



To: Chief Jeffrey Trickler

From: Lt. Michael J. Passalacqua- Complainant

Date: 12.13.17

Subject: Internal Investigation

### **Introductory Paragraph**

On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 I was alerted by Lieutenant Valenti to a Facebook post which had been made under the Facebook name "Rich Baskin". After viewing the photo of OJ Simpson which was posted, Sgt. Turner was contacted by myself and told to have PO Baskin remove the post from his Facebook account immediately. The photo was in fact removed approximately 15 minutes after my phone call with Sgt. Turner.

### **Findings Section for the Specific Violations**

The information alleged by complainant:

1. Lieutenant Passalacqua after being notified of the post by Lieutenant Valenti which was made by PO Baskin did observe a photo on his Facebook page which shows OJ Simpson holding a plate of turkey with the caption "Carvin' up that white meat" and captioned the photo by saying, "Happy Thanksgiving everyone!!"
2. This type of conduct/social media post falls under a violation of Geneva Police Department General Orders 307- Social Media- IV(B)1(a) which states **"Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair the working relationships of this Department for which trust and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Department"**.



**Geneva Police Department**  
**JEFFREY E. TRICKLER**  
**Chief of Police**  
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The facts of the investigation support the findings of:

**1. Sustained**

**Evidence to Support the Specific Allegations**

- Return letter from Sergeant Tyler Turner (attached) detailing his conversation with PO Baskin regarding the post. PO Baskin did admit to Sgt. Turner that the post was in bad taste and should not have been posted.
- Return letter from Lieutenant Matthew Valenti (attached) stating he first saw the post and notified me of same. Lieutenant Valenti also took screenshots of the post and forwarded them along with his response letter.
- Return letter of PO Baskin (attached) in which he indicates he did post the OJ Simpson photo/meme because he thought it was funny. PO Baskin states he was not the originator of the picture/meme and had seen it before. PO Baskin also states "I do understand that these may be considered insensitive, and that the timing was really bad. I also understand that following the events with another GPD Officer, this is not acceptable. I have taken measures so this will never happen again".

**Evidence to Refute the Specific Allegations**

- None

**Recommended Finding:**

At the time of this report based upon the information available to me the following is: **Sustained.**

PO Baskin's post of a picture with OJ Simpson holding up a plate of turkey with the caption "Carvin up that white meat" was on his Facebook page for approximately 1 hour until he was told to remove the photo. Although PO Baskin has every right to express himself as a private citizen, this photo itself can very easily negatively affect the public perception of the Geneva Police Department which is in direct violation of General Order 307- Social Media- IV(B)1(a)



To: Chief Jeffrey Trickler

From: Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua

Re: Internal Investigation- **CR # 2017-24675**

Date: January 26, 2018

Chief,

Regarding the Internal Investigation which I completed referenced above, I spoke to PO Richard Baskin on Wednesday night in my office. PO Baskin was advised he was being verbally warned regarding the posting of a Facebook post and that this will not happen again. If this does happen again, formal discipline could possibly be sought. PO Baskin stated he understood and agreed that the Facebook post was wrong to post and that he should not have posted it. PO Baskin was advised that things like these can cause a negative public perception and put the department in an unfavorable light in the eyes of the community.

Respectfully submitted,

Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua



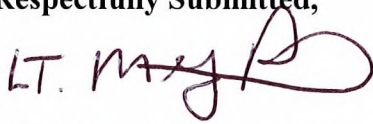
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**\*\*\*\*Attachments\*\*\*\***

- 1. Copy of Call for Service (CR#2017-24675)**
- 2. Letter to Sergeant Tyler Turner**
- 3. Letter to Lieutenant Matthew Valenti**
- 4. Letter to PO Richard Baskin**
- 5. Return letter from Sergeant Tyler Turner**
- 6. Return Letter from Matthew Valenti (with photos attached)**
- 7. Return Letter from PO Richard Baskin**
- 8. Copy of screenshot of Rich Baskin Facebook post**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "LT. Michael J. Passalacqua", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Lt. Michael J. Passalacqua**



**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Supervisor: MPAS PASSALACQUA      Dispatcher: MPAS PASSALACQUA      Responding Officer: MPAS PASSALACQUA  
Date/Time: 11/27/17 13:23      Reported Signal: CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION 115  
Actual Signal: CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION 115      Received By: WALK-IN  
Received: 13:23:44

## Vehicle Description:

Plate No.:

State: NY

Disposition: H

Disp. Date: 11/27/17 13:24

Report Taken: NO

Action Taken:

Reference No. 2:

**LOCATION**

Location Name: PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Zone: BEAT

Address: 255 EXCHANGE STREET

Alt. Address:

Direction:

Apt. No.:

City: GENEVA

Intersection:

Phone No.: (315) 789-1111

**CALLER INFORMATION**

Last Name: PASSALACQUA

First Name: LT

Middle Name/Suffix:

Alias/Maiden Name:

DOB:

Address: GPD

City: GENEVA

State: NY

Zip: 14456 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Anonymous: NO

**RESPONDING UNITS/OFFICERS**Unit/OfficerDispatchedArrivedCleared**ASSOCIATED PERSONS**NameAliasDOBAddressPhoneSex Inv.**NOTES**

LIEUTENANT REQUESTING A CR FOR A CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATION



To: Sergeant Tyler Turner

From: Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua

Re: Confidential Investigation- CR#2017-24675- Baskin

Date: November 27, 2017

Sergeant,

Please submit to me in writing a response regarding any and all involvement and conversation you had with PO Rich Baskin regarding a Facebook post which was made by PO Rich Baskin on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Please have this to be by the end of business on 12.1.17.

Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua



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To: Lieutenant Matthew Valenti

From: Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua

Re: Confidential Investigation- CR#2017-24675- Baskin

Date: November 27, 2017

Lieutenant,

Please submit to me in writing a response to our conversation regarding a Facebook post which was made by Rich Baskin on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and your involvement. Please have this to be by the end of business on 12.1.17.

Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua



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To: PO Richard Baskin

From: Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua

Re: Confidential Investigation

Date: November 27, 2017

Officer Baskin,

Please submit to me in writing a response regarding the reason, content and nature of **all** Facebook posts which you made on your Facebook page under "Rich Baskin" on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. Please have this written response back to me no later than the end of business on 12.1.17

Lieutenant Michael J. Passalacqua



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To: Lieutenant Passalacqua

From: Sergeant Turner

Re: Confidential Investigation CR#2017-24675

11-27-2017

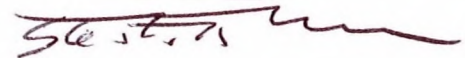
Lieutenant,

On 11-23-2017 I received a phone call stating that Officer Baskin had posted on his facebook page while working a photo of O.J. Simpson with a knife with a caption stating, "carving up the white meat"

Officer Baskin was called into the Sergeant's office and told to take it down. Officer Baskin stated that he had posted it utilizing his phone and did not utilize city property. Officer Baskin agreed that the post was in bad taste and should not have been posted.

This Sergeant spoke to Officer Baskin again approximately 30 minutes later after it was discovered that Officer Baskin had commented on a post about shooting ISIS members in the face. I explained to Officer Baskin that it was not a good idea to comment or post items about shooting people in case he actually had to shoot someone during his shift. Officer Baskin stated that he didn't see the problem with posting his opinion on his private facebook page.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Turner", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sergeant T. Turner



TO: Lt. M. Passalacqua  
FROM: Lt. M. Valenti  
RE: Officer Richard Baskin  
DATE: November 27, 2017

Lt. Passalacqua,

This letter is in response to the conversation we had regarding Officer Richard Baskin's Facebook post on November 23, 2017.

Around 9pm I was home scrolling through my personal Facebook account when I came across a post that was on Officer Richard Baskin's personal Facebook page. The page's name was Rich Baskin. The post concerned me as an administrator but also upset me as a Geneva Police Officer and a person. The post was a picture of OJ Simpson holding a cooked turkey with the words "Carvin' up that white meat". Above the picture Officer Rich Baskin wrote the words "Happy Thanksgiving everyone!"

Due to the time on my phone and the time that Facebook stated it was posted, Officer Richard Baskin posted that picture at 8:38pm. There were also 2 comments from people that I do not know who enjoyed the picture. I took a screen shot of both the picture and the comments and have attached them with this letter.

Respectfully,

Lt. Matthew J. Valenti



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**Rich Baskin**

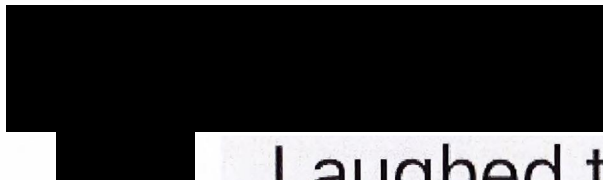
46 mins · 👥



👍 Like

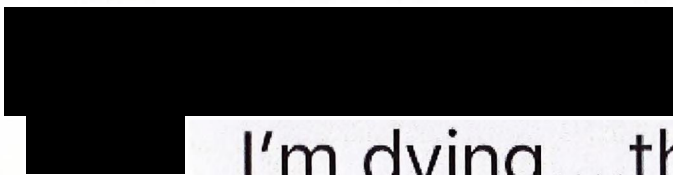
💬 Comment

👍 😂 😱 11



Laughed too hard at this one! Thank you.

27m Like Reply



I'm dying....thanks Rich!!

18m Like Reply



Lieutenant Michael Passalacqua,

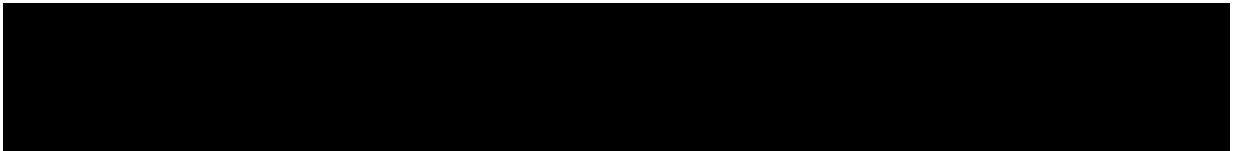
I am writing you in response to your inquiry about the Facebook posts that were posted by me on November 23, 2017 under the name of "Rich Baskin". The following is the reason, content and nature of those posts.

The post about OJ Simpson

This is a meme that I shared on my account that I just thought was funny. I have seen it Before and I am not the originator or creator of the meme.

The post about Isis

Being a Veteran who has seen first hand the destructive nature of Isis and Al-Qaeda I felt it absurd that someone would have that flag, for one, and that US citizens would feel it Ok to say and agree with the person conducting the experiment. I had watched a Documentary about Isis and what they did to the Kurdish and Yezidis both of whom I Have had the pleasure to work with while deployed to Iraq. The Yezidis being a very Small sect in Iraq and are only found in the area of operations for which I was assigned To. Isis had murdered many of them, both women and children and I felt a personal connection. The video from Berkley College just made me upset



The video of Demi Lovato

Officer Tapscott and I were singing this song during our shift. It was catchy and I couldn't get it out of my head. Plus my wife does like it.

I do understand that these may be considered insensitive, and that the timing was really bad. I also understand that following the events with another GPD Officer, this is not acceptable. I have taken measures so this will never happen again.

Sincerely,

Richard Baskin





Rich Baskin

39 mins •



Happy Thanksgiving everyone!!

