

SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

INVESTIGATION # 2019-005

SERGEANT WES MOREY

COMPLAINANT:

INTERNAL

SUBJECT EMPLOYEE:

OFFICER CHRISTOPHER GALLI #136



5 YEARS OF SERVICE

DATE FILED:

JANUARY 24, 2019

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MEMORANDUM
POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: May 13, 2019
TO: Chief of Police 
FROM: Deputy Chief Rick Martinez
SUBJECT: Administrative Findings-Internal Affairs Investigation #2019-005

Subject Officer: Chris Galli

I have reviewed investigation IA 2019-005 completed by Sergeant Morey and I concur with Sergeant Morey's final analysis and make the following recommendations and comments:

Sustained: On the allegation Officer Chris Galli made an insensitive racial comment that violated department policies related to conduct.

Summary of Allegations:

This complaint was received via an email submitted by community member, [REDACTED] on January 24, 2019. In his email to Chief Mills, [REDACTED] expressed concerns regarding comments Officer Galli had posted on a Facebook page that he felt were racist. The Facebook comments were also posted on Indybay Santa Cruz IMC with a heading of "Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli Uses Racist Term to Describe Homeless Man". Chief Mills requested a formal investigation into the allegations be initiated on January 24, 2019. On January 28, 2019, Sergeant Jones authored a memo outlining a conversation he had with Officer Galli regarding the social media post and forwarded the memo to Sergeant Morey.

Summary of Events:

On January 24, 2019, a Facebook account named "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" posted a news article that KION originally reported, regarding the "Ross Camp". In the article, a person named Michael Sweatt, a resident (and spokesman) for the encampment was interviewed. During the interview, Mr. Sweatt commented that the encampment contained a bunch of heroin addicts and bad apples.

In November 2018, Officer Galli was injured and placed on a light duty status. On January 23, 2019, he had a follow up [REDACTED] with the recovery process. When interviewed, Officer Galli stated the [REDACTED] put him in a very "negative state of mind". Officer Galli, who was at home [REDACTED] [REDACTED] read the Facebook post pertaining to Mr. Sweatt. Officer Galli has arrested Mr. Sweatt several times in the past for serious felony crimes. When he read the article and saw that Mr. Sweatt was the spokesman for the encampment and was calling some

of the campers "bad apples", he became frustrated. Officer Galli decided to post a comment on the Facebook "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" page on January 24, 2019 that read, "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt". When he posted the comment, Officer Galli used his personal Facebook account with the screen name of "Chris Meriekuh".

Officer Galli explained that when he worked as an officer in the downtown unit, he investigated several criminal incidents involving Mr. Sweatt. During one incident, Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a subject downtown. The victim ended up not wanting to cooperate with the criminal process. During a second incident, Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a female on the railroad tracks. This victim also ended up not wanting to cooperate with the criminal process.

Officer Galli expressed that he had become frustrated with the justice system and the lack of accountability for Mr. Sweatt's criminal actions. Officer Galli felt Mr. Sweatt was never held accountable for his felony robberies and that he (Officer Galli) was simply frustrated with the system.

He stated at the time he wrote the "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt" comment, his understanding of the comment was that it was a term used to describe any person, regardless of race or gender, who had been caught red handed committing a crime and then would refuse to take responsibility for their actions. He compared the term to when a police officer finds drugs in a pair of pants and the suspect says the pants don't belong to them. He refers to this saying as the "not my pants" defense.

When Officer Galli was asked where he first heard the "dindunuffin" term, he said he read it somewhere on the internet and believes it might have been on Facebook. When he originally heard the term, it was used in the same context as he used it. Someone had committed a crime, they were caught, however took no responsibility for their actions.

After the Indybay article came out, suggesting Officer Galli used a racist term, he researched the term and found out it had a racial connotation. Officer Galli stated he was appalled by the meaning, and has personally refused to use it ever again. He said it upset him to the point where he took down his post on "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" and cancelled his Facebook account. Officer Galli also notified Sergeant Jones of the issue and later spoke with Chief Mills regarding the post.

Officer Galli said he and Mr. Sweatt never had problems with each other. During all of his contacts with Mr. Sweatt, he never tried to run from Officer Galli, nor did he get into a physical altercation with him in the performance of his duties. The last time he had contact with Mr. Sweatt was about a year ago.

Several of Officer Galli's body worn camera videos were viewed to see how he interacted with the public, specifically with people of color and/or minorities. The audit found Officer Galli was courteous to all members of the public and treated them with respect during all types of calls for service.

Statistical data regarding arrests and citations by race for the entire department and specifically Officer Galli was also audited for the year 2018. The data audited found that Officer Galli did not target or profile stop solely based on the race of a particular subject and in some areas, he is

well below and/or at the same average as the rest of the department. Conversely, the Officer Galli and department wide audits of enforcement activity by race was reflective and in alignment with census demographics of our city.

Officer Galli has not had any prior complaints of racial bias, racial profiling, or engaging in any type of inappropriate language or behavior specific to race.

Findings/Recommendations:

Throughout the course of this investigation, and even before an investigation was initiated, Officer Galli took full responsibility for his actions. Officer Galli quickly determined that his posted comments related to a sensitive issue nationwide and that the comments damaged the department's reputation and jeopardized the public's trust. When officer Galli found he had used a racially insensitive term while publicly voicing his frustrations about the accountability of Mr. Sweatt, he immediately notified his supervisor and the Chief of Police.

Although Officer Galli is sorry about what happened, admits he made a mistake, and that he would never knowingly make a comment like that had he known the true meaning, Officer Galli discredited our department. Repeating a slang term that he did not fully understand the context of to give comment about an individual he had interactions with in his role as a police officer in a public forum was irresponsible and it adversely reflected upon the department.

Considering Officer Galli's comments were unwitting, that no discriminatory practices were found in his enforcement practices and that he quickly accepted responsibility for his actions, I recommend a Documented Oral Counseling (DOC) memo be issued to Officer Galli.



MEMORANDUM POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: June 11, 2019

TO: Officer Chris Galli

FROM: Deputy Chief Rick Martinez

SUBJECT: Documentation of Oral Counseling

DRAFT

On January 24th 2019, Professional Standards investigation #2019-005 was initiated by the Chief of Police. The Professional Standards investigation stemmed from concerns brought forward by a community member regarding comments you had posted on a Facebook page on January 24, 2019 that were believed to be racist. The Facebook comments were also posted on Indybay Santa Cruz IMC with a heading of "Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli Uses Racist Term to Describe Homeless Man". After diligent and thorough review of the completed Professional Standards investigation, I found that you had in fact violated department policies 339.2.3 and 339.6, under policy 339-Standards of Conduct & Discipline.

Your conduct in this instance brought discredit to the peace officer profession and our department. Repeating a slang term that you did not fully understand the context of to give comment about an individual you had interactions with in your role as a police officer in a public forum was irresponsible and it adversely reflected upon the department.

The above mentioned policy is attached to this memo for your reference.

You are hereby notified that you are to follow all department policies and perform to departmental standards. Continued failures of this nature will result in further discipline.

This memorandum will serve as your formal notice of a Documented Oral Counseling for this incident. This memorandum will be placed in your Operations File for a period not exceeding one year from the date of your signature. Your signature acknowledges this corrective action, and your receipt of a copy of this memorandum.

Officer Chris Galli #136

Date

D.C. Rick Martinez #110

Date

CC: OPS File (Chris Galli)

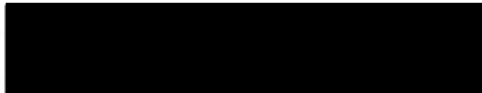


**MEMORANDUM
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

DATE: April 16, 2019
TO: Deputy Chief Martinez
FROM: Sergeant Wes Morey
SUBJECT: Case Summary
Internal Affairs Case # 2019-005

INVOLVED PARTIES:

Investigator: Sergeant Wes Morey #109
Subject Officer: Officer Christopher Galli #136
Mentioned: Michael Sweatt
Transient, Santa Cruz



Complainant: Internal

INTRODUCTION:

On January 24, 2019, Chief Mills forwarded me an e-mail from a community member named [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had concerns regarding comments Officer Galli had posted on a Facebook page that he felt were racist. The Facebook comments were also posted on Indybay Santa Cruz IMC with a heading of "Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli Uses Racist Term to

¹ Section 4 – Chief Mills E-mail

Describe Homeless Man". Four days later on January 28, 2019, Sergeant Jones authored a memo outlining the social media post and forwarded the memo to me².

Chief Mills directed me to conduct a Professional Standards investigation into the social media post made by Officer Galli.

SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS:

After reading the memo authored by Sergeant Jones, I determined the following Santa Cruz Police Department Policies applied.³

POLICY 339 - STANDARDS OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

339.2.3 CONDUCT UNBECOMING

A members conduct either on or off-duty, which could adversely reflect upon the department, will be deemed to be conduct unbecoming. Each case of misconduct will be examined to determine if the act was such that a reasonable person would find that such conduct was unbecoming a police employee. Actual conduct does not have to be public knowledge, but if known, could have an adverse effect.

339.6 CANONS OF ETHICS - 339.6.4 CANON FOUR

Standard 4.4 Peace Officers shall maintain a level of conduct in their personal and business affairs in keeping with the high standards of the peace officers profession. Officers shall not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude.

Standard 4.9 Peace Officers shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner which does not discredit the peace officer profession or their employing agency.

² Section 3 – Sgt. Jones Complaint Memo

³ Exhibit F - 339 (Standards of Conduct)

SYNOPSIS:

On January 24, 2019, a Facebook account named "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" posted a news article that KION originally reported, regarding the "Ross Camp"⁴. In the article, a person named Michael Sweatt, a resident (and spokesman) for the encampment was interviewed. During the interview, Mr. Sweatt commented that the encampment contained a bunch of heroin addicts and bad apples.

Officer Galli, who was at home on [REDACTED] read the article. Officer Galli has arrested Mr. Sweatt several times in the past for serious felony crimes. When he read the article and saw that Mr. Sweatt was the spokesman for the encampment and was calling some of the campers "bad apples", he became frustrated. Officer Galli decided to post a comment on the Facebook page that read, "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt".

Later that afternoon on January 24, 2019, Indybay Santa Cruz IMC published an article on their website titled, "Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli Uses Racist Term to Describe Homeless Man"⁵. The Indybay article summarized the article from "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" and showed Officer Galli's comments he posted.

A community member named [REDACTED] sent Chief Mills the links to the two websites and criticized Officer Galli and his comments as being racist.

It should be noted, and it is important for this case to point out the fact that Officer Galli is a White male adult and Mr. Sweatt is a Black male adult.

I conducted an investigation into the posted comment.

⁴ Exhibit C – Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real Facebook Page

⁵ Exhibit D – Indybay Santa Cruz IMC Page

INVESTIGATION:

Body Worn Camera Videos:

I randomly selected and watched several of Officer Galli's body worn camera videos, to watch how he interacts with the public, specifically persons of color and/or minorities. As I watched the videos, I noticed that Officer Galli was very courteous to all members of the public and treated them with respect during all types of calls for service.

I located a video in which Officer Galli had made contact with Mr. Sweatt and arrested him for a case he was investigating in which Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a female on the railroad track. Officer Galli treated him with respect and never showed any type of bias or prejudice towards him. Reference SCPD Case: 18S-02234.

Arrest and Citation Statistics⁶:

I had Crime Analyst Megan Patzke pull statistical data regarding arrests and citations by race for the entire department and specifically Officer Galli. The data analyzed was from the year 2018.

In regards to arrests made by race, the following data was pulled department wide:

White: 48%

Hispanic: 17%

Black: 5%

In regards to arrests made by race for Officer Galli, the following data was pulled:

White: 46%

⁶ Exhibit B – Arrest and Citation Statistics

Hispanic: 15%

Black: 4%

The data showed Officer Galli was below the department average in arrests made for the three races listed above.

In regards to citations issued by race, the following data was pulled department wide:

White: 71%

Hispanic: 14%

Black: 5%

In regards to citations issued by race for Officer Galli, the following data was pulled:

White: 85%

Hispanic: 8%

Black: 5%

The data showed Officer Galli was slightly higher in citations issued to White subjects than the department average. He was well below the average in citations issued to Hispanic subjects and was at the same average in citations issued to Black subjects.

The data clearly shows Officer Galli does not target or profile stop solely based on the race of a particular subject and in some areas, he is well below and/or at the same average as the rest of the department.

Complaint History:

I searched through Officer Galli's complaint history, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was unable to locate any complaints that accused Officer Galli of any type of racial bias, racial profiling, or engaging in any type of inappropriate language or behavior regarding a specific race.

Officer Christopher Galli Interview⁷:

On March 23, 2019, I conducted an interview with Officer Christopher Galli in association with Internal Affairs investigation 2019-005. The interview was conducted in person at the Santa Cruz Police Department. Officer Galli was interviewed as a subject officer in this investigation.

Before starting the interview, I confirmed that Officer Galli was aware that he was a subject in this investigation. I advised him that the interview would be recorded. Present at this interview was Officer Galli and myself. Officer Galli chose not to bring a representative to the interview. I advised him of his Administrative Rights as a subject by reading them verbatim from the Administrative Rights Civilian ~ Subjects Form. He acknowledged that he understood his Administrative Rights and signed the form.

Officer Galli has been a Police Officer with the City of Santa Cruz for five years. Before working at the SCPD, he was employed by the CA State Parks as a Peace Officer for a couple of years. He is currently on light duty assigned to Operations.

I confirmed with Officer Galli that he had a personal Facebook account with the screen name of "Chris Meriekuh". This Facebook account also had a profile picture of him, his wife, and their child. He said he has since deleted his Facebook account due to this incident. I asked him how often he would browse on Facebook and/or make posts. He said he would frequently browse on Facebook and would post things about once a week.

I confirmed with Officer Galli that he followed a Facebook account named, "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real". He said this account posts stories about crime in Santa Cruz, the court process, and arrest records. He has only posted one comment to the account, which is the comment being investigated.

⁷ Section 7 – Officer Galli Interview

I confirmed with Officer Galli that he knows an individual named Michael Sweatt. He said when he worked as an officer in the downtown unit within the last couple of years, he investigated several criminal incidents involving Mr. Sweatt. During one incident, Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a subject downtown. The victim ended up not wanting to cooperate with the criminal process. During a second incident, Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a female on the railroad tracks. This victim also ended up not wanting to cooperate with the criminal process.

Officer Galli said he became frustrated with the justice system and the lack of accountability for Mr. Sweatt's criminal actions. He said Mr. Sweatt was never held accountable for his felony robberies and that struck a nerve with him and made him frustrated with the system.

Officer Galli said he and Mr. Sweatt never had problems with each other. During all of his contacts with Mr. Sweatt, he never tried to run from Officer Galli, nor did he (Mr. Sweatt) ever try to batter him during the performance of his duties. The last time he had contact with Mr. Sweatt was about a year ago.

I told Officer Galli that I wanted to talk about the post he made about Mr. Sweatt on Facebook account "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real".

Officer Galli said back in November 2018, he was injured and placed on light duty status. On January 23, 2019, he had a [REDACTED] with the recovery process. He said the [REDACTED] put him in a very "negative state of mind". He said he eventually stopped [REDACTED] because it affected him negatively to the point his family didn't want to be around him anymore, because he was so irritable and hostile.

While Officer Galli was at home recovering from his [REDACTED] he read an article in the "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real". The article was about "Ross Camp" and featured an interview of Mr. Sweatt where he was acting as spokesman for the encampment. In the article, Mr. Sweatt referred to some of the people in the camp as "criminals" and "bad apples".

Officer Galli said the article elevated his level of frustration with Mr. Sweatt, because he was a known criminal, yet he was calling others in the encampment "bad apples". He said the article "bothered me greatly". He said due to the totality of his situation ([REDACTED] no accountability for Mr. Sweatt's criminal activity, and the article), he decided to post a comment on the article. He said he wanted to "call out Mr. Sweatt" in his post.

Officer Galli stated he posted the following statement, "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt". It should be noted, I showed him a copy of the post from Facebook and he confirmed it was the statement he wrote on the Facebook page.

I asked Officer Galli what he meant by the comment, specifically the term "dindunuffin". He stated at the time he wrote the comment, his understanding of the comment was a term used to describe any person, regardless of race or gender, who had been caught red handed committing a crime and then refuse to take responsibility for their actions. He compared the term to when a police officer finds drugs in a pair of pants and the suspect says the pants don't belong to them. He refers to this saying as the "not my pants" defense.

I asked Officer Galli where he first heard this term. He said he read it somewhere on the internet and believes it might have been on Facebook. When he originally heard the term, it was used in the same context as he used it. Someone had committed a crime, they were caught, however took no responsibility for their actions. He said he has used the term one other time on Facebook, but can't remember when or any of the specifics regarding the post. He said he used the term in the same context as he used it to describe Mr. Sweatt.

I asked Officer Galli if he has since learned the meaning of the term and how it is generally used. He said he researched the term on the internet. He couldn't find a definition in a traditional dictionary, so he looked on websites like "Urban Dictionary" and other websites where people can write and talk about things like this. He discovered the term was specifically related to black people and used as a street slang term to properly say "I didn't do anything". He learned the term was connotative with a racial comment as it makes black people sound unintelligent.

Officer Galli said after he researched the term and found out its true meaning, he was appalled by the meaning and has personally refused to use it ever again. He said "my heart sank" when he found out the true meaning. He said it upset him to the point where he took down his post on "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" and cancelled his Facebook account.

Officer Galli said a friend of the family noticed an article on Indybay that claimed he used a racist term to describe a homeless man. When he noticed the article on Indybay, he notified Sergeant Jones and later spoke with Chief Mills regarding the article.

Officer Galli believes he is very professional as a police officer. He has never been accused of making any racially motivated comments during work or in his personal life. He has never been accused of racial profiling, making racial remarks, or singling out any specific race for any reason.

Officer Galli had a lot going on in his life at the time he posted the comment and believes those were contributing factors for this post. He said he takes full responsibility for his actions and doesn't want to make any excuses for his actions. He understands his comments relate to a sensitive issue nationwide and that some members of the public may think he is a racist police officer. He said if people knew him, the product of work he delivers and how he helps this community, they would see that he is not a racist whatsoever.

Officer Galli understands he broke the public's trust and the comment damaged the department's reputation. He is truly sorry about what happened and admits he made a big mistake. He never would knowingly make a comment like that had he known the true meaning.

Officer Galli had no further information.

Refer to the audio recording of the interview for further specific information⁸.

⁸ Exhibit A – Digital Case File

Comment Meaning:

The term "dindunuffin" or "Dindu Nuffin" is not located in any type of official dictionary. In order to find the true meaning of the term, I had to use internet websites "Urbandictionary.com" and "Reddit.com".

Urban Dictionary is a crowdsourced online dictionary for slang words and phrases. Originally, Urban Dictionary was intended as a dictionary of slang, or cultural words or phrases, not typically found in standard dictionaries, but it is now used to define any word, event or phrase. Words or phrases on Urban Dictionary may have multiple definitions, usage examples, and tags.

Reddit is an American social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website. Registered members submit content to the site such as links, text posts, and images, which are then discussed by other members.

According to Urban Dictionary, "dindunuffin" has the following meaning:

Dindu Nuffin is a pejorative term used to mock and criticize black people that commit crimes and the excuses that's made for them. The phrase "dindu nuffin" is derived from a bastardization of the phrase "didn't do nothing", a plea for innocence often used in reference to unarmed black men killed by police. The term originated from the numerous riots throughout 2014 and 2015. Detractors often use "dindu nuffins" to refer to sympathizers of the black community. Largely in part because they themselves lack proper mastery of the English language.

I located a posting on Reddit called: Is saying "dindu nuffin" racist? The following are posts from that conversation.

- I was given a temporary ban for saying this. The reason was saying something racist.

- It's a memetic quote that's supposed to emulate Black American dialects. It's like how "me so horny" or "ching chong" have become quotes that either poorly emulate Asian languages or mock their cultures. So yes, it probably is racist.

- It's also tends to be used in a way that implies that black people who get shot by the cops deserved it because they were criminals, which is pretty racist.

- On the surface level, it's mocking a black speaker's dialect & making them seem unintelligent. Looking slightly deeper, it's suggesting that they all lie to the cops and they're all actually guilty criminals. Specifically, this line's trotted out after a young black man is shot by the cops & his grief-ridden mother is saying "he was a good boy and didn't do anything wrong" and making a mockery of the whole situation. Yes - it's very fucking racist.

- It also became popular because of Michael Brown, a man who assaulted and robbed a store clerk and then tried to take an officer's gun and was shot for doing so. And on top of all of that people tried to claim he was innocent.

- It's a phrase used after the 2014 Ferguson police brutality protests to mock African-American people who deny committing crimes.

During my investigation, I've learned the term "dindunuffin" originated around 2014 and 2015, around the times of the riots around the country regarding young black males being shot by white police officers (Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Trayvon Martin).

I've learned it's a term used to mock black people who commit crimes and use the excuse "I didn't do anything wrong".

It's also used to mock a black person's dialect and making them sound unintelligent.

CONCLUSION:

This investigation focused on the allegation that Officer Galli made an inappropriate racial comment regarding a black male in a social media post. During the course of my investigations, I found that Officer Galli posted an insensitive racial comment on Facebook. According to Officer Galli, he didn't know what the term "dindunuffin" meant until he later researched it and found it had a racial undertone. Had he known what the term meant beforehand, Officer Galli would not have posted the comment.

Although Officer Galli didn't know the true meaning of the term before he made the post, his comment was inappropriate and adversely reflected upon the department.

I recommend the following findings:

SUSTAINED: On the allegation that Officer Galli posted an inappropriate racial comment on Facebook, which adversely reflected upon the department. A members conduct either on or off-duty, which could adversely reflect upon the department, will be deemed to be conduct unbecoming.

SUSTAINED: On the allegation that Officer Galli's inappropriate racial comments violated Canon of Ethics Standard 4.4 (Peace Officers shall maintain a level of conduct in their personal and business affairs in keeping with the high standards of the peace officers profession. Officers shall not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude) and Standard 4.9 (Peace Officers shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner which does not discredit the peace officer profession or their employing agency).

I forwarded this case to Deputy Chief Martinez for review on April 16, 2019.



MEMORANDUM POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: 01/28/2019
TO: Sergeant Morey #109
FROM: Sergeant Jones #106
SUBJECT: Social Media Post

On Sunday afternoon January 27th, 2019 at approximately 16:22 hours, Officer Galli #136 contacted me (off duty) via text message, asking if I was clear a phone call. I replied, and mentioned that I was, and he called me a few minutes later. I spoke to Officer Galli for approximately five minutes as he explained to me that he had made a social media post on Facebook that a screen shot had been taken of and was now cross posted on “Indybay.”

I asked him what the content of the post was, and he mentioned that it was in reference to a news article about the homeless camp and specifically Michael Sweatt. He explained what he posted, and as we concluded our conversation, he asked if he should send me the link to the article on Indybay. I asked him to send me the link to the article which is outlined as follows:

<https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2019/01/24/18820683.php>



**Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli
Uses Racist Term to Describe
Homeless Man : Indybay**
indybay.org

I then contacted Sergeant Morey via phone, and explained to him that I had just received a phone call from Officer Galli, and outlined the circumstances of the call. I was scheduled to be at work the following day, so after a brief conversation, I told Sergeant Morey that I would come see him in person the following morning, since we were both on our days off.

We will investigate it and render a finding as per policy. I take any accusation of a racial slur as serious.

Andy.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 24, 2019, at 3:30 PM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hello,

Please see that this does not happen again. Three days after the SCPD/MLK march, SCPD officer Chris Galli is making this racist comment online here:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2302165693353721&id=2162553480648277&comment_id=2302185103351780&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D

I archived the racist comment here:

Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli Uses Racist Term to Describe Homeless Man
<https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2019/01/24/18820683.php>

Thank you.



MEMORANDUM
POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: March 11, 2019
TO: Officer Christopher Galli
FROM: Sergeant W. Morey
SUBJECT: Complaint Notification

This is to inform you that an Internal Affairs Investigation has been initiated, and you have been named as a Subject in the investigation. The investigation is assigned Professional Standards investigation number: 2019-005

Reference Professional Standards Unit case #: 2019-005
Initiation Date: January 24, 2019
The complaint alleges: Standards of Conduct

You are required to personally contact me within 5 days to acknowledge receipt of this notice and schedule an appointment for an interview. You are hereby ordered not to discuss this incident with any person, other than your chosen representative.

If you have any questions or concerns about this direct order, please contact me.

Andrew G. Mills, Chief of Police
Santa Cruz Police Department
(831) 420-5810

Sergeant Wes Morey
Professional Standards Unit



SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICE DEPARTMENT
"Your Police, Our Community"

ADMINISTRATIVE RIGHTS - SWORN SUBJECTS

I am Sergeant Wes Morey of the Professional Standards Unit. You are about to be questioned as part of an official Santa Cruz Police Department administrative investigation. The investigation concerns an allegation of:

Standards of Conduct

If this were a criminal investigation, any statements you made could be used against you in a court of law. Since this is an administrative investigation, neither your statements nor any information or evidence, which is gained by such statements, can be used against you in any subsequent criminal proceeding. However, these statements may be used against you in subsequent administrative actions.

You are being ordered to answer questions specifically related to the performance of your official duties and/or your conduct as related to your employment with the department. I am now giving you an order to answer the questions truthfully and completely as asked.

You have the right to remain silent; and you have the right to presence and assistance of counsel. You are hereby notified, that although you have the right to remain silent, failure to answer questions directly related to this administrative investigation may result in your discharge or other punitive action.

You have the right to a representative of your choice, who is not involved in this investigation, present with you during your interview. You may tape record this interview if you wish.

You are advised that your rights are fully outlined in the Public Safety Officer's Bill of Rights Act, Government Code Sections 3300 to 3311.

The above admonition has been explained to me and I understand its contents.

Date: Thursday, March 21, 2019 File Number: 2019-005

Subject: CHRIS GALLI
Officer Christopher Galli

Witness: Wes Morey
Sergeant Wes Morey



MEMORANDUM POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: March 23, 2019

TO: File

FROM: Sergeant Wes Morey

SUBJECT: Officer Christopher Galli Interview
Internal Affairs Case # 2019-005

On March 23, 2019, I conducted an interview with Officer Christopher Galli in association with Internal Affairs investigation 2019-005. The interview was conducted in person at the Santa Cruz Police Department. Officer Galli was interviewed as a subject officer in this investigation.

Before starting the interview, I confirmed that Officer Galli was aware that he was a subject in this investigation. I advised him that the interview would be recorded. Present at this interview was Officer Galli and myself. Officer Galli chose not to bring a representative to the interview. I advised him of his Administrative Rights as a subject by reading them verbatim from the Administrative Rights Civilian ~ Subjects Form. He acknowledged that he understood his Administrative Rights and signed the form.

Officer Galli has been a Police Officer with the City of Santa Cruz for five years. Before working at the SCPD, he was employed by the CA State Parks as a Peace Officer for a couple of years. He is currently on light duty assigned to Operations.

I confirmed with Officer Galli that he had a personal Facebook account with the screen name of "Chris Meriekuh". This Facebook account also had a profile picture of him, his wife, and their child. He said he has since deleted his Facebook account due to this incident. I asked him how often he would browse on Facebook and/or make posts. He said he would frequently browse on Facebook and would post things about once a week.

I confirmed with Officer Galli that he followed a Facebook account named, "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real". Hi said this account posts stories about crime in Santa Cruz, the court process, and arrest records. He has only posted one comment to the account, which is the comment being investigated.

I confirmed with Officer Galli that he knows an individual named Michael Sweatt. He said when he worked as an officer in the downtown unit within the last couple of years, he investigated several criminal incidents involving Mr. Sweatt. During one incident, Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a subject downtown. The victim ended up not wanting to cooperate with the criminal process. During a second incident, Mr. Sweatt battered and robbed a female on the railroad tracks. This victim also ended up not wanting to cooperate with the criminal process.

Officer Galli said he became frustrated with the justice system and the lack of accountability for Mr. Sweatt's criminal actions. He said Mr. Sweatt was never held accountable for his felony robberies and that struck a nerve with him and made him frustrated with the system.

Officer Galli said he and Mr. Sweatt never had problems with each other. During all of his contacts with Mr. Sweatt, he never tried to run from Officer Galli, nor did he ever try to batter him during the performance of his duties. The last time he had contact with Mr. Sweatt was about a year ago.

I told Officer Galli that I wanted to talk about the post he made about Mr. Sweatt on Facebook account "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real".

Officer Galli said back in November 2018, he was injured and placed on light duty status. On January 23, 2019, he had a [REDACTED] with the recovery process. He said the [REDACTED] put him in a very "negative state of mind". He said he eventually stopped taking the [REDACTED] because it affected him negatively to the point his family didn't want to be around him anymore, because he was so irritable and hostile.

While Officer Galli was at home recovering [REDACTED] he read an article in the "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real". The article was about

"Ross Camp" and featured an interview of Mr. Sweatt where he was acting as spokesman for the encampment. In the article, Mr. Sweatt referred to some of the people in the camp as "criminals" and "bad apples".

Officer Galli said the article elevated his level of frustration with Mr. Sweatt, because he was a known criminal, yet he was calling others in the encampment "bad apples". He said the article "bothered me greatly". He said due to the totality of his situation (injury, medication, no accountability for Mr. Sweatt's criminal activity, and the article), he decided to post a comment on the article. He said he wanted to "call out Mr. Sweatt" in his post.

Officer Galli stated he posted the following statement, "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt". It should be noted, I showed him a copy of the post from Facebook and he confirmed it was the statement he wrote on the Facebook page.

I asked Officer Galli what he meant by the comment, specifically the term "dindunuffin". He stated at the time he wrote the comment, his understanding of the comment was a term used to describe any person, regardless of race or gender, who had been caught red handed committing a crime and then refuse to take responsibility for their actions. He compared the term to when a police officer finds drugs in a pair of pants and the suspect says the pants don't belong to them. He refers to this saying as the "not my pants" defense.

I asked Officer Galli where he first heard this term. He said he read it somewhere on the internet and believes it might have been on Facebook. When he originally heard the term, it was used in the same context as he used it. Someone had committed a crime, they were caught, however took no responsibility for their actions. He said he has used the term one other time on Facebook, but can't remember when. He said he used the term in the same context as he used it to describe Mr. Sweatt.

I asked Officer Galli if he has since learned the meaning of the term and how it is generally used. He said he researched the term on the internet. He couldn't find a definition in a traditional dictionary, so he looked on websites like "Urban Dictionary" and other websites where people can write and talk about things like this. He discovered the term was specifically related to black people and used as a street slang term to properly say "I didn't do anything". He learned the term was connotative with a racial comment as it makes black people sound unintelligent.

Officer Galli said after he researched the term and found out its true meaning, he was appalled by the meaning and has personally refused to use it ever again. He said "my heart sank" when he found out the true meaning. He said it upset him to the point where he took down his post on "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" and cancelled his Facebook account.

Officer Galli said a friend of the family noticed an article on Indybay that claimed he used a racist term to describe a homeless man. When he noticed the article on Indybay, he notified Sergeant Jones and later spoke with Chief Mills regarding the article.

Officer Galli believes he is very professional as a police officer. He has never been accused of making any racially motivated comments during work or in his personal life. He has never been accused of racial profiling, making racial remarks, or singling out any specific race for any reason.

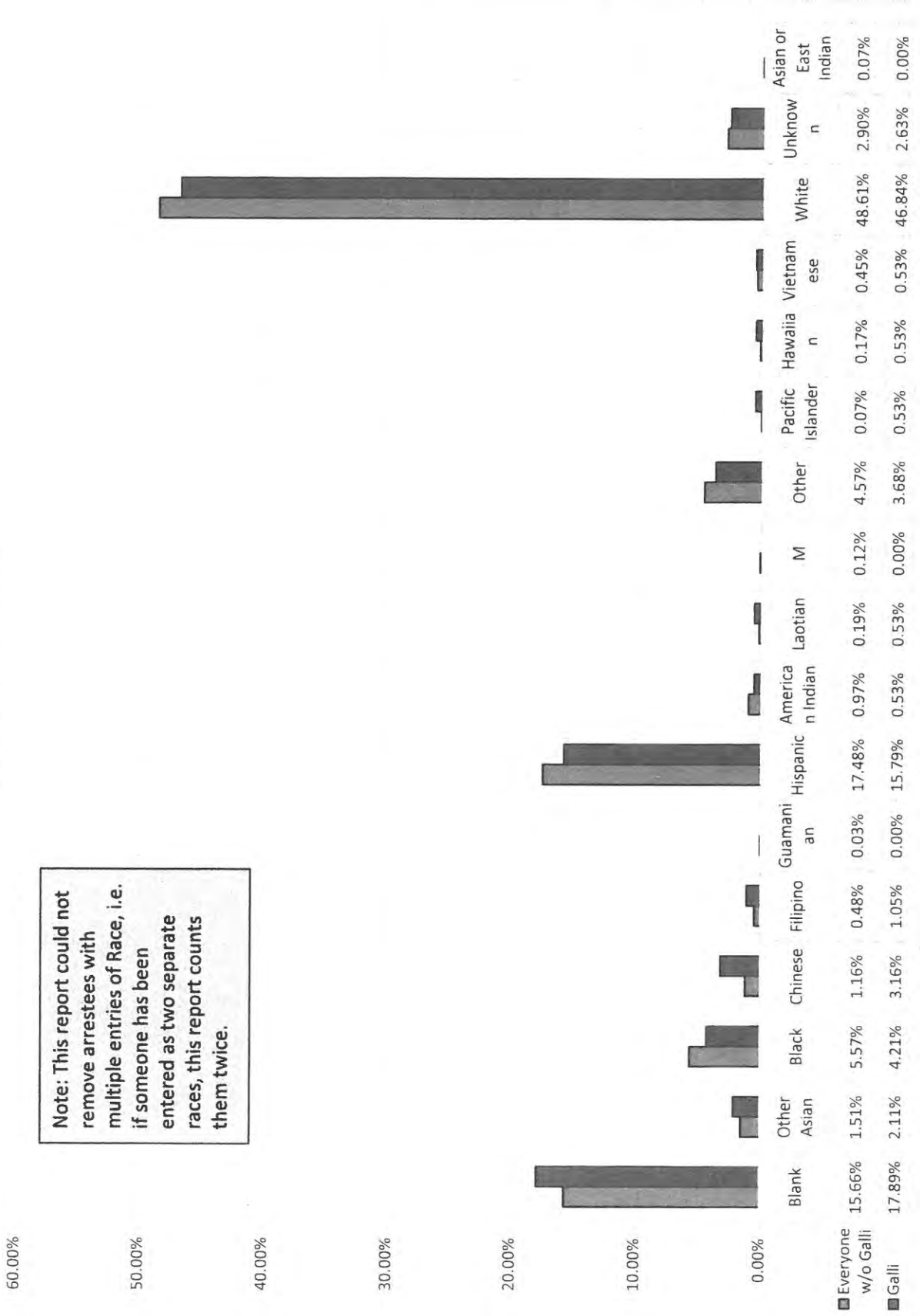
Officer Galli had a lot going on in his life at the time he posted the comment and believes those were contributing factors for this post. He said he takes full responsibility for his actions and doesn't want to make any excuses for his actions. He understands his comments relate to a sensitive issue nationwide and that some members of the public may think he is a racist police officer. He said if people knew him and the product of work he delivers and how he helps this community, they would see that he is not a racist whatsoever.

Officer Galli understands he broke the public's trust and the comment damaged the department's reputation as an agency. He is truly sorry about what happened and admits he made a big mistake. He never would knowingly make a comment like that had he known the true meaning.

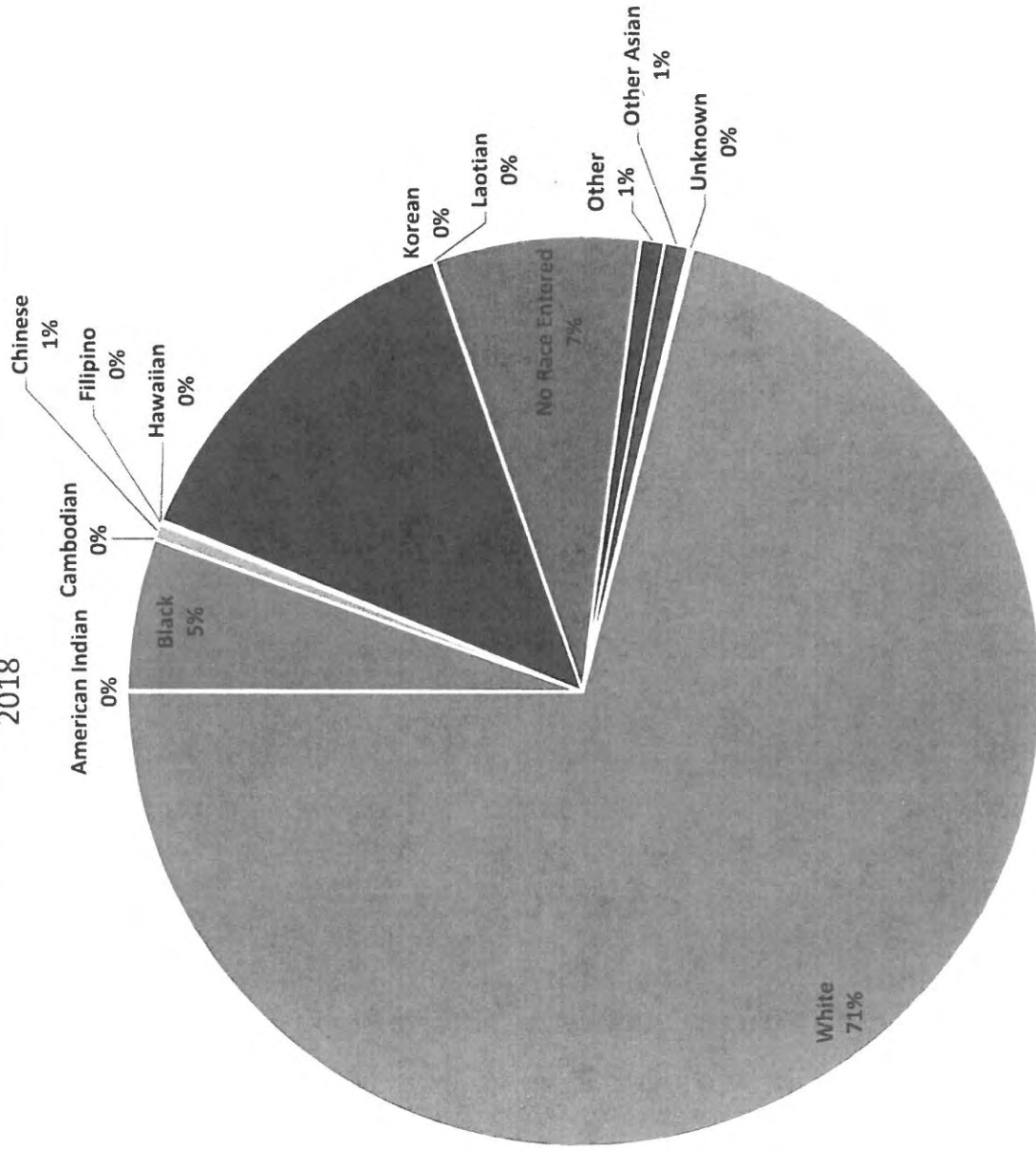
Officer Galli had no further information.

Refer to the audio recording of the interview for further specific information.

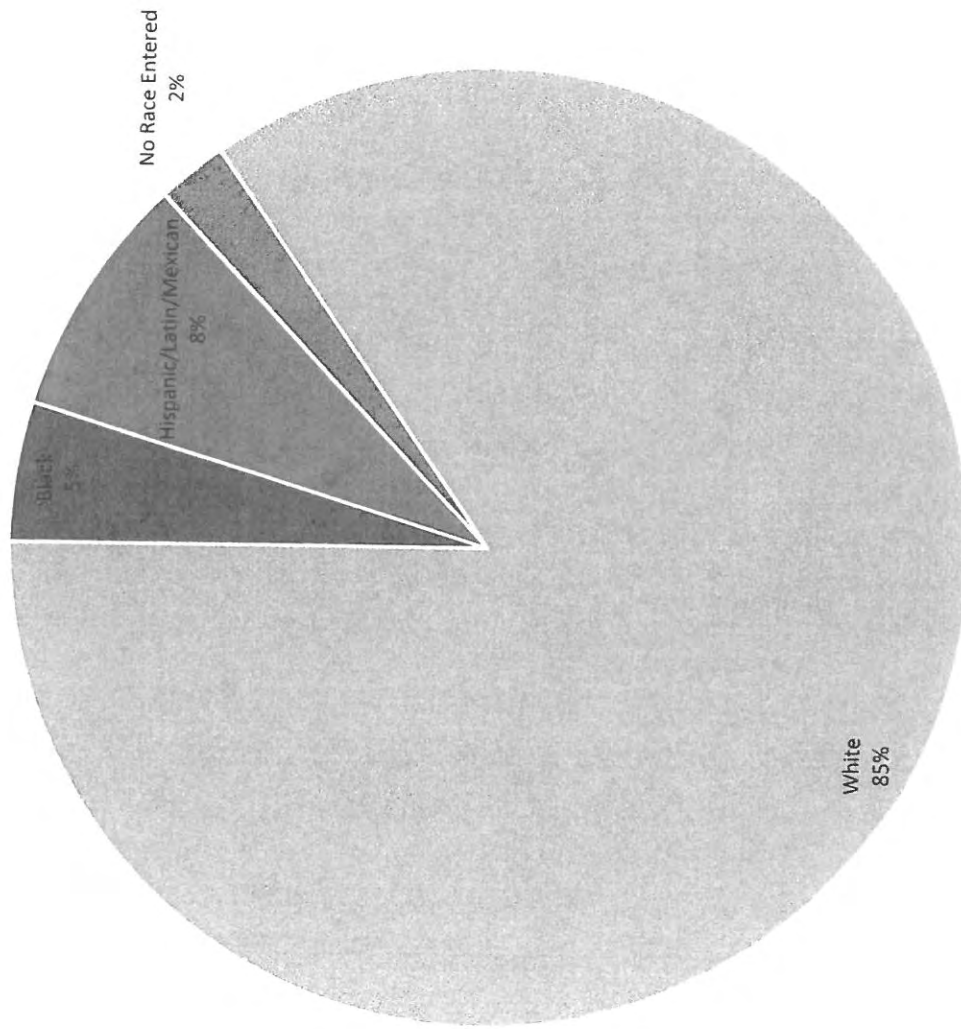
2018 Arrests by Race



All PD Officers Citations by Race
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Officer Galli Citations by Race
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Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real
January 24 · 🌐

The DA's Darling: Meet Michael Sweatt

I woke up this morning to see an article in the news. KION reporter did a piece on the Ross Camp. She interviewed besieged business owners in the Gateway Plaza, and a person named Michael Sweatt, a resident (and spokesperson) for the illegal campers.

"One of the people living at the encampment, Michael Sweatt, says he is thankful for what the city has done and hopes there is a long term solution. But says the main thing he wants to see change is how they are perceived (sic), "there's a lot of people that don't care for people here because they associate us with things that happen amongst (sic) us, like overdoses so now this is a drug area. It's a bunch of heroin addicts, there's a few bad apples here and there, but you know you have to deal with that."

Two sides of the story. Two different accounts. I ran a background check on Sweatt. Here's what I got back:

Sweatt, Michael Lewis DOB: 01.19.1965

On September 2, 2017, Sweatt was charged with armed robbery, inflicting great bodily injury in the commission of a felony (the robbery), and grand theft. All felonies. The ADA's in the case (17CR05617), Archie Webber and Pamela Dunlap, dismissed the robbery charge (Motion of the People) resulting in the GBI charge being erased as well. Sweatt entered a plea of "No Contest" to the grand theft charge and was sentenced by Judge Volkman to 136 days in jail (Sweatt served 68 actual) and 36 months probation. His probation is active with an end date of 11.12.2020.

Approximately 4 months later and under the Formal Supervision of the Probation Department, Sweatt again faced felony charges. This time for armed robbery, making terrorist threats, and witness intimidation (18CR01684). All felonies. ADA "Archie" caught the case (because he did such a great job the last time), and in the true spirit of the Santa Cruz District Attorney's Office dismissed every charge.

Fast forward to December 11, 2018. The DA's "Darling," Michael Sweatt, was charged with possessing a "replica firearm." Sweatt has entered a plea of "Not Guilty." The case is still active, and the next court appearance is scheduled for today, January 24th. Looks like Dunlap is representing the people this time...

So a convicted criminal is a spokesperson for an illegal camp, purportedly nonviolated by criminals. It worried that people are attaching on violent crimes...

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So a convicted criminal is a spokesperson for an illegal camp, purportedly populated by criminals, is worried that people are attaching an unjust stigma to...criminals?

Do the research.

Big Joe 77

Sources:

KION 5/46: "Business Owners Raise Concerns as Homeless Camp Grows" (A. Keehn, 01.23.2019): <https://twitter.com/KION546/status/1088315461350162432>

Santa Cruz County Superior Court "Smart Search" <https://portal.santacruzcourt.org/Portal/Home/WorkspaceMode...>



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Santa Cruz Police Officer Chris Galli Uses Racist Term to Describe Homeless Man

by Peter Green

Thursday Jan 24th, 2019 2:20 PM

Officer Chris Galli of the Santa Cruz Police Department used a racist term today on social media to describe his experience with a local homeless man. Posting as "Chris Meriekuh" in the Facebook comments section of a local hate blog, Officer Galli referred to a homeless man as a "dindunuffin", a common racist term used by law enforcement officers to describe arrestees of color who claim to be innocent. The comment was directed at Michael Sweatt, a homeless man of color who was recently interviewed by KION 5/46 for a news article on the Gateway Plaza homeless encampment in Santa Cruz.



Chris Meriekuh Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt.

Like · Reply · 6h



3



Cee Cee Seems like the above is just a small sample of the things he had no part in....i recall leaping over a 8 foot wall and running like a gazelle

Like · Reply · 2h



Chris Meriekuh Cee Cee yep I had two 211 cases with him back to back in a year. Unfortunately my victims went MIA

Like · Reply · 2h

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[original_image \(827x476\)](#)

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Following the publication of the KION article, individuals looked into Sweatt's background and publicized a mugshot of his that was available online. One hate blogger who posts anonymously as "Big Joe" on the Facebook page "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" was among those who

In the KION article, Michael Sweatt said he was thankful for what the city had done to facilitate the Gateway Plaza homeless camp. Sweatt was quoted by KION as saying: "There's a lot of people that don't care for people here because they associate us with things that happen amongst us, like overdoses so now this is a drug area. It's a bunch of heroin addicts, there's a few bad apples here and there, but you know you have to deal with that."

Following the publication of the KION article, individuals looked into Sweatt's background and publicized a mugshot of his that was available online. One hate blogger who posts anonymously as "Big Joe" on the Facebook page "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" was among those who posted about Sweatt. "Big Joe" is a "public safety" advocate who posts one sided accounts of court cases. He also describes himself as a member of the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury during the time the needle exchange was investigated.

On the Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real blog post about Sweatt, Officer Galli commented: "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt." (see above photo)

An unidentified individual named "Cee Cee", who may also be a law enforcement officer, responded to Officer's Galli's racist remark by saying: "Seems like the above is just a small sample of the things he had no part in.....i recall leaping over a 8 foot wall and running like a gazelle."

Officer Galli's next reply included bold, unsubstantiated claims about Sweatt's criminal history: "I had two 211 cases with him back to back in a year. Unfortunately my victims went MIA."

Officer Galli was sworn into the Santa Cruz Police Department in March of 2014. Chis Galli comes from a family with law enforcement history. His father, John Galli worked for the Santa Cruz Police Department until 1989. The elder Galli eventually opened a uniform supply business "Galli Gear" where Chris Galli worked as an aspiring police officer.

At the time of publication of this article, Officer Galli's racist comment still had not been removed from the Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real blog.

If anyone can identify who "Cee Cee" is, please do so here in the comments section of this article.

Information about the process of filing complaints with the Santa Cruz Police Department about Officer Chirs Galli's racist comment can be found at the following link.

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<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/police/how-do-i-obtain-a-citizen-comment-form>

The Independent Police Auditor, Robert H. Aaronson, can be contacted directly at 650-565-8800 with complaints. More info here: <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/police/community-policing/independent-police-auditor>

KION source material:

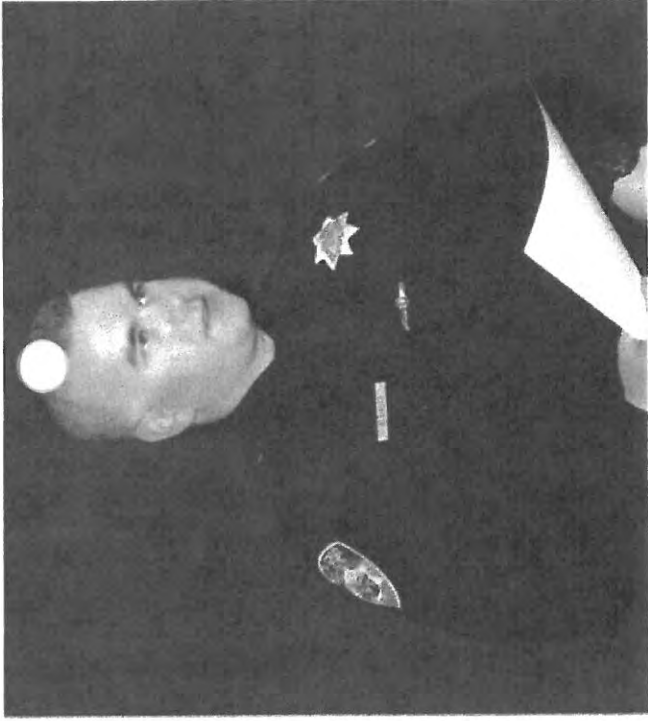
<https://www.kion546.com/news/business-owners-raise-concerns-as-santa-cruz-homeless-encampment-grows/987409008>

Officer Chris Galli

by Peter Green *Thursday Jan 24th, 2019 2:20 PM*

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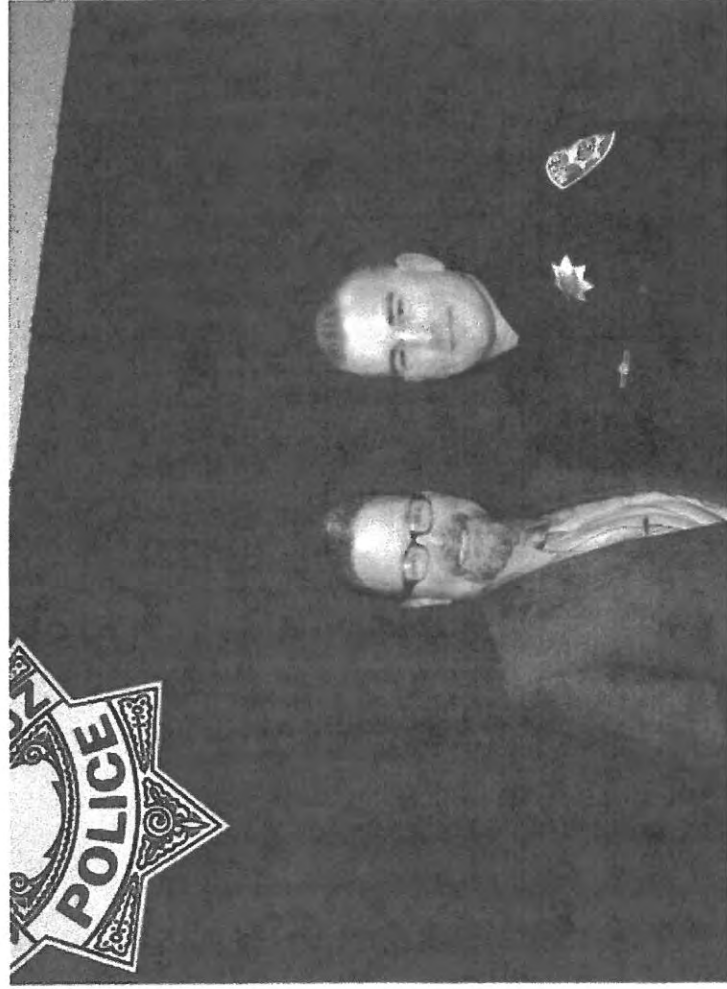


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Chris Galli and his father John

by Peter Green *Thursday Jan 24th, 2019 2:20 PM*

§



Chris Galli and his father John

by Peter Green *Thursday Jan 24th, 2019 2:20 PM*



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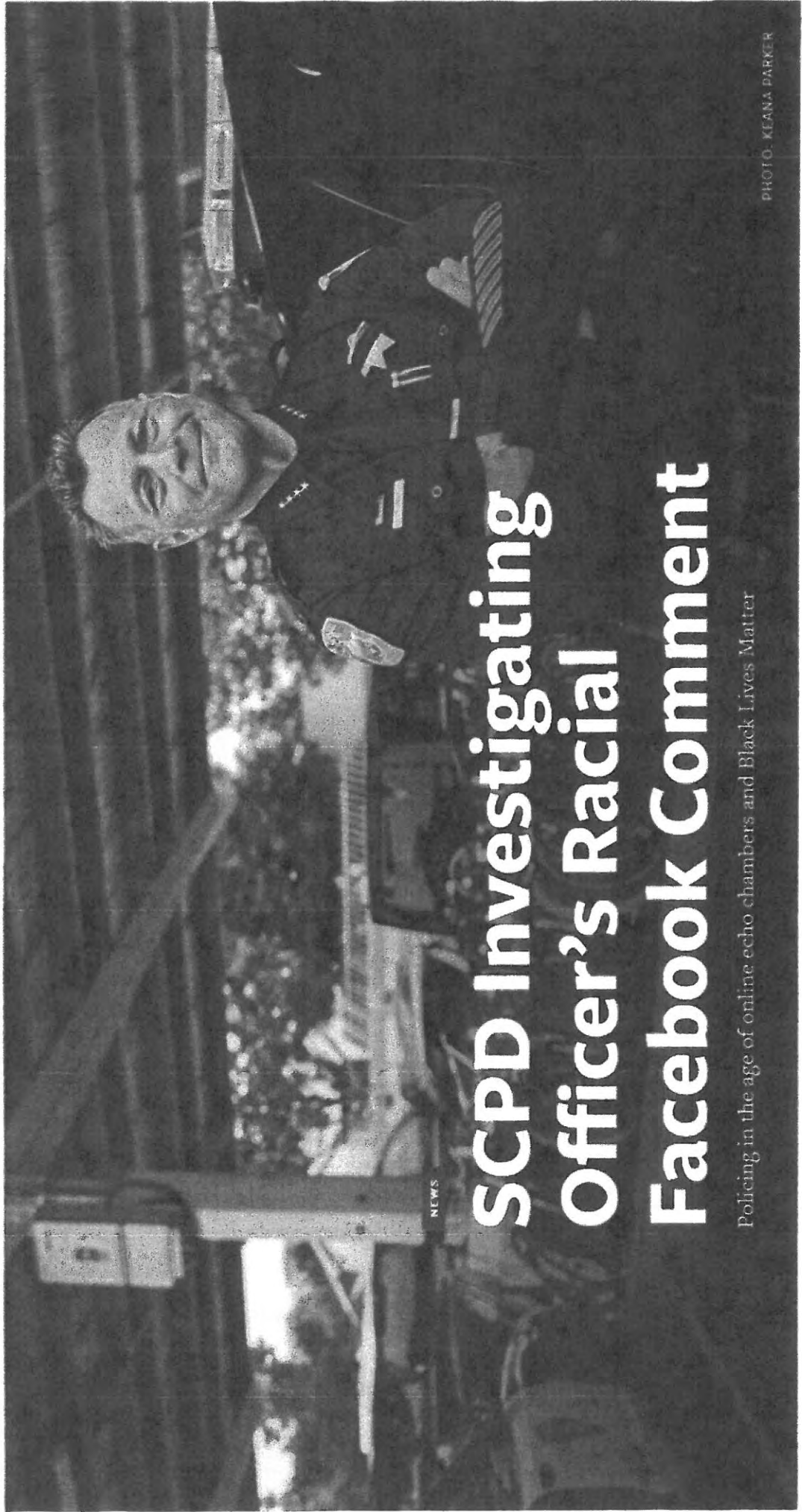
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Speculation	A.K	Sunday Jan 27th, 2019 8:41 PM
PROVE that "dindunuffin" is necessarily racist.	Author	Friday Jan 25th, 2019 7:08 AM
A young Chris Galli and his father John	File Photo	Thursday Jan 24th, 2019 2:23 PM



SCPD Investigating Officer's Racial Facebook Comment

Policing in the age of online echo chambers and Black Lives Matter

PHOTO: KEANA PARKER

SCPD Investigating Officer's Racial Facebook Comment

Policing in the age of online echo chambers and Black Lives Matter

PHOTO: KEANA PARKER

BYLAUREN HEPLER

POSTED ON MARCH 19, 2019

Fresh off Black History Month and the local Martin Luther King Jr. Day march, the Santa Cruz Police Department has opened an investigation into a police officer's racially charged post in a law-and-order-centric Facebook group.

Officer Chris Galli first drew attention for a January post on a conservative Facebook page called "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" when screenshots of his commentary about an African-American resident of the homeless encampment behind the Ross department store were published on left-leaning news site *Indybay*. In the exchange, Galli, posting as "Chris Meriekuh," referred to camp resident and unofficial spokesman Michael Sweatt as, "Good 'ol dindunuffin Mr. Sweatt"—a phrase used on Reddit and elsewhere after the 2014 Ferguson police brutality protests to mock African-American people who deny committing crimes.

"Yes, it has been brought to my attention, and we have initiated an Internal Affairs investigation into the matter," Santa Cruz Police Chief Andrew Mills tells *GT*. "I can't comment on the personnel investigation, but I can tell you that we take all those matters seriously."

The investigation comes as local online political groups, a microcosm of a chaotic national political environment, continue to splinter into increasingly insular corners of the Internet. If and how local law enforcement or other employers will respond to the polarizing rhetoric is the question now confronting Mills and his department.

The "Santa Cruz, CA: Keepin' It Real" Facebook page is billed as "a humble attempt to make sense of the chaos that is daily life in the city of Santa Cruz." It consists mostly of detailed crime and court reports compiled by moderator "Big Joe 77," plus *Law & Order*-inspired slideshows of mugshots and often-vitriolic comments about people accused of crimes. City spending on homeless services is a frequent target of posters who call Santa Cruz and its elected officials a "shitshow," and sometimes bestow a "Jackass of the Day" award.

Mills says the police department doesn't regularly track online posting habits of police personnel on 'Keepin' It Real' or other pages. If remarks are brought to the department's attention, as was the case with Galli, the department will investigate. "We don't actively monitor social media," Mills says. "There's just so much of it. I don't really have the staff or the ability to do that."

The Santa Cruz Police Officers' Association did not respond to a request for comment about whether officers' online personas should be grounds for departmental action.

PERSONAL VS. POLITICAL

The issue of political expression among local law enforcement could be muddled by the fact that Mills himself faced criticism for uneven enforcement of department rules in his previous role as Eureka police chief. As Humboldt County media [reported](#) in 2017, Mills took issue with a Humboldt Bay firefighter wearing a “Black Lives Matter” pin on his uniform, though Mills was captured in a photo wearing a “Police Lives Matter” bracelet while on duty.

“What happened is that the city’s policy is that you cannot wear pins of any kind without prior approval from the chief of that department,” says Mills, who adds that he has also told multiple officers that they may not wear pro-Second Amendment pins or other insignias on the job. “You have to set a standard, or it gets out of control.”

As for what made his “Police Lives Matter” bracelet an exception, Mills says he was showing personal support for officers killed in a 2016 Texas [ambush](#). And the bracelet, he adds, was not physically on his uniform.

“That is not a violation of the policy because it’s not on my uniform,” Mills says. “It was more of an issue of showing support for our officers.”

Since taking the job as Santa Cruz’s top cop in the summer of 2017, Mills has staked out a conciliatory position. In addition to championing the annual MLK Day march with the local NAACP, Mills has used his personal blog to draw attention to alleged hate crimes and civil rights milestones. In a post earlier this year titled “[Words Matter](#),” Mills wrote that, “How we speak to one another matters greatly. People on the fringe use extreme words as justification for wrong behavior.”

Last year, after visiting a Resource Center for Nonviolence exhibition on “Black Lives in Santa Cruz: What Matters,” Mills [told GT](#) that, “We need to look at what we are doing that eliminates people of color” in public hiring.

“Me, as a white male in my 60s in government, I cannot understand what it’s like for a young African-American guy to be stopped multiple times,” Mills says. “And I don’t think that those who are not in law enforcement can truly understand what it’s like to walk up to a car when you have no idea who’s in the car at 3:00 in the morning. My goal is to bring connection and unity.”

Though he doesn’t expect questions about political expression to go away, Mills says it will take addressing underlying tension and improving a range of social and economic systems to really move the needle.

“It’s a broad topic that’s not just fixed by policing,” Mills says. “I mean, the whole system has to be changed.”

[LAUREN HEPLER](#)

Digital Editor at [Good Times](#) | [Blog](#)