMBER: IA-17-015**

**PERIOD COVERED:** April 2 to April 13, 2017

**DATE REPORTED:** April 13, 2017

**SUBJECT(S) NAME:** Deputy Brant Lickiss #8316

**INVESTIGATING OFFICER:** Sergeant Thomas Tatum #2405

**BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:**

On April 3, 2017, Detective Katie Campbell was assigned a grand theft and dealing in stolen property investigation in Deland. The victim alleged her friend Raven Bell stole several rings from her residence while Ms. Bell stayed with her. Deputy Berriozabal responded wrote the initial report on April 2, 2017. During the investigation, Detective Campbell was advised that the suspect, Ms. Bell, had contact with two deputies during the course of the investigation. Ms. Bell told Detective Campbell that she received a phone call from Deputy Wesley Blum the night the victim called to report the theft. Ms. Bell also had contact with Deputy Brant Lickiss at a hotel in Port Orange two days before she was arrested.

**OFFENSE(S):**

This investigation is relevant to an alleged violation of Department Standards Directives:

**Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13).** Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the County as an employer. *This violation may be sufficient*

*grounds for disciplinary action ranging from oral reprimand to dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the offense and other circumstances related to the situation.*

**26.2.71 Communicating Criminal Information** - Employees shall maintain the security of confidential information, and shall not intentionally communicate or give law enforcement information to another which may aid a person to escape arrest, delay the apprehension of a criminal suspect, secure the removal of stolen or embezzled goods, money or other property. Employees shall not intentionally divulge the identity of criminal informants except as required by law and authorized by competent authority. *(Violation subject up to dismissal.)*

**26.2.54 Association with Criminals** - Employees shall avoid regular or continuous association or dealings with persons who they know or should know are under criminal investigation or indictments, or persons who have a criminal or immoral reputation in the community, except as necessary in the performance of official duties. Immediate family members are exempt from this provision, providing the situation is immediately reported to the Sheriff. *(Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.)*

**26.2.108 Perjury in an Official Proceeding** - Employees shall not knowingly make false statements while under oath in any court, civil or criminal, in statements made to internal affairs investigators, notaries and persons taking depositions or other testimony or any other official proceeding as defined in F.S. 837. *(Violation subject up to dismissal.)*

#### **INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY:**

On April 13, 2017, Chief Deputy John Creamer assigned the above case to the Internal Affairs Unit for investigation. Sergeant Thomas Tatum reviewed VCSO incident and supplement report 17-8928, the interviews Lieutenant Henderson conducted with Deputy Lickiss and Raven Bell along with phone records. This report details the internal affairs investigation conducted by Sergeant Tatum.

On April 13, 2017, Sergeant Tatum served Deputy Lickiss with his Notification of Internal

Investigation at the Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex and he was placed on Administrative Leave with Pay. Deputy Lickiss was also provided a copy of the Law Enforcement Officer's Rights. *(See Tab-B Official Correspondence)*

On April 18, 2017, Sergeant Tatum reviewed the interview conducted by Lieutenant Brian Henderson and Lieutenant Ben Yisrael with Raven Bell dated April 12, 2017. Lieutenant Henderson was assisting Detective Campbell with the criminal investigation.

On April 19, 2017, Sergeant Tatum reviewed the sworn interview Lieutenant Henderson and Sgt. Brian Cobb conducted with Deputy Lickiss on April 12, 2017, at the Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex. The purpose of the interview was to determine if Deputy Lickiss had any information on the criminal investigation. The following is a summary of the interview.

Lieutenant Henderson advised Deputy Lickiss that he was conducting a criminal investigation, not an administrative investigation several times during the interview and told him the statement was given freely and voluntarily. Deputy Lickiss advised Lieutenant Henderson that he has known Ms. Bell for several years and they used to be neighbors. He received a text from Ms. Bell on April 3, 2017, asking for help because she was being accused of something she didn't do. Deputy Lickiss agreed to meet with Ms. Bell at the Comfort Suites Inn hotel in Port Orange at her request. She told Deputy Lickiss that she was under investigation for stealing rings that belonged to her friend and that a detective wanted to interview her. There were text messages sent between Ms. Bell and Deputy Lickiss prior to his arrival at the hotel. One of the text messages was of a screen shot conversation of what appeared to be Ms. Bell trying to sell the stolen rings to a male friend of hers. Ms. Bell told Deputy Lickiss that she did not send that Facebook message to the male and that someone is trying to get her in trouble.

Deputy Lickiss advised upon his arrival at the hotel, Ms. Bell told him the victim found her rings. Deputy Lickiss told investigators that he never saw the rings that were stolen and Ms. Bell never said she took the rings. When asked if he ever told the detective that he was in contact with Ms. Bell during the investigation, he said no.

During the interview, Lieutenant Henderson asked Deputy Lickiss if he knew the details of the criminal investigation, which he replied he did not. Later in the interview, Sergeant Cobb also asked if Deputy Lickiss if he had knowledge of the details of the criminal investigation, again he said he did not.

Deputy Lickiss stated the night he met with Ms. Bell was the last night he was on leave from a deadly force incident and he was returning to work the next day. Deputy Lickiss stated he was not sleeping during that time and was not thinking correctly. Lieutenant Henderson asked Deputy Lickiss if he needed additional assistance to deal with that incident and he declined by saying that since meeting with Ms. Bell in the hotel he has been sleeping more. Deputy Lickiss advised that he should not have been with Ms. Bell while she was under investigation. *(See Tab I for Audio interview)*

Sergeant Tatum reviewed the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) report history of the Grand Theft and Dealing in Stolen Property report's involving Ms. Bell (17-8928). The report showed DID 8316 viewed the report via the browser on April 6, 2017, at 1532 hrs. That department ID is assigned to Deputy Lickiss. Deputy Lickiss viewed the supplement report on April 11, 2017, at 0847 hrs. Sergeant Tatum contacted Sheriff's Office IT who tracked the terminal number on the CAD report to a computer at the Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex; which is where Deputy Lickiss is assigned. *(See Tab H for documents)*

### **Deputy William Leven**

On April 18, 2017, Sergeant Tatum and Lieutenant Justin Sawicki conducted a sworn recorded interview with Deputy Leven in the Internal Affairs Office in Deland. The following is a summary of the interview.

Deputy Leven has been with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office for the past 5 years and is currently assigned to District 2 Alpha Shift. Deputy Leven stated Deputy Blum worked on Bravo Shift so they would see each other in between shifts. Deputy Leven explained that a few weeks ago, Deputy Blum came into briefing and was talking about how he was nervous or upset

that he and Deputy Lickiss had to go to a female's house and take care of a situation. Deputy Leven said Deputy Blum did not mention any name other than Deputy Lickiss so he didn't know who the female was he was talking about or when the situation occurred. Deputy Leven said he (Deputy Leven) made the comment about Deputy Lickiss being married and Deputy Blum said not to get him started on that. Deputy Leven said he was just trying to get his work done so he could go home when Deputy Blum was talking so he didn't pay much attention to it. *(See Tab D for Complete Transcript)*

### **Raven Bell**

On April 26, 2017, Sergeant Tatum and Lieutenant Sawicki conducted a sworn recorded interview with Raven Bell in the Volusia County Administration Office in Deland. The following is a summary of the interview.

Ms. Bell stated she has known Deputy Lickiss for about two years and they used to be neighbors in the same apartment complex. Ms. Bell confirmed she knew Deputy Blum and was stopped by him while she was wearing scrubs and they began talking and the two discovered they had mutual friends. She has known Deputy Blum for approximately three years. Ms. Bell ran into Deputy Blum after that when she was out with a friend and Deputy Blum was off duty and they became Facebook friends.

Ms. Bell received a phone call from Deputy Blum on April 2, 2017, and he asked her why he just heard her name on the [police] radio. Ms. Bell told Deputy Blum her side of the story and he asked her where she was because "Barry" (Deputy Berriozabal) was going to meet and talk to her. Ms. Bell said she was walking to the Walgreens and Deputy Blum said he would have Deputy Berriozabal meet her there. Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if she was aware law enforcement was called before she received the phone call from Deputy Blum and she said no. According to Ms. Bell, Deputy Blum told her that a female called the police and said she (Bell) stole her rings. Ms. Bell stated she told Deputy Blum that she went to the victim's house and helped her look for the rings and the next thing she knows she is walking down the road to the Walgreens.

Ms. Bell said once she filled out a statement with Deputy Berriozabal and they went back to the victim's house, she was allowed to leave. Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if she texted Deputy Blum when she was in the back of Deputy Berriozabal's patrol car, she said yes and told him this is crazy. Deputy Blum told her unless there are shots fired and he (Deputy Berriozabal) needs backup, he can't come up there. Ms. Bell said that conversation was on Snap Chat. Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if she had any further communication with Deputy Blum that night. Ms. Bell stated they were chatting back and forth about her roommate and how busy the night was but nothing relevant to the situation.

Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if she had any knowledge of Deputy Blum reading the report or if he provided her with any information contained in the report and she said no. Ms. Bell stated that if Deputy Blum would have told her he read the report, she would have asked him what it said because she would be curious, but to her knowledge he did not see the report. Ms. Bell said once she was arrested Deputy Blum really pulled himself away from her.

Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if she thought Deputy Blum acted professionally as a deputy sheriff by calling her, Ms. Bell responded:

*"I mean I guess in a way because he knew I'd wait at Walgreens. If it wasn't for him I'd a gone home. I feel like he made the process go a little faster so I can't answer that. That's a hard question for me to answer because I feel like he did his job well enough to make me wait at Walgreens vs. going home so he did technically serve the public. He got me to stay somewhere to fill out the statement. So maybe if I'd gone home, I'd say no but because he knew I would wait and he told Barry where I was and we made this process go a little quicker yeah maybe."*

Sergeant Tatum began to follow up Ms. Bell's statement by asking another question regarding the phone call, but Ms. Bell interjected and said:

*"I didn't say it was justifiable. I said if I'd gone home no."*

Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if Deputy Blum used his position as a deputy sheriff to give her any kind of special privileges and she replied:

*“No, I wish! No. I wish he did but no. I went through it just like everybody else.”*

Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell about her contact with Deputy Lickiss during the felony investigation. Ms. Bell stated she first contacted Deputy Lickiss on April 3, 2017, when she was at the hotel in Port Orange and she felt like she needed someone to talk to. Ms. Bell said she had not talked to Deputy Lickiss for the past year or year and a half, but she felt like she had a connection with him and reached out to talk to him. Deputy Lickiss told her that night was his last night of leave, but he had his daughter and he would call her back. She told Deputy Lickiss her situation on the theft case and ended up sending him four pictures of the screen shots from Facebook at his request because she was freaking out. The screen shots were of the conversation of the attempt to sell the rings to a male friend of hers. Ms. Bell said it was someone else who was trying to sell the rings on her Facebook page and she was not the one who sent them.

Ms. Bell wanted Deputy Lickiss’s opinion on if she should show the Facebook posts to Detective Campbell. Deputy Lickiss told her to call Detective Campbell and tell her she couldn’t meet her in the morning and he sent her Central’s phone number for her to leave a message for Detective Campbell. Ms. Bell said she wouldn’t be able to meet Detective Campbell in the morning as planned because she didn’t have a car at the hotel in Port Orange and she didn’t have a ride to Deland. Deputy Lickiss agreed to meet her at the hotel. According to Ms. Bell, Deputy Lickiss did tell her to show the photos to Detective Campbell.

Sergeant Tatum reaffirmed that Deputy Lickiss knew she was the suspect in a felony theft case and still agreed to meet with her at the hotel. Ms. Bell stated she was not arrested at that point and Sergeant Tatum pointed out that she was a suspect in an active criminal investigation and she said yes, he did agree to meet her knowing she was a suspect.

Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if she reached out to Deputy Lickiss because he was a Deputy Sheriff and he could possibly help her out, she said, *“No. I reached out to him because I wanted*

*to know what was gonna happen next.”*

During the time Deputy Lickiss was enroute to the hotel, Ms. Bell was receiving texts from the victim of the theft pressuring her to give the rings back. Ms. Bell stated she found the rings in her backpack earlier but she had no idea how they got there. Ms. Bell made arrangements for the victim to pick up her rings at the front desk of the hotel in Port Orange. Ms. Bell said Deputy Lickiss never knew she had the rings because she didn't tell him and he had no idea that the victim was picking the rings up at the front desk. Ms. Bell told Deputy Lickiss when he arrived at the hotel that the victim found her rings and he said, *“So you're good?”* Ms. Bell couldn't bring herself to tell Deputy Lickiss that she found the rings in her backpack earlier and the victim picked them up at the front desk. Deputy Lickiss never saw the rings nor did he see photos of the rings that were stolen. Ms. Bell explained that Deputy Lickiss still does not know that she was in possession of the rings and he will be upset when he finds out she had them.

Sergeant Tatum asked Ms. Bell if Deputy Lickiss gave her guidance on how to handle herself during the investigation; she responded that he told her she would be fine as long as she was honest. Ms. Bell stated she never received any information contained in the original or supplement report from Deputy Lickiss. Ms. Bell was arrested after her interview with Detective Campbell. She spoke with Deputy Lickiss two days after she was released from jail told him she was going to pre-trial. Ms. Bell said Deputy Lickiss responded, *“You got arrested?”* and *“I thought you didn't do it”* and she told him she didn't. Ms. Bell said that was the last time she spoke with Deputy Lickiss. *(See Tab E for complete transcript).*

### **Deputy Hector Rodriguez**

On April 28, 2017, Sergeant Tatum and Sergeant Sawicki conducted a sworn interview with Deputy Hector Rodriguez in the Internal Affairs Office in Deland. The following is a summary of the interview.

Deputy Rodriguez has been with the Sheriff's Office since 2015 and is currently assigned to District 2 Alpha Shift. Deputy Rodriguez transported Ms. Bell after she was arrested on April 5,



2017, from the District 2 Office to Kepler and US 92 where he met with the prisoner transport unit. During his transport, Ms. Bell mentioned she knew Deputies Blum, Lickiss and Blaine Lewis. According to Deputy Rodriguez, Ms. Bell made the comment that she was asking one of the deputies for legal advice, but he did not recall which deputy it was, but she mentioned rings. Deputy Rodriguez said Ms. Bell was talking the whole time he transported her and he began to ignore her. Deputy Rodriguez had no further information regarding this investigation. *(See Tab F for complete transcript)*

On May 8, 2017, Deputy Lickiss was served an amended Notice of Investigation at his residence by Sergeant Tatum.

### **Deputy Brant Lickiss**

On May 18, 2017, Sergeant Tatum and Detective Glen Bennett conducted a sworn recorded interview with Deputy Lickiss in the Public Information Office conference room in Deland. Also present during the interview was Nancye Jones who is representing Deputy Lickiss. The following is a summary of the interview.

Deputy Lickiss has been employed by the Volusia County Sheriff's Office since July 7, 2014. He is currently assigned to Judicial Services Division/Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex. Prior to his current assignment, Deputy Lickiss was assigned to District 4 Patrol and worked overtime in all of the districts.

Deputy Lickiss stated he has known Ms. Bell for the past two years. Ms. Bell used to live in the apartment above his in Deland. Deputy Lickiss advised she moved to North or South Carolina and he had not spoken with her in approximately a year and a half. Deputy Lickiss explained that he received a text message that said, *"Hey you working?"* I told her, *"No I go back tomorrow who's this?"* She said, *"Raven"* because I didn't know who it was at the time. It was just a random number. Asked her if she got a new number? She said, *"Yes. I'm in panic mode."* I said, *"Why? What's up?"* She said, *"They're trying to charge me for something I didn't do."* I said, *"Who is? What charge?"* She said, *"Call me please Brant."* And then she

*responded with, "I don't know what the fuck to do and Wes with his wife right now and can't talk and I need someone right now. I covered with your wife and your gun please have my back right now." Let's see what time was that? And then she said, "Please Brant." I can't remember if I called her before she said please Brant".*

Deputy Lickiss called Ms. Bell to find out what was going on. Sergeant Tatum confirmed that Ms. Bell knew he was a Deputy Sheriff. Deputy Lickiss believed her intent was to reach out to her for advice or help because of his employment. Deputy Lickiss said Ms. Bell denied her involvement in the missing rings. Ms. Bell advised him that Detective Campbell wants to speak with her. He explained that his response to Ms. Bell was that if the Detective wants to speak with her, she needed to talk to her.

Ms. Bell asked if she could send him pictures that proved someone hacked into her Facebook. Deputy Lickiss received the photos and told Ms. Bell that she should show them to Detective Campbell when she meets with her. Ms. Bell asked if he thought the photos would help or hurt her; he told her that he was not working the case, but she needs to give them to the Detective. Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss if he felt he was getting involved too deep with the investigation, he replied, *"Was I concerned? At the time I; it's hard, it's hard in hindsight yeah absolutely. At the time I was in a weird place. My mind wasn't right. I was; and I hate to use excuses or blame things on something but looking back from this point to that point I wasn't me for a couple weeks after my incident. And looking back on it now yes I should have been more concerned than I was at the time when I was receiving the information."*

Sergeant Tatum and Detective Bennett confirmed with Deputy Lickiss that he was cleared to return to duty from his previous incident by the department Psychiatrist. Deputy Lickiss said, *"My concern with it was I wasn't thinking straight at the time. There was a lot of lack of sleep in the second week of my paid leave from that incident."* Deputy Lickiss continued and said, *"And it's just, it everything felt weird. My body. I wasn't uncomfortable with going back to work. I just didn't feel like myself at the time if that makes sense."* Sergeant Tatum asked if Deputy Lickiss told anybody about his concerns as far as not feeling like himself, and he replied, *"I didn't, No."* Deputy Lickiss now feels he is in a better place and no longer has the dream he kept

having and he is sleeping more now.

Deputy Lickiss confirmed he did not notify Detective Campbell that he was in contact with Ms. Bell and didn't see the relevance in it at the time. He assumed Detective Campbell had the photos of the Facebook screenshots and didn't want it to appear that he was trying to cover for her or soften anything. Deputy Lickiss provided Ms. Bell with several phone numbers for her to contact Detective Campbell.

Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss if he provided Ms. Bell with any intimate knowledge of the case or if she asked him to use his position as a Deputy Sheriff to help her, he said if she did, he didn't recall that. Deputy Lickiss explained that the only information he provided to Ms. Bell regarding the case was the phone numbers to VCSO Central and that she needed to talk to the detective.

Deputy Lickiss was asked if he accessed the incident and or supplement report regarding the theft case. Deputy Lickiss acknowledged he did access the reports. He explained the first time he pulled the report up was on April 6, 2017, but did not have a chance to read it because he had to transport an inmate, so he closed the report without reading it. Deputy Lickiss accessed the report again on April 11, 2017, at 0847 hrs. He began to read the report and got to the "*Meat and potatoes*" of it but got pulled away from the computer; then came back later and exited out of it without reading it in its entirety.

As stated above, Deputy Lickiss provided a sworn statement to Lieutenant Brian Henderson and Sergeant Brian Cobb on April 12, 2017, at the Courthouse Annex regarding the criminal investigation. During the interview Lieutenant Henderson advised Deputy Lickiss several times that he was conducting a criminal investigation, not an administrative investigation, and that he was giving the statement freely and voluntarily. Deputy Lickiss said he felt as though he wasn't free to leave due to the presence and demeanor of Lieutenant Henderson. He explained that the door to the jury room (where the interview took place) was locked and he felt intimidated that he couldn't leave. Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss if at any time he told Lieutenant Henderson that he was not comfortable with the interview, he said he didn't have the opportunity

because once the interview started he didn't feel he could get up and leave. Deputy Lickiss felt due to the line of questions he was asked, he was more of a co-defendant than a witness. He didn't want to interfere with their investigation and wanted to help the best he could but still felt uncomfortable.

During that interview, Deputy Lickiss told Lieutenant Henderson and Sergeant Cobb that he did not know the details of the report. He said that he was not untruthful when Lieutenant Henderson and Sergeant Cobb asked him about if he knew the details of the report since he did not read the report entirely.

Deputy Lickiss told Sergeant Tatum that he was texting Ms. Bell just before she went in for her interview at District 2 and told her, *"You will be fine."* Deputy Lickiss told her she would be fine because he was still under the impression she didn't steal the rings. After Ms. Bell was arrested, she tried to meet with him; he told her that he couldn't because she was arrested on two felony charges and he could no longer communicate with her. Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss if he felt he acted professionally as a Deputy Sheriff by having contact with the suspect in a criminal investigation, he replied, *"That's a tough question to answer. Professionally as a deputy sheriff while she was a suspect? No, I don't believe so."*

Deputy Lickiss viewed the reports again on April 13, 2017, the day after his interview with Lieutenant Henderson. According to Deputy Lickiss, he was curious what the report said since he was interviewed and wanted to see if there was a supplement report done by Lieutenant Henderson. He felt like he was interviewed as a criminal and he wanted to see where Lieutenant Henderson was going with the interview even though he was told he was being talked to as an eye witness. Deputy Lickiss said he read the whole report on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Due to the statement Deputy Lickiss provided earlier in the interview with Sergeant Tatum regarding Ms. Bell covering for him with his gun, he was asked if that was related to the current investigation, which he said no. Deputy Lickiss voluntarily, with the agreement of Mrs. Jones, explained the comment regarding the gun. Deputy Lickiss explained approximately two years ago he asked Ms. Bell to give him a ride to the gas station on Beresford Avenue. He placed his

off duty/personally owned firearm (Glock 27) in her glove box and forgot to retrieve it when they returned to the apartment complex where they both lived. The firearm was returned to him approximately two weeks later. He did not want there to be any confusion between his personally owned firearm and his department issued firearm. *(See Tab G for complete transcript)*

Deputy Lickiss was asked if he violated the following policies:

**Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13).** Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the County as an employer. *This violation may be sufficient grounds for disciplinary action ranging from oral reprimand to dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the offense and other circumstances related to the situation.* **No**

**26.2.71 Communicating Criminal Information** - Employees shall maintain the security of confidential information, and shall not intentionally communicate or give law enforcement information to another which may aid a person to escape arrest, delay the apprehension of a criminal suspect, secure the removal of stolen or embezzled goods, money or other property. Employees shall not intentionally divulge the identity of criminal informants except as required by law and authorized by competent authority. *(Violation subject up to dismissal.)* **No**

**26.2.54 Association with Criminals** - Employees shall avoid regular or continuous association or dealings with persons who they know or should know are under criminal investigation or indictments, or persons who have a criminal or immoral reputation in the community, except as necessary in the performance of official duties. Immediate family members are exempt from this provision, providing the situation is immediately reported to the Sheriff. *(Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.)* **Yes**

**26.2.108 Perjury in an Official Proceeding** - Employees shall not knowingly make false statements while under oath in any court, civil or criminal, in statements made to internal affairs investigators, notaries and persons taking depositions or other testimony or any other official proceeding as defined in F.S. 837. (*Violation subject up to dismissal.*) **NO**

Sergeant Tatum briefed Sheriff Chitwood on the interview with Deputy Lickiss. Due to the statements provided by Deputy Lickiss regarding his lack of sleep and how “*everything felt weird*”, Sheriff Chitwood recommended he return to the psychiatrist for a follow up visit.

Deputy Lickiss met with the psychiatrist on May 31, 2017, for a follow up session. Deputy Lickiss was cleared to return to full duty by the psychiatrist on June 1, 2017.

On June 1, 2017, Sergeant Tatum served Deputy Lickiss with a memo removing him from Administrative Leave with Pay as the investigation continued and he was ordered to return to duty on June 2, 2017.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On April 2, 2017, Deputy Berriozobal responded to a grand theft report in Deland. The victim accused her friend, Raven Bell, of stealing several rings during her stay at the residence. The case was assigned to Detective Katie Campbell for follow up.

During the course of the investigation, it was learned that Ms. Bell had recent contact with two deputies, Wesley Blum and Brant Lickiss, who were not involved in the investigation. Ms. Bell received a phone call on the night the victim reported the rings stolen, from Deputy Blum who heard the call come out on the radio (See IA-17-016 for details). Ms. Bell also had contact with Deputy Brant Lickiss at the Comfort Suites hotel in Port Orange, FL on April 3, 2017.

Deputy Lickiss received a text message from Ms. Bell asking him to call her because someone was trying to get her in trouble. Deputy Lickiss was on Administrative Leave with Pay stemming from a deadly force incident. Deputy Lickiss did not recognize the number Ms. Bell texted him from and asked who it was. Ms. Bell said "Raven" and they began to text one another. Ms. Bell told Deputy Lickiss that her friend is accusing her of stealing rings and she said someone is trying to make it look like she was selling them on Facebook. Ms. Bell sent the Facebook screenshots of the messages to Deputy Lickiss. Ms. Bell told Deputy Lickiss Detective Campbell wanted to interview her regarding the criminal investigation.

Deputy Lickiss agreed to meet with Ms. Bell at the Comfort Suite Hotel in Port Orange, FL., knowing she was the suspect in a felony theft case. Prior to Deputy Lickiss arriving at the hotel, Ms. Bell said she found the rings in her backpack but she didn't know how the rings got there. Ms. Bell arranged for the rings to be picked up by the victim at the front desk of the hotel prior to Deputy Lickiss's arrival. Once the victim picked up her rings, Deputy Lickiss arrived shortly after and she told him that the victim found her rings.

On April 12, 2017, Deputy Lickiss was interviewed by Lieutenant Brian Henderson due to his contact with Ms. Bell to see if he had any information regarding the criminal investigation. According to the sworn statement provided by Deputy Lickiss, he didn't know Ms. Bell was in possession of the rings, but he knew she was the suspect in a criminal investigation. Deputy Lickiss also stated he never saw the rings and Ms. Bell denied her involvement during their time together. Lieutenant Henderson asked Deputy Lickiss if he knew what was in the report for the criminal investigation and he said no. Sergeant Brian Cobb was in the interview with Lieutenant Henderson and he also asked Deputy Lickiss if he knew the details of the report; again he said no. Deputy Lickiss told investigators that he should not have been at the hotel with Ms. Bell.

Sergeant Tatum reviewed the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) report history for the original report submitted by Deputy Berriozobal and the supplement report submitted by

Detective Campbell. The report showed Deputy Lickiss viewed the report via the browser on April 6, 2017, and April 11, 2017. Sergeant Tatum contacted Sheriff's Office IT who tracked the computer terminals used by Deputy Lickiss to computers at the Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex where Deputy Lickiss is assigned.

On April 13, 2017, Deputy Lickiss was placed on Administrative Leave with pay. He was served at the Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex by Sergeant Tatum and Lieutenant Sawicki.

On May 18, 2017, Sergeant Tatum and Detective Bennett conducted a sworn interview with Deputy Lickiss in the Sheriff's Public Information Office in Deland. Mrs. Nancye Jones was present on behalf of Deputy Lickiss. Deputy Lickiss confirmed he received a text from Ms. Bell on April 3, 2017, asking for his assistance. Deputy Lickiss had not spoken to Ms. Bell for the past year to year and a half. Ms. Bell provided Deputy Lickiss with the information about her being accused of stealing rings that belonged to a friend and denied her involvement.

Ms. Bell sent Deputy Lickiss screen shots (via text) of the Facebook conversation involving the attempt to sell the rings to a male friend of Ms. Bell. According to Deputy Lickiss, Ms. Bell denied she sent the Facebook message and denied trying to sell the rings. Deputy Lickiss knew that Ms. Bell was under investigation for the theft because Ms. Bell told him Detective Campbell wanted to speak with her. Deputy Lickiss advised Ms. Bell that if she didn't do anything wrong, she would be fine and she should talk to the detective.

Deputy Lickiss advised once he arrived at the hotel in Port Orange, Ms. Bell told him that her friend found her rings. Deputy Lickiss said he did not see the rings and Ms. Bell never told him she was in possession of the rings. Deputy Lickiss was not aware the victim picked up the rings at the front desk of the hotel he was at with Ms. Bell. When asked if he was concerned he was getting too involved in the case with Ms. Bell, Deputy Lickiss said, *"Was I concerned? At the time I; it's hard, it's hard in hindsight yeah absolutely. At the time I was in a weird place. My mind wasn't right. I was; and I hate to use excuses or*



*blame things on something but looking back from this point to that point I wasn't me for a couple weeks after my incident. And looking back on it now yes I should have been more concerned than I was at the time when I was receiving the information.*" Deputy Lickiss confirmed that he was cleared to return to duty by the psychiatrist but went on to say, *"I was cleared actually the same day she called me is when I was contacted and told I could return to duty. My concern with it was I wasn't thinking straight at the time. There was a lot of lack of sleep in the second week of my paid leave from that incident."* Deputy Lickiss stated he did not tell anybody his concerns on how he was feeling.

Deputy Lickiss confirmed he knew she was the suspect in a felony grand theft case. He did not notify Detective Campbell that he was in contact with the suspect in her case; but he provided Ms. Bell with two telephone numbers for the Sheriff's Office that she could call and leave a message for Detective Campbell. Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss, *"So at any point did you interfere with the investigation by providing her with information on what to do? Or what to say? Or how to answer the questions the detective may ask her?"* and his response was, *"Absolutely not."*

Deputy Lickiss told Lieutenant Henderson on April 12, 2017, during his interview that he did not know what the report said. Deputy Lickiss stated he accessed the original report on April 6, 2017, from the Courthouse Annex. According to Deputy Lickiss, he pulled up the report but began talking to another deputy and he didn't have time to read it because he had to transport inmates out to the jail. Deputy Lickiss exited out of the report and moved the inmates. Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss, *"If you didn't think you had time to review that report when you pulled it up knowing that you had to leave why would you pull it up at that time?"* and he replied, *"Curiosity and when we're doing prisoner transport a lot of times when we're leaving at that time we have inmates still in courtrooms and we try to leave without leaving anybody behind that we have to come back and get. So you really don't know your time frame until they say bringing an inmate down. And once they come down then it's, if it's the last one then ok. Let's go. Let's load up."*

Deputy Lickiss again pulled up the report on April 11, 2017. Once again Deputy Lickiss

said, *“I began to read it. I didn’t read the entire thing. I began to. I probably got right to the well what we call meat and potatoes of the report. And then I got tied up doing something. And I remember getting pulled away from the computer and when I had come back I just X’d out of it. I didn’t continue to read it. I didn’t finish reading it at that point.”* Deputy Lickiss believed that report was the supplement by Detective Campbell.

Sergeant Cobb also asked Deputy Lickiss if that day (April 12<sup>th</sup>) was the first time he knew the details of the missing rings and he said, *“Yes”*. Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss if he was untruthful about reading the report when interviewed by Lieutenant Henderson and Sergeant Cobb and he replied, *“I wouldn’t say I was untruthful. I would say I was more or less confused by the question because I at the I time did not know the full details of the report. I knew what the report was about. I knew; I don’t want to say what it was about but basically the basics of the report. But I wouldn’t say I was untruthful with him at that time because I; the most details I had gotten at that point were in that interview.”*

Deputy Lickiss expressed his concern that even though Lieutenant Henderson told him he was giving his statement freely and voluntarily, he didn’t feel he was free to leave the interview because the door to the jury room was locked. According to Deputy Lickiss, he felt uncomfortable with the questioning and may have been confused. Deputy Lickiss did not tell Lieutenant Henderson he felt uncomfortable with the interview. *NOTE: It was later confirmed that each deputy assigned to the Courthouse Annex has a key to unlock the jury rooms.*

Deputy Lickiss viewed the reports again on April 13, 2017, the day after his interview with Lieutenant Henderson. According to Deputy Lickiss, he was curious what the report said since he was interviewed and wanted to see if there was a supplement report done by Lieutenant Henderson. He felt like he was interviewed as a criminal and he wanted to see where Lieutenant Henderson was going with the interview even though he was told he was being talked to as an eye witness. Deputy Lickiss said he read the whole report on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Sergeant Tatum asked Deputy Lickiss if he used his position as a deputy sheriff to give any preferential treatment or provide Ms. Bell with criminal intelligence while the investigation was on going, and he said, *“No, I did not.”* When asked if he felt he acted professionally as a deputy sheriff by meeting with Ms. Bell while she was a suspect in a criminal investigation, he replied, *“That’s a tough question to answer. Professionally as a deputy sheriff while she was a suspect? No I don’t believe so.”*

According to Deputy Lickiss, once he found out Ms. Bell was arrested, she called him after she was released from jail and he told her he could no longer communicate with her.

Due to the statement Deputy Lickiss provided earlier in the interview with Sergeant Tatum regarding Ms. Bell covering for him with his gun, he was asked if that was related to the current investigation, which he said no. Deputy Lickiss voluntarily explained the comment regarding the gun. Deputy Lickiss stated approximately two years ago he asked Ms. Bell to give him a ride to the gas station on Beresford. He placed his off duty/personally owned firearm (Glock 27) in her glove box and forgot to retrieve it when they returned to the apartment complex where they both lived. Deputy Lickiss stated the firearm was returned to him approximately two weeks later. He did not want there to be any confusion between his personally owned firearm and his department issued firearm.

## **CONCLUSION:**

On June 19, 2017, this investigation was presented to the Sheriff and his administrative staff. After review, the Sheriff determined the violations of the below listed Department Standards Directives to be:

**26.2.54 Association with Criminals** - Employees shall avoid regular or continuous association or dealings with persons who they know or should know are under criminal investigation or indictments, or persons who have a criminal or immoral reputation in the community, except as necessary in the performance of official duties. Immediate family

members are exempt from this provision, providing the situation is immediately reported to the Sheriff. *(Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.)*

**Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13).** Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the County as an employer. *This violation may be sufficient grounds for disciplinary action ranging from oral reprimand to dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the offense and other circumstances related to the situation.*

Sheriff Chitwood tentatively determined to suspend Deputy Lickiss without pay for forty (40) hours and mandated him to attend EAP counseling. On June 22, 2017, Deputy Lickiss was served with his Notice of Intent to Suspend letter. *(See Tab B for Official Correspondence)*

On July 6, 2017, Deputy Lickiss met with Sheriff Chitwood and after earnest consideration; Sheriff Chitwood's final decision was to suspend Deputy Lickiss for forty (40) hours without pay and mandated him to attend EAP counseling. *(See Tab B for Official Correspondence)*

On July 18, 2017, Deputy Lickiss was served with his final suspension letter. *(See Tab B for official correspondence)*

**EXHIBIT(S):**

- A. Report of Investigation
- B. Advisement of Rights for Disciplinary Interview & Perjury Warning
- C. Official Correspondence
- D. Official transcript of Deputy William Leven
- E. Official transcript of Raven Bell
- F. Official transcript of Deputy Hector Rodriguez

- G. Official transcript of Deputy Lickiss
- H. Miscellaneous Documents
- I. Digital Media

**WITNESSES:**

Deputy William Leven  
Volusia County Sheriff's Office  
District 2 Patrol

Raven Bell  
127 S. Frankfort Ave  
Deland, FL 32720  
386-316-0121


Deputy Hector Rodriguez  
Volusia County Sheriff's Office  
District 2 Patrol

Deputy Brant Lickiss  
Volusia County Sheriff's Office  
Daytona Beach Courthouse Annex

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:  DATE: 7/18/17

**Sergeant Thomas Tatum**  
**Internal Affairs Detective**

APPROVED BY:  DATE: 7/20/17

**Chief Deputy John Creamer**  
**SHERIFF MICHAEL J. CHITWOOD**  
**VOLUSIA COUNTY FLORIDA**