

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

**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**

**REPORT NUMBER: IA-17-016**

**PERIOD COVERED:** April 2, 2017 to April 13, 2017  
**DATE REPORTED:** April 12, 2017  
**SUBJECT(S) NAME:** Deputy Wesley Blum #8181  
**INVESTIGATING OFFICERS:** 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 discovered that the suspect, Ms. Bell, received a phone call from Deputy Wesley Blum the night the victim reported the theft.

**OFFENSES:**

This investigation is relevant to an alleged violation of Department Standards Directives and Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations:

**26.2.68 Interference in Official Investigation** - Employees shall not interfere with cases being processed by other Deputies or other governmental agencies, nor undertake any investigation or other official action not part of their regular duties unless ordered to do so by a superior, unless the intervening Deputy reasonably believes that failure to act would result in an injustice, or the exigencies of the situation require immediate action. Such action will be immediately reported to a superior. *(Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.)*

**Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453** - *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.*

**RE:**

**(13) Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the county as an employer.**

**INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY:**

On April 13, 2017, Chief Deputy John Creamer assigned the above incident to the Internal Affairs Unit. On April 18, 2017, at 1612 hrs. Sgt. Tatum and Lt. Sawicki served Deputy Wesley Blum the Notice of Internal Investigation along with the Officer Bill of Rights. This report details the internal affairs investigation conducted by Sergeant Tatum. *(See Tab C for Official Correspondence)*

**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 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 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.

She filled out a statement with Deputy Berriozabal and they went back to the victim's house, she was then 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. 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, she 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.” (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)*

### **Deputy Daniel Berriozabal**

On May 3, 2017, at 1440 hrs., Sergeant Tatum and Lieutenant Justin Sawicki conducted a sworn recorded interview with Deputy Daniel Berriozabal in the Internal Affairs Office in Deland, FL. The following is a summary of the interview.

Deputy Berriozabal has been with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office since March of 2016. He is currently assigned to District 2 Bravo shift in Deland. Deputy Berriozabal was dispatched to a theft call involving stole rings. After he was dispatched, Deputy Berriozabal received a phone call from Deputy Wesley Blum advising he knew the suspect Ms. Bell. Deputy Berriozabal was told by Deputy Blum that he just spoke with Ms. Bell and she would be waiting for him at the Walgreens on 15A and Hwy 17.

According to Deputy Berriozabal, Deputy Blum told him to do his investigation and if he determined that she committed the theft, arrest her and by no means have any leniency against

her. Deputy Blum told him that if he needs any help he can call him, but he is not going to help her out. Deputy Berriozabal told Internal Affairs Detectives that he often calls Deputy Blum for advice on different calls due to Deputy Blum's experience and he provides guidance.

Deputy Berriozabal advised that Deputy Blum came into the District 2 Office when he was talking to Detective Campbell and she was telling them about the case, but he didn't recall Deputy Blum say anything about Ms. Bell and he didn't appear to be upset or make any comments. *(See Tab G for complete transcript)*

On May 15, 2017, Sergeant Tatum served Deputy Blum with an Amended Notice of Investigation at his residence. Deputy Blum was provided another copy of the Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights. *(See Tab C for Official Correspondence)*

### **Deputy Wesley Blum**

On May 23, 2017, at 1239 hrs., Sergeant Tatum and Detective Glen Bennett conducted a sworn recorded interview with Deputy Wesley Blum in the Sheriff's Administration Office in Deland, FL. The following is a summary of the interview.

Deputy Blum has been with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office for the past four years and he is currently assigned to District 2 in Deland on Bravo shift. Deputy Blum met Ms. Bell on a traffic stop several years ago and later ran into her outside of work where they exchanged phone numbers. Deputy Blum last met with Ms. Bell in June of 2016, but he spoke with her on SnapChat approximately a month and a half ago.

Deputy Blum heard his zone partner get dispatched to a theft call and the suspect name provided over the radio was Ms. Bell. Deputy Blum called Ms. Bell and asked her what was going on because he heard her name on the radio. Ms. Bell began to tell Deputy Blum about the situation but Deputy Blum told Ms. Bell to stay where she was and a deputy will meet her because she was walking. According to Deputy Blum, the reason he called Ms. Bell was to have her stay in one location so Deputy Berriozabal could meet with her and conduct the investigation. She

agreed to wait at the Walgreens at 15A and Hwy 17. Deputy Blum called Deputy Berriozobal and told him that he knows Ms. Bell but she was not to use his name to interfere with the investigation or influence his decision during the course of the investigation.

Ms. Bell called Deputy Blum while seated in the back seat of Deputy Barriozabal's patrol car and told him she was nervous because she didn't know what was going on. Deputy Blum told her to let the deputy do his job and he couldn't be involved or come to the scene. According to Deputy Blum, he did not provide any criminal intelligence to Ms. Bell. At the conclusion of Deputy Berriziobal's initial investigation, Ms. Bell was allowed to leave. Ms. Bell called Deputy Blum in an attempt to meet him while she waited for her ride, but he refused.

According to Deputy Blum, the only conversation he had at the district involving this case was when he was speaking with Deputy Berriozobal and Detective Campbell, he did not have any conversation involving Deputy Lickiss. He did not have any conversation about going with Deputy Lickiss to an apartment or anywhere else as stated by Deputy Leven. *(See Tab H for complete transcript)*

When asked if he felt he violated the Volusia County Merit Rules and Regulation 86-453(13) he said "No." He also denied violating 26.2.68 Interference with an Official Investigation.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On April 2, 2017, Deputy Blum heard his zone partner get dispatched to a theft call naming Ms. Bell as a suspect. Deputy Blum has known Ms. Bell for several years and he called her while he was on duty to find out why her name came across the radio. Ms. Bell began to tell Deputy Blum about the situation and he told her to wait for Deputy Berriozobal at the Walgreens at 15A and Hwy 17 because a deputy was going to meet her there. Deputy Blum then called Deputy Berriozobal and told him that he knew Ms. Bell and she would be waiting for him at the Walgreens. Deputy Blum told Deputy Berriozobal that Ms. Bell should not use his name to influence the investigation and that he would not get involved. Deputy Blum told Internal

Affairs Detectives that he was trying to facilitate the meeting between Deputy Berriozabal and Ms. Bell, nothing more.

Deputy Berriozabal advised he received a phone call from Deputy Blum as he was responding to the theft call. Deputy Blum told him that Ms. Bell would meet him at the Walgreens at Hwy 17 and 15A in Deland for contact. Deputy Blum told him that he knows Ms. Bell and he is to conduct his investigation and by no means have leniency against her if his investigation revealed that she committed the crime. Deputy Blum said he was not responding to the location and that if he needed assistance he could call him, but he was not getting involved.

Ms. Bell did not know the victim called the Sheriff's Office until she received the phone call from Deputy Blum. According to Ms. Bell, she did not receive any information from Deputy Blum other than she was the suspect in a theft. Ms. Bell said she did not gain any assistance from Deputy Blum during the course of the investigation. Ms. Bell was told by Deputy Blum that unless there are shots fired and Deputy Berriozabal needed backup he can't come up there with her. Deputy Blum told Internal Affairs Detectives that he did not provide any criminal information to Ms. Bell. *(See Tab A for Report of Investigation)*

**CONCLUSION:**

On July 10, 2017, this investigation was presented to the Sheriff. After review, the Sheriff determined the violation of the below listed department and county policies to be:

**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.**

**UNFOUNDED**



**26.2.68 Interference in Official Investigation** - Employees shall not interfere with cases being processed by other Deputies or other governmental agencies, nor undertake any investigation or other official action not part of their regular duties unless ordered to do so by a superior, unless the intervening Deputy reasonably believes that failure to act would result in an injustice, or the exigencies of the situation require immediate action. Such action will be immediately reported to a superior. (*Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.*) **UNFOUNDED**

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. Report of Investigation
- B. Advisement of Administrative Oath/Perjury Warning/Garrity Warning
- C. Official Correspondence-Original NOI and Amended NOI
- 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 Daniel Berriozabal
- H. Official Transcript of Deputy Wesley Blum
- I. Miscellaneous Documents
- J. Digital Media

**Witnesses**

Deputy William Leven  
VCSO District 2  
Deland, FL  
386-943-7866

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

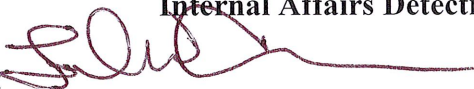
Deputy Hector Rodriguez  
VCSO District 2  
Deland, FL  
386-943-7866

Deputy Daniel Berriozabal  
VCSO District 2  
Deland, FL  
386-943-7866

Deputy Wesley Blum  
VCSO District 2  
Deland, FL  
386-943-7866

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: 07/11/17  
**Sergeant Thomas Tatum**  
**Internal Affairs Detective**

APPROVED BY:  DATE: 07/14/17  
**Chief Deputy John Creamer**  
**SHERIFF Michael J. Chitwood**  
**VOLUSIA COUNTY FLORIDA**