

City hires 'tribune' hands

Letters

Attorney defends Inkster detective

To the editor:

I am writing in response to an article in your March 3 story, "Detective Subject of Accident Investigation." Inkster Police Detective Anthony Abdallah is the subject of your article – and the target of a criminal investigation by the Inkster Police command staff. Our law firm is proud to represent Detective Abdallah during this criminal investigation, and I want to give your readers a balanced view of the Department's numerous (and anonymous) allegations against him.

As you read this, Detective Abdallah has been suspended without pay and benefits – and without any formal charges being laid against him – for over one month. He finds himself in the unenviable position of being publicly assailed, accused, and berated by both his Department's command staff and a plaintiff's attorney – both of whom are acting upon their own self-serving interests.

Unnamed "police contacts" and "police sources" have gone to great lengths to paint a one-sided picture of Detective Abdallah. Not coincidentally, these same "sources" have also tried to distance the Department's command staff as far as possible from the threat of a pending lawsuit.

Unfortunately, this has become a common tactic in many police departments. The "command staff" would have your readers believe that the entire responsibility for submitting, tracking, and storing police reports resides with the lowest ranks in the Department. If reports about a shooting in Inkster have gone missing, the "command staff" denies any responsibility – and finds it much easier to publicly disgrace a veteran street Detective who responded to the scene.

The term "command," however, also means "to direct" and "to control." Your readers should know that when a prisoner in the police station is discovered to be injured, the responsibility for checking into the injury rests squarely upon the command staff. And ensuring that the submitted reports don't get lost also is the responsibility of the command staff – not a street Detective. Those simple duties were obviously ignored in this incident.

It is the responsibility of the command staff – not a street Detective – to ensure that each day's reports match up to the dispatch cards, and that the incident dispositions for the same time period match the reports. A properly supervised reporting system ensures that missing reports are caught and quickly located within 24 or 48 hours – not months later when a Freedom of Information request arrives from a plaintiff's

attorney.

It is the responsibility of the command staff – not a street Detective – to ensure that the Department's Record Section is not losing reports that have been submitted on paper or by computer. And (surprise) it's also the responsibility of the command staff to fix the malfunctions and restore the system to reliability. It is not acceptable to simply yank in the lowest ranking officer and criminally accuse him of failing to fill out reports that the Department has lost or can't locate.

Too many police departments have equated the term "command staff" with "retired at full pay." And the simple threat of a lawsuit – real or perceived – sends the "command staff" scurrying for cover, and deciding who is to be sacrificed as a scapegoat for the administration's own failings.

Detective Abdallah has been suspended without pay for over one month, and publicly berated, because the Police Department's command staff refuses to acknowledge its own serious deficiencies in the Department's reporting and record retention systems. The Department's street officers – and the citizens of Inkster – deserve much better.

Sincerely,
Mark A. Porter
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ASSOCIATES, L.L.C.
Pontiac