



Personal Relationship with Inmate

A Kirkland jail sergeant reviewing inmate mail read a letter to a female inmate with a return address for SPD Headquarters. The letter was signed by "Sugar Bear" and referenced a prior jail visit. The sergeant pulled records for that visit and determined that an SPD detective had visited the female inmate. The sergeant recalled that the same detective had visited the female inmate previously, too, saying she was a CI. The same day the sergeant reviewed the letter, the detective called the jail and asked that staff provide his new contact information to the female inmate. The sergeant told him they were unable to do that, and asked him whether he had a personal relationship with the inmate. The detective acknowledged that they previously did, and said that there was no longer a need to pass on the contact information. This matter was referred to OPA by the Kirkland Police Department.

OPA determined that the inmate was not a CI at the time of either of the visits by the detective. A review of the letter and video of the visit revealed that their relationship was personal and romantic in nature. Supporting this finding were statements made by the detective that he wanted to "touch" and "hold" the inmate and that she was "beautiful." OPA also discovered that the detective lied when he told jail staff that the inmate was a CI in order to get in-person access to her that otherwise would not have been granted. [OPA ultimately found](#) that the detective was unprofessional and used his position and authority for personal gain.

Confusing Bias Allegation Scenarios

In an early June volume of the Case & Policy Update, OPA requested specific examples of instances in which sergeants were unsure whether an allegation constituted a claim of biased policing. We received a variety of responses. In one example, the subject said that an officer's actions were "racial" or "racist," but could not provide any clarification as to what he meant by that and did not identify any specific acts of the officer that indicated biased policing. In another, a subject approached a bicycle officer who was on routine patrol and told him that he had no business being in that location and that he was merely there to harass Black males like the subject. In a third example, a subject arrested for trespass alleged, without any additional explanation, that the officers who took her into custody were "racists" or "prejudiced."

OPA will be compiling a list of examples, which will include the above and other similar incidents identified by OPA, that will be transmitted to SPD. OPA will make a request that formal guidance be provided to Patrol on when allegations rise to the level of an allegation of biased policing. OPA hopes this will provide clarity to officers and supervisors and will ensure that Bias Reviews are only completed when necessary and appropriate.

If you have questions, feedback, content requests, or to add/remove your name from this distribution list, please contact Anne Bettesworth, OPA Deputy Director of Public Affairs, at anne.bettesworth@seattle.gov.



**Seattle Office of
Police Accountability**

Office of Police Accountability
720 Third Avenue Seattle WA
Phone: 206-684-8797
<https://www.seattle.gov/opa>