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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF ORANGE (CENTRAL JUSTICE CENTER)

ROSS BYER,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff(s),	)	
	)	
vs.	)	Case No.
	)	30-2024-01394359-CU-OE-CJC
	)	
CITY OF LA PALMA, a public	)	
entity; and DOES 1 through	)	
100, inclusive,	)	
	)	
Defendant(s).	)	
_____	)	

REMOTE VIDEORECORDED DEPOSITION OF RONALD LOPINO
Monday, August 11, 2025

REPORTED BY: Dayna Michelle Glaysher
CSR No. 13079; RPR, CRR No. 28081

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF ORANGE (CENTRAL JUSTICE CENTER)

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Case No.
30-2024-01394359-CU-OE-CJC

Remote videorecorded deposition of RONALD LOPINO,
taken before Dayna Michelle Glaysher, a Certified
Shorthand Reporter for the State of California, with
principal office in the County of Los Angeles,
commencing at 2:00 PM, Monday, August 11, 2025.

1 years now.

2 Q. Okay. And before that did you have any other
3 employment in law enforcement?

4 A. Yes, sir. I worked in part-time capacities for
02:09:38 5 several years prior to joining the police academy. And
6 then I volunteered as a Police Explorer as a teenager.
7 So I have about five years prior to being a sworn police
8 officer in law enforcement. So about let's say 15 years
9 of total law enforcement experience.

02:09:53 10 Q. Gotcha. Okay. And what was your first position
11 as a sworn officer?

12 A. With the City of La Palma's Police Department.

13 Q. Okay. So that was the -- that was your first
14 sworn officer position.

02:10:08 15 And was your second this one you currently have
16 at the OC Sheriff?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And can you give me -- and again, an
19 estimate is fine here -- can you give me an estimate of
02:10:21 20 the years that you worked for La Palma?

21 A. About 2015 to 2024. So about nine years.

22 Q. And were you full-time that entire time or was
23 there periods where you were part-time?

24 A. Full-time, sir.

02:10:34 25 Q. Okay. And it was full-time throughout the entire

1 time that you worked for La Palma?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And in the time that you were at La Palma
4 were you always in the same position?

02:10:51 5 A. The same position of police officer, yes, but
6 I've had other collateral assignments.

7 Q. Okay. What other collateral assignments?

8 A. Different ones, from armor, range positions.
9 Semi most notable ones were field training officer,
02:11:09 10 corporal.

11 Q. Okay. And is there -- is there a difference
12 between -- at La Palma between a police officer and a
13 patrol officer or are they one and the same?

14 A. They're one and the same.

02:11:18 15 Q. And why did you -- well, why did you leave the
16 La Palma Police Department?

17 A. There was a plethora of reasons. One of the
18 biggest ones is the Orange County Sheriff's Department
19 just has lot more opportunity. But there was a lot of
02:11:41 20 things that led me up to looking into the Orange County
21 Sheriff's Department unfortunately working at the
22 City of La Palma.

23 Q. Okay. And we might -- you know, if we get into
24 that naturally, we can. If not, I might ask you at the
02:11:54 25 end. I don't -- I just don't want to jump ahead. So

1 let me see here. Okay.

2 Did you while you were employed at La Palma work
3 with Ross Byer?

4 A. Yes.

02:12:14

5 Q. Okay. And do you know or can you recall during
6 what approximately period of time that you worked with
7 Ross Byer at La Palma?

8 A. I believe somewhere around the year 2023.

02:12:36

9 Q. And were you involved at all in Officer Byer's
10 police training at La Palma?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. And how were you involved?

13 A. I was his phase three and his final phase
14 instructor, field training officer.

02:12:46

15 Q. And what is -- could you just explain briefly
16 what phase three is, and then separately what the ghost
17 phase is?

02:12:57

18 A. Yes, sir. So there's essentially four phases of
19 training for a police officer. There's a phase one,
20 which is your introductory phase. Your second phase,
21 which is a little more complex, you're doing a little
22 bit more. Third phase is you're almost done with your
23 training. You might be getting polished a little bit by
24 your field training officer.

02:13:11

25 And then your fourth and final phase is what's

1 called a ghost phase, meaning your instructor or your
2 field training officer is essentially just riding along
3 pretending like they're not there, seeing if you can do
4 the job on your own if you were not in the call with
02:13:23 5 them.

6 Q. Gotcha. Okay. And during the -- during the
7 phase -- the third phase, is -- at that point is the
8 trainee driving the police vehicle --

9 A. Yes.

02:13:37 10 Q. And then the trainer is in the passenger's seat?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And you said you were his --
13 Officer Byer's trainer for the third phase and the
14 ghost phase?

02:13:48 15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Have you done -- have you trained other
17 officers at La Palma before Ross?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. How many roughly, if you had to estimate, you
02:13:58 20 think you've trained?

21 A. Roughly ten in the about seven years that I was a
22 field training officer there, ten, maybe even more, but
23 approximately ten.

24 Q. Were there other officers that did training?

02:14:12 25 A. Sorry, one more time. It broke up.

1 Q. Was there other -- any other police officers at
2 La Palma that also did new hire training besides
3 yourself?

4 A. Yes, sir.

02:14:23 5 Q. Who else did it?

6 A. There's different FTOs throughout the years. But
7 Officer Braasch contributed heavily as a field training
8 officer. Officer Genera, Officer Brad Stene and then
9 Officer Choi. But he might've been training after
02:14:40 10 Ross Byer. But those are the main FTOs during my time.

11 Q. Okay. And based on your experience working with
12 Ross, how did he perform in his training in the -- in
13 the third phase, in the ghost phase with you?

14 A. He performed well. He performed satisfactorily,
02:14:59 15 as reflected in his daily observation reports. There
16 was nothing noteworthy, negatively that I felt would
17 hinder him from becoming a solo police officer.

18 Q. Okay. And actually, partly leads nicely into
19 what I'm going to show you next.

02:15:14 20 Are you on a computer where you're able to see --
21 are you on a phone?

22 A. I'm on a computer.

23 Q. Okay. Cool. So I'm going to send -- I'm going
24 to publish this exhibit. It's Exhibit 22.

02:15:26 25 (Exhibit 22 was marked for identification.)

1 And if you could just look at it once you're able
2 to see it on the screen. You should be able to see it I
3 believe now.

4 Are you able to see it?

02:15:37

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. One second here. I want to make sure I got the
7 right -- hold on a second. I don't know why this is not
8 occupying the whole screen.

02:16:00

9 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: At the top right corner
10 you'll click the maximize button.

11 BY MR. PETRONELLI:

12 Q. Okay. And I'm going to scroll in on this because
13 I'm -- or zoom in because I'm sure you probably can't
14 see it from there. Let me zoom out a little bit.

02:16:17

15 Are you able to see this document?

16 It's -- for purposes of the deposition, it's
17 Exhibit 22, and it's Bates-stamped City's RRTP 1-0348
18 through 0421. And again, I'll go back up to the top so
19 you can see this. All right. And so this looks like a
20 phase 3 training for POST field training program guide.
21 I'm assuming this is like a form.

02:16:46

22 Do you recognize this document?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And what do you recognize it as?

02:17:01

25 A. It's going to be my daily observation reports

1 that are done on the trainees. And in this case it's
2 for Officer Ross Byer in his third phase of training.

3 Q. Okay. And so is this -- when you would do these
4 would you actually, like, check these boxes off?

02:17:17 5 Did you go through this and -- or did somebody
6 else assist you in it?

7 A. It's going to be the field training officer.
8 This is all their observations of the training.

9 Q. Okay. And in this case it would've been you?

02:17:28 10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. For Ross. Okay. And is that true -- so then
12 when you were doing this -- I'm just scrolling down on
13 this document. And it looks like there's perhaps one of
14 these for every shift.

02:17:41 15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Did you fill one of these out every shift that
17 you were in the phase three training with Officer Byer?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay. And then if you scroll down to -- well,
02:17:54 20 did anybody assist you in preparing this or did you do
21 this completely on your own?

22 A. No -- on your own, sir. You're responsible for
23 completing the daily observation report each day of
24 training for your training.

02:18:07 25 Q. Okay.

1 to, you can read through it.

2 Do you remember if you had any sort of, like,
3 areas of improvement or anything that stands out for
4 Ross at the end of phase three that you can recall, or
02:20:02 5 would you need to review the document?

6 A. No. Pretty standard thing. So most trainees --
7 his report writing could be better. All the pertinent
8 information is there, the details, accurateness is
9 there. It is just structurally, style, things like that
02:20:17 10 he could work on. But that comes with time naturally.

11 Q. Gotcha. And that was in terms of just writing
12 reports up?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. That was the main area that you saw for
02:20:26 15 some potential improvement at the end of the phase three
16 training?

17 A. Yeah, I would say that's his biggest weakness.

18 Q. Okay. And then here again the page before this,
19 is that -- is this your signature here at the bottom of
02:20:36 20 0405?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. And then at the end of this you conclude with I
23 recommend Officer Byer be transitioned to phase four of
24 his training program.

02:20:48 25 Did you write that?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Did anybody assist you in writing this summary?

3 A. No, no, sir.

4 Q. Okay. And then it looks like -- so going down to
02:20:59 5 the very last page of this document, it's a similar sort
6 of summary. And it looks like this is another end of
7 phase report. This one was on August 31st, 2022.

8 And again, is this your signature on the page
9 Bates City's R RTP 1-0420?

02:21:34 10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. And then at the bottom here, this looks to
12 be the summary that you did at the end of his ghost
13 phase.

14 Are those your initials on the bottom of the page
02:21:46 15 Bates 0421?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. And do you remember doing this summary at
18 the end of Ross's ghost training?

19 A. Yes, sir.

02:21:55 20 Q. And again, you -- as you sit here, do you recall
21 anything besides the -- kind of the formatting or
22 details of his report writing that you noted needed --
23 or were areas that he can improve upon?

24 A. That was his biggest weakness. But everything
02:22:15 25 else he was in my opinion completely fine to be on his

1 own.

2 Q. And again, you wrote this yourself, nobody
3 assisted you in writing this?

4 A. Yes, completely myself.

02:22:25 5 Q. Okay. And at the end of this you recommended
6 that he conclude his field training and transition to
7 being a solo patrol officer at that point; is that true?

8 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. Did you have any involvement in training
02:22:46 10 Officer Jay Choi at La Palma?

11 A. I did.

12 Q. Okay. What did you -- what sort of training did
13 you do with Officer Choi?

14 A. He was going through field training like any
02:22:58 15 other officer that comes in new. So I had him at some
16 point in training. I don't know which phase, but --

17 Q. Okay. Do you remember if you did more than one
18 phase of training with him?

19 A. I don't recall. I trained quite a lot of people
02:23:10 20 there throughout the years. So I don't recall
21 specifically.

22 Q. Okay. And based on your experience being
23 involved in training for both Officer Byer and Officer
24 Choi, do you have an opinion about -- do you have an
02:23:35 25 opinion about how Officer Byer and Officer Choi's

1 performance during the training compared?

2 Were they relatively the same?

3 Was one better than the other?

4 A. It's kind of hard to put an exact answer on that.

02:23:50

5 They were similar in a sense of, you know, they're both
6 safe, stuff like that. They both have good things and
7 bad things about them. Be it -- I don't want to call it
8 life experience.

9 But, like, Officer Byer came from a background of
10 working construction. And I think he had a daughter, a
11 wife, stuff like that. So he had a lot more life
12 experience, he was a lot more relatable, a lot more
13 comfortable talking to people. Just came very
14 naturally. Be it suspects, witnesses, stuff like that.

02:24:22

15 Choi, he did come to America kind of later in his
16 life. So he was kind of awkward talking to people, very
17 awkward interactions. But as far as proactivity and
18 stuff, they were both pretty much the same. They are
19 very similar, I would say. One didn't absolutely
20 outshine the other. And they were both signed off to be
21 on their own so...

02:24:40

22 Q. Okay. And in your time at La Palma did you work
23 with Sergeant Won Koh?

24 A. Yes, sir.

02:24:52

25 Q. And during what period of time?

1 Was it certain years that he was on the force
2 when you were on or was it the entire time you were
3 there?

02:25:03

4 A. The entire time. So when I first started he was
5 actually one of my field training officers. And then he
6 got promoted to sergeant a couple years after that. So
7 he ended up being my sergeant for seven of the nine
8 years I was there, I would say.

02:25:25

9 Q. Okay. And at some point in time after Byer
10 finished his new officer training was he assigned to
11 report to Sergeant Koh?

12 A. Yes, sir. He was on one of his shifts.

02:25:44

13 Q. Okay. And after Officer Byer moved to Sergeant
14 Koh's shift, did Sergeant Koh ever come to you and ask
15 you for feedback about Ross's performance, based on the
16 fact that you were his training officer?

17 A. No.

02:26:00

18 Q. And did you guys -- did you and Ross work the
19 same shift reporting to Sergeant Koh, or were you guys
20 on different shifts at that point?

21 A. I believe we were on different shifts at that
22 point. I think I was on the day shift, if I recall
23 correctly. And I believe Ross Byer and Koh were on the
24 night shift.

02:26:11

25 Q. Okay.

1 to you it's a very awkward interaction. But that's what
2 he would do. He would go out there and stop vehicles
3 and essentially order you to do the work on it. And it
4 got deemed a sergeant's special.

02:28:51

5 Q. And is the sergeant's special -- was that a term
6 that was only used in reference to Sergeant Koh or did
7 other sergeants also make sergeant stops?

02:29:15

8 A. There was another sergeant. I think it got
9 coined after him. But there was a sergeant named
10 Luke Carlson that was pretty notorious for doing the
11 same thing. He would go out there and basically find
12 work and order you to come clean it up.

02:29:26

13 But enough employees had complained hey, we're
14 busy with, you know, calls for service, writing reports,
15 getting our own self-initiated activity, investigations.
16 Like, it really bothers us, it annoys us, it puts us
17 back and makes us busy.

02:29:40

18 And he was talked to by administration and it
19 stopped. He completely stopped it. And then Koh would
20 go out there and just do it continuously without ever
21 stopping.

22 Q. Did Sergeant Koh ever assign you sergeant
23 specials?

24 A. Yes.

02:29:48

25 Q. And did you -- during the period of time when you

1 observed Officer Koh assign sergeant specials, based on
2 your observations, did he assign the same amount of
3 sergeant specials to everyone or were there certain
4 officers he would assign work to?

02:30:06

5 A. Yeah, no, it was -- it was not even at all. So
6 he would justify it as training. Like, oh, I'm pulling
7 this car over to hand it off to new rosters to train
8 them. Which can serve a purpose if you have new police
9 officers, you know, fresh off of FTO training. I can
10 see the legitimate need to serve that purpose.

02:30:22

11 But then there would be a gap of officers with
12 three, four, five, six years on that he liked, and it
13 was obvious he liked them. He wouldn't give them
14 sergeant specials. But then he would come after people
15 like me that are field training officers, corporals,
16 eight, nine, ten year veterans.

02:30:37

17 And he would specifically go dump them on me. So
18 there is a wide gap. And it became apparent that he was
19 dumping work on who he didn't like.

02:30:48

20 Q. Okay. And was there -- was there ever a
21 time where you were able to see or access I guess
22 documentation or whatever the case may be that would
23 tell you whether or not he had made sergeant specials,
24 had stopped -- had made sergeant specials during a
25 particular shift?

02:31:11

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. What was that?

3 What would you look at to see that?

02:31:19

4 A. So on our computer our records management system,
5 it's called Spillman is the name of the entity that we
6 had used. So if I say Spillman, that's what I'm
7 referring to.

8 Q. Okay.

02:31:31

9 A. You could go on Spillman and search certain
10 things. So you can search an officer in their traffic
11 stops, an officer in their calls for service, you know,
12 within certain periods, be it a day, three days, a week,
13 a month, three months. And then it will upload all that
14 activity for you to look at.

02:31:43

15 Q. And is it Spillman, S-p-i-l-l-m-a-n?

02:31:58

16 A. Yes, sir. I think it was bought out by a
17 company. And they named it Flex. But everyone refers
18 to it as Spillman. Basically our records management
19 system we do all our reports on and get dispatched to
20 calls on. It's like our hub of work, I guess is the
21 best way to describe it.

02:32:15

22 Q. Okay. And from there was there ever a time where
23 you looked at what was on Spillman or Flex and observed
24 that there had been, you know, long periods of time
25 where Sergeant Koh had not assigned sergeant specials to

1 officers?

2 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

3 Q. When was that?

4 A. Mind if I look at notes I have on that?

02:32:24 5 Q. Well, let me ask it this way.

6 What do you recall?

7 Just tell me what you remember about that.

8 A. So I remember there was a period where I
9 strategically avoided working with Sergeant Koh. My
02:32:36 10 working conditions were so hostile. And administration
11 never helped. I thankfully had enough seniority to
12 avoid him. But there were occasional times I had to
13 work with him; be it an overtime shift or short notice
14 or something of that nature.

02:32:48 15 And I hadn't worked with him in so long that I
16 was checking the stats one day. And I noticed there was
17 about a four month period where Sergeant Koh didn't
18 stop -- didn't go out there and give any, you know,
19 sergeant specials.

02:33:01 20 And then the first day that I worked an overtime
21 shift with him, I'm coming in to help, be it short
22 notice, overtime staffing, he goes and finds a sergeant
23 special and, you know, basically it dumps it on me. So
24 you can look at the stats and, you know, see stuff like
02:33:18 25 that pretty blatantly obvious.

1 Q. Okay. And do you recall roughly when that was,
2 if it was in your -- like, during your last year, during
3 your last couple years?

4 A. Last couple years, last few years, give or take.

02:33:29

5 Q. Okay. And on that shift when he assigned you
6 sergeant specials, do you recall if he assigned anyone
7 else sergeant specials that night?

8 A. That night no, because it would've been my beat.
9 And then wherever he ever stops the -- yeah, wherever he
10 stops the vehicle. So if that's in your beat, that is
11 your sergeant special. And he would only drive around
12 and pull over cars in my beat strategically. Like, it
13 was blatantly obvious.

02:33:47

14 Q. And did he -- did Sergeant Koh ever say anything
15 to you that made you think he was going out, you know,
16 and trying to find work for you?

02:34:01

17 A. Absolutely.

18 Q. What did he say?

19 A. Basically that, I'm going to go out there and
20 find you something. You know, I've told you you need to
21 be more proactive so I'm going to go find you something.
22 And he would flat out say it.

02:34:12

23 Q. When he said that to you about you need to be
24 more proactive, did -- was -- I mean, did you -- was
25 there any credibility to that in your mind that you were

02:34:30

1 not being proactive?

2 A. No, no. It was -- it was strictly just based on
3 however he felt at the time. Because one of those times
4 that I got the sergeant special, I mean, recently I
02:34:43 5 pulled stats on other officers.

6 And in a four month period he was working with an
7 officer that he liked. And then I pulled my stats and
8 his and compared them. And I had significantly more
9 stats than that officer. So it's all subjective to him.
02:34:56 10 It didn't have any relevance.

11 Q. In the --

12 A. There was no level of proactive you can be to
13 satisfy him if he did not like you.

14 Q. And in terms of the stats, what do stats include?

02:35:11 15 I'm assuming it's the number of stops.

16 Is there anything else that's included in the
17 stats that you had looked at?

18 A. Yes, sir. There was a lot of different types of
19 statistics. So there's idle time, there's traffic
02:35:23 20 stops, pedestrian checks, bike stops, things like that.
21 And then their outcome, be it a citation was issued, an
22 arrest was made.

23 Sometimes, you know, no action was taken. You
24 know, we can pull cars over and decide that we're going
02:35:37 25 to warn them or, you know, what be it so...

1 Q. Okay. And that was during -- was that
2 information you were also able to view on the Spillman
3 or Flex program?

4 A. Yes, sir.

02:35:47

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. There was another way to view them as well on
7 kind of like a shared drive. But that got removed from
8 us by administration when an employee had made a
9 complaint about it, using it for his complaint.

02:36:08

10 Q. Okay. Do you remember what period of time that
11 was?

12 A. That was around I want to say 2022 or 2023.

13 There was an officer that got a bad evaluation. And
14 they decided that he had really low statistics. So he

02:36:26

15 pulled up the statistics on a shared common drive in the
16 computer and basically revealed that his eval wasn't
17 accurate.

18 So then officers could use that information to
19 compare to others to hey, I am being as proactive as
20 this officer, be it, you know, more or less. And then
21 administration had told the records -- one of our
22 records females to go ahead and hide that file so we
23 can't view it anymore.

02:36:37

24 Q. And was that after -- and I believe the officer
25 you're referring to that got this evaluation that he

02:36:51

1 felt was factually inaccurate and then he used the
2 system to compare information -- I'm assuming you're
3 referring to Officer Goble?

4 A. Yes, sir, Officer Zachary Goble.

02:37:02

5 Q. Okay. And after Officer Goble apparently
6 accessed the drive in order to I guess contest the stuff
7 that was in his performance evaluation, you said then
8 there was a directive from -- was it Captain Amend?

9 A. Yes.

02:37:19

10 Q. That the records person should no longer allow
11 officers to have access to that drive?

12 A. Yes, sir. You could still find stats and other
13 means, but --

02:37:32

14 Q. How do you know that Captain Amend gave that
15 directive?

02:37:45

16 A. I was talking to a dispatcher who worked closely
17 with that records female. And we were just talking
18 about Officer Goble, what had happened to him. And I
19 had mentioned that yeah, he pulled a stat, the
20 statistics and compared them to other officers and
21 revealed that his evaluation was completely inaccurate.

02:37:59

22 And she had said oh, that's very interesting
23 because Captain Amend around that time told me to hide
24 that file, basically lock it so officers can't view it
25 anymore. And it was just a very, very interesting

02:40:45 1 out there and dumping traffic stops on you on your
2 Friday when you're already busy and things like that.
3 And just very poor management, poor leadership. So we
4 had talked that hey, this is what I'm going to put in
5 the survey so that way, hey, maybe it can be addressed,
6 that enough employees are complaining of the same exact
7 thing over and over and over.

02:40:58 8 And then after they had their team building
9 exercise, Andrew told me that I guess the survey wasn't
10 anonymous because Koh confronted me in the hallway
11 afterwards.

12 Q. Okay. Was there ever -- was there ever a time
13 that Koh confronted you about something you had said?

14 A. Yeah.

02:41:09 15 Q. When?

16 Just tell me what you remember about it. You
17 don't have to know the exact time frame. If you know
18 the exact time frame, if you have a note or something in
19 front of you that shows you that, that's fine, you can
02:41:22 20 refer to that.

21 A. Yeah, it's fine. So December 8th of 2021 we were
22 at a court trial. And then prior to this he had had an
23 IA, which is an administrative investigation, where his
24 sergeant probationary status was extended. He didn't
02:41:40 25 get his pay raises because of it. And I was one of the

1 witnesses for some of the activity he was doing.

2 So I didn't have a choice to participate. But
3 he had confronted me at the courthouse and said, and I
4 quote, You cost me money, end quote. And then ever
02:41:55 5 since then it was sergeant specials all the time and bad
6 evals and things like that. So -- and I'm going to find
7 you work. And just it was just years of unbated
8 retaliation.

9 Q. What was the -- what was the -- you said it was
02:42:09 10 basically an investigation.

11 And then you were just a witness and you had
12 given information, and somehow he had learned that?

13 A. Yeah. So I was given paperwork that I'm going to
14 be a witness for that IA. And then ultimately the
02:42:22 15 result of that IA, from what was shared, was that he got
16 his sergeant probationary status extended.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. With that, he didn't get his next pay stub. So
19 it cost him money essentially.

02:42:34 20 Q. Did he -- and when he confronted you and said you
21 cost me money, why did you think it related to your role
22 as a witness in that investigation?

23 Did say something to that effect?

24 A. He just left it at that. But, you know, it
02:42:48 25 doesn't take a detective to read between the lines.

1 Anytime an investigation is conducted, it's the totality
2 of the circumstances. So if all the witnesses
3 corroborate that you in fact were wrong, then you're a
4 part of that so...

02:43:00

5 Q. Gotcha. Gotcha. And after he made that comment
6 to you about costing him money, did you say you felt as
7 though after that he retaliated against you?

02:43:23

8 A. Oh, it was long before that. But for some reason
9 he just made that comment at the courthouse as well. I
10 don't know if it was to remind me or something. But he
11 had been doing it ever since so...

12 Q. Okay. What would he do to retaliate against you?

02:43:40

13 A. Just mainly make my working conditions so hostile
14 to the point it was basically unbearable. We have these
15 GPS tracking devices in our vehicles, I think via our
16 computer. That way they can monitor where we're at and
17 stuff.

02:43:52

18 He would watch mine all night long, all night
19 long. And then working night shift sometimes there is,
20 you know, more downtime, you know, where you can write
21 reports or pull off the road and monitor businesses at
22 night for break-ins and stuff.

02:44:05

23 But he would monitor mine specifically and say
24 you're not moving enough, that's not how you do a patrol
25 check, hey, why is your car not moving. He would do

1 stuff like that in addition to dropping the sergeant
2 specials on me.

3 And there was one incidence in particular where
4 the micromanagement was so bad and so unbearable that I
02:44:19 5 was scared to pull off the road and just take a little
6 break at, you know, 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning working
7 night shift, for fear of getting a bad eval and all that
8 stuff.

9 So I fell asleep behind the wheel of one of the
02:44:32 10 patrol vehicles with my foot on the brake for I think
11 several minutes. So I brought that up to Captain Amend.
12 And ever since I've just been trying my hardest to get
13 off his shift because it was unbearable.

14 Q. And when you said you fell asleep, you were
02:44:43 15 actually in your patrol car.

16 But it was in drive and you fell asleep in the
17 car?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Were you stopped at a traffic light?

02:44:50 20 A. Yes, sir. I was at a left turn arrow at a major
21 intersection. And it had been several minutes because I
22 was listening to a song.

23 And from the point that the song started it was
24 almost the end of the song, and a car drove by me and
02:45:03 25 woke me up. And I realized that I was fully asleep at

1 an intersection with my foot on the brake.

2 Q. Okay. And you said you were afraid to pull over
3 and take a break because you knew Sergeant Koh was
4 monitoring your vehicle's movement?

02:45:16

5 A. Yes, sir. Other witnesses have gone into the
6 sergeant's office. And you could click on the unit,
7 right click and track, and the whole computer will just
8 follow you the entire shift. So people would look
9 inside, you know, be talking to him, and be like he's
10 literally monitoring just your GPS.

02:45:30

11 And he would message me if it's four or five
12 minutes my car isn't moving, why is your vehicle not
13 moving, that's not how you patrol. You better be
14 moving. We had this talk before. So I was terrified to
15 pull off the road. And unfortunately, you know, put
16 myself in a situation where I fell asleep in an
17 intersection.

02:45:44

18 Because I was driving around in endless circles
19 for fear of getting a bad eval and retaliated against.

02:45:54

20 And I finally had to again ask for administration to do
21 something about this.

22 Q. And when you asked administration, did you go to
23 Captain Amend?

24 A. Yes, sir.

02:46:04

25 Q. And did he do anything in response?

1 A. To my understanding, no, other than tell me that
2 I need to grow up and learn to get along with people.
3 And then I had asked for a separate shift. I said I had
4 tried talking to him, I've tried talking to you.

02:46:20

5 My working conditions are so unbearable that now
6 I'm essentially putting the city at risk for me driving
7 into an intersection while asleep because I'm terrified
8 to pull off the road.

02:46:32

9 Can you please move me to a different shift. I
10 cannot work like this anymore. And that's when he said
11 I need to grow up and learn to get along with people.

12 Q. Do you recall roughly when that was, the incident
13 where you fell asleep inside the vehicle and then went
14 to Captain Amend?

02:46:45

15 A. Approximately 2021, 2022, somewhere around there.

16 Q. And when you -- when you told Captain Amend about
17 this incident where you had fallen asleep in the
18 vehicle, did he issue you any sort of disciplinary
19 action or warnings or anything like that?

02:47:05

20 A. Not me, no.

21 Q. Did he -- do you know if that incident where you
22 fell asleep in the car -- was that ever included in one
23 of your performance evaluations, that you can recall?

24 A. Falling asleep behind the wheel, no.

02:47:21

25 Q. Okay. And after you went to Captain Amend

1 about -- well, how many times did you go to Captain
2 Amend about issues you were having with Sergeant Koh
3 during your time at La Palma?

02:47:38

4 A. I've gone to all levels of administration. But
5 Captain Amend had recently been promoted from a
6 sergeant. So I've gone to Captain Amend approximately
7 two or three times about stuff like this.

8 Q. Okay. And how many times did you go to
9 Captain Amend specifically about Sergeant Koh?

02:47:51

10 A. I would say about the same, two or three times.
11 He was recently promoted toward the end of my tenure
12 there.

13 Q. And the times that you went to Captain Amend
14 about issues you were having with Sergeant Koh, do you
15 know if he ever opened up an investigation?

02:48:10

16 A. To my knowledge, no. I never put anything in
17 writing. And I went to him verbally just hoping he
18 would handle it on the verbal level of hey, employee
19 again has complained. Can you please knock this off and
20 let him just do his job. But to my knowledge, nothing
21 ever came of it. It actually probably even got worse.

02:48:23

22 Q. And why do you say that?

23 A. Because it was apparent that the behavior wasn't
24 stopping. It was continuing.

02:48:38

25 Q. Sorry, sorry. I think you -- I caught just the

1 very end of that. Can you --

2 A. Oh. It was apparent because the behavior never
3 changed. It either continued or sometimes got worse.

4 So it was just apparent to me that nothing had happened.

02:48:51

5 Q. Gotcha. And were there other -- when you were
6 reporting to officer -- or I'm sorry, Sergeant Koh, was
7 there ever a time where you would be out doing patrol
8 and other officers were, you know, not being -- clearly
9 not being as proactive as you, Sergeant Koh let that
10 slide with regard to those officers, but told you you
11 needed to increase your proactivity?

02:49:15

12 A. Oh, yeah --

13 MS. COHEN: I'm just going to object -- I'm
14 just going to object to the speculative nature of the
15 question about what he thought about what was happening
16 with other officers.

02:49:24

17 But you can answer.

18 BY MR. PETRONELLI:

02:49:33

19 Q. Yeah. Did you ever observe other officers not
20 being proactive, but Sergeant Koh not saying anything to
21 them about it?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. What did you observe?

02:49:42

24 A. Just different officers that he liked. There was
25 one officer, Bradley Stene he worked with. You know, he

1 wasn't as proactive as me. He would sit in the station
2 watching Call of Duty, you know, writing reports, eating
3 sunflower seeds. And Koh wouldn't bother him.

4 And that was the stats that I had pulled up.

02:49:58

5 There was a four month period where they worked
6 together. I had way more stats than Brad Stene. Didn't
7 drop one traffic stop on him.

8 But then the second I worked overtime after that
9 four month period, first thing he does is go drive in my
10 beat and dump a traffic stop on me. So it was blatantly
11 obvious. And the stats don't lie.

02:50:09

12 And then those are officers with significantly
13 less years on than me. So I just find it very
14 interesting that he would go out and dump training on
15 the nine year veteran and not the five year officer, you
16 know, with less time on. And it was blatantly obvious.

02:50:43

17 Q. Did you ever -- when you were told by Sergeant
18 Koh that you needed to be more proactive, and then
19 looked at your stats compared to other officers who he
20 was not saying the same thing to, did you ever bring
21 that to Sergeant Koh's attention and said hey, you know,
22 you're telling me to be more proactive, but here's other
23 officers over here whose stats are less and you're not
24 telling them the same thing?

02:50:59

02:51:14

25 A. Yep, I brought it to his attention personally, as

1 well as administration. And on no level was it ever
2 handled.

3 Q. Do you recall how Sergeant Koh responded when you
4 brought it to his attention?

02:51:26 5 A. He just gets frustrated. Says you don't meet his
6 expectations. It is what it is. And then just ends up
7 in either a blowout argument or I don't know what to
8 tell you, I'm the sergeant.

9 And it is what it is. And then don't go to admin
02:51:41 10 about me. He's made that comment several times of don't
11 go to admin. I'm never going to change the way that I
12 do things so...

13 Q. And what is -- what is admin?

14 What did that mean to you?

02:51:52 15 A. Sorry. Admin is administration. So the people
16 above a sergeant, captains and chief, things like that.

17 Q. Okay. So but it would be -- and it would be
18 administration in the police department of La Palma and
19 just be -- in terms of above Sergeant Koh, it would be
02:52:06 20 all the captains and then the chief?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. How many captains were there during the
23 time you worked there?

24 A. We have a shift. So we had one captain and then
02:52:16 25 a -- like, a civilian manager. And then they fired him

1 So the night watch briefing.

2 Q. Okay.

3 MS. COHEN: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear the
4 year. What --

02:54:58 5 THE WITNESS: That was 2023.

6 MS. COHEN: '23. You said September 6,
7 2023?

8 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. COHEN: Okay.

02:55:05 10 BY MR. PETRONELLI:

11 Q. In your -- so you were with La Palma for a total
12 of -- so you were about nine years; is that right?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. And in your time at La Palma did you find
02:55:50 15 that police administration was receptive to the
16 complaints that you made about Sergeant Koh?

17 A. Not at all.

18 Q. Okay. Why do you say that?

19 A. Because as stated, the behavior never changed.

02:56:04 20 There was numerous employees complaining. It was the
21 same complaints. It was you need to do something about
22 this, I can't work like this.

23 And in the end it just got you bad evals, work
24 dumped on you, confronted in hallways. So it actually
02:56:18 25 made things worse for you.

1 Q. Do you ever recall reporting this when you felt
2 like you were retaliated against after making
3 complaints?

4 Did you ever report that to anyone in
02:56:28 5 administration?

6 A. I did.

7 Q. Who did you report it to?

8 A. Captain Amend.

9 Q. And do you recall how he responded when you
02:56:33 10 reported retaliation?

11 A. Didn't seem super concerned. Seemed more annoyed
12 that I was reporting it. Because I had told them that
13 I've tried talking to Koh, I've tried talking to you.
14 The behavior continues. And Koh even said that admin
02:56:47 15 will never change the way he does things.

16 So I'm basically telling you he's telling you you
17 are not going to change the way he does things. And he
18 just seemed more annoyed than anything.

19 Q. And in your -- well, let me ask this.

02:57:06 20 Was what you experienced from Sergeant Koh -- did
21 that factor in at all in your decision to leave the
22 La Palma Police Department?

23 A. Absolutely.

24 Q. Okay. And why?

02:57:17 25 How did it factor in?

1 disclosing my confidential evaluations and bragging
2 about it. So I wanted what I thought would be, you
3 know, it handled impartially.

4 Q. And what happened with that investigation?

03:00:57

5 Do you know how it was handled, the formal
6 complaint made to HR?

7 A. They investigated it, said it was concluded, and
8 they weren't going to tell me the results.

03:01:12

9 Q. Okay. But as far as you're aware, James Roche
10 was not disciplined in any way that you're aware of?

11 A. I have no idea.

12 Q. And did you -- did you ever come to learn that
13 Officer Goble had filed a complaint with human resources
14 towards the end of his time at La Palma?

03:01:30

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. And did you -- do you recall learning at some
17 point that he was terminated by La Palma?

18 A. Yes, sir.

03:01:44

19 Q. Okay. Do you recall the proximity of time
20 between when he made the complaint to HR when you --
21 when he was terminated, if you know?

22 If you don't know, that's fine.

23 A. It was short. It was, like, a week later maybe.

03:01:56

24 Q. Did that cause you any concern when you yourself
25 went to HR?

1 A. I had went before him. So me personally, no.
2 But then after he had went it kind of painted a very
3 clear picture about again, if you complain, you're going
4 to be retaliated against.

03:02:12

5 Q. And you said Officer Goble.

6 Did you recall him being terminated shortly
7 before Officer Byer left La Palma or did you -- I don't
8 want you to guess.

03:02:30

9 A. Yeah, he was terminated before Officer Byer had
10 left.

11 Q. Do you recall approximately how long before?

12 A. A couple weeks, maybe a couple months at most.

03:02:48

13 Q. Okay. And you said by that time there was no
14 longer access to that drive, that shared drive where you
15 were able to see other officer stats in comparison to
16 your own --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- by the time Officer Byer was terminated
19 or Officer Byer --

03:02:55

20 A. Yes, yes, sir.

21 Q. And do you still -- do you still have
22 communication with Officer Goble?

23 A. Yes, sir.

03:03:14

24 Q. Okay. How long did you two work together at
25 La Palma?

1 I'm a nine year veteran, you know. And in this
2 time this four year veteran that you like has ten
3 traffic stops. You're dumping work on me, making my day
4 extremely busy and miserable, and you're not bothering
03:04:30 5 him. Now you just have to take exactly what they say
6 and you can't question it.

7 Q. What race do you identify with?

8 A. White.

9 Q. Okay. What's your nationality?

03:04:42 10 A. It's Italian and German and I think Swedish or
11 some other European countries.

12 Q. Okay. I don't have any more questions right now.
13 Ms. Cohen may. So if you just hold tight.

14 EXAMINATION

03:04:58 15 BY MS. COHEN:

16 Q. Yeah, just one. You mentioned I think an
17 Officer Stene or was that a Sergeant Stene?

18 I don't remember.

19 A. He was promoted recently to a sergeant.

03:05:13 20 Q. Okay. So was he an officer at the time that
21 you mentioned that Koh was -- treated him somewhat
22 favorably?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Do you know his nationality?

03:05:21 25 A. He's white as well.

1 Q. Okay. So you never learned that he complained
2 about Sergeant Koh?

3 A. No.

03:06:22

4 Q. Okay. And did you ever learn that Officer
5 Jay Choi had complained about Sergeant Koh?

6 A. No. I think he favored Choi.

7 Q. Why do you say that?

03:06:37

8 A. You can always tell in the interactions Koh would
9 have with individuals if he liked them or not. So it
10 just seemed like he just kind of favored him.

11 Q. Okay. And is there something that -- other than
12 the interactions, did you -- that made you believe he
13 favored Choi?

03:06:47

14 A. Yeah. Choi would say that he -- you know, he
15 wouldn't go out there and dump work on him, and didn't
16 really seem to bother him too much. So kind of leads
17 you to believe, you know, he likes him or what be it.

03:07:01

18 Especially being a brand new police officer, not
19 going out there and dumping traffic stops for training
20 purposes when he's brand new to the agency.

21 Q. Gotcha. And did you -- did you notice right
22 away, shortly after Officer Choi was hired that
23 Sergeant Koh appeared to favor him?

24 A. Yeah, yeah, it was pretty obvious.

03:07:16

25 Q. Okay. And was it obvious throughout the time

1 that you were at La Palma?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 MR. PETRONELLI: Okay. All right. I don't
4 have anything else.

03:07:27 5 MS. COHEN: Same here. Nothing else. Thank
6 you.

7 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: All right. Just before
8 we go off record, on behalf of our court reporter,
9 Counsel, I'll go ahead and ask for your transcript
03:07:36 10 orders.

11 MR. PETRONELLI: Yeah, we'll take -- I think
12 we -- with our order I think maybe we get the standard,
13 whatever the standard is. And then we'll take a copy of
14 the video.

03:07:46 15 Can we get it synced?

16 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: With the transcript?

17 MR. PETRONELLI: Yes.

18 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Yes, sir.

19 And for Ms. Cohen?

03:07:52 20 MS. COHEN: Just the transcript.

21 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Okay. Very good. All
22 right. If that's everything --

23 MR. PETRONELLI: Thank you so much. I
24 really appreciate you logging in and taking the time.

03:08:02 25 Thank you so much. I said it was going -- I was

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CERTIFICATE
OF
CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER

The undersigned certified shorthand reporter
of the State of California does hereby certify:

That the foregoing deposition was taken
before me at the time and place therein set forth, at
which time the witness was duly sworn by me.

That the testimony of the witness and all
objections made at the time of the deposition were
recorded stenographically by me and thereafter
transcribed, said transcript being a true copy of my
shorthand notes thereof.

In witness whereof, I have subscribed my
name this date: August 19, 2025


<%signature%>

CSR Number 13079
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