



**Garry E. Lucas**  
*Sheriff*

**Internal Affairs Investigation:** IC14-005

**Investigated by:** Sgt. Phil Sample  
Sgt. Mitch Seagondollar

**Date received:** April 1, 2014

**Date completed:** May 28, 2014

**Complainant (s):** Cmdr. Walter Warren

**Involved employee (s):** Deputy Ed Bylsma

**Allegation (s):**

On March 28, 2014 you failed to respond appropriately to a 911 call for service, and it's alleged that the call was inappropriately cleared without supervisor approval.

**Policy Violation (s):**

**01.29.040 PERFORMANCE OF BASIC DUTIES (EMPHASIS ADDED)**

Deputies will perform their basic duties, preserve the public peace, prevent crime, detect and arrest law violators, serve civil papers, protect life and property, and enforce the criminal laws of this jurisdiction, the State of Washington, and the United States, to the best of their ability and in accordance with all written directives.

**01.29.060 COMPETENCY (EMPHASIS ADDED)**

Employees will perform their assigned duties in a competent manner. Incompetence may be demonstrated by:

- A. A lack of knowledge of the laws to be enforced;
- B. An unwillingness to perform assigned tasks;

- C. The failure to conform to work standards established for the employee's rank or position;
- D. The failure to take appropriate action on the occasion of a crime, instance or disorder, or other incident; or
- E. Repeated work evaluations showing substandard performance.

Incompetent work performance will be grounds for disciplinary action.

#### **01.29.140 PROMPT RESPONSE TO CALLS (EMPHASIS ADDED)**

**Deputies will respond in a prompt manner when dispatched** or ordered to respond to a situation.

#### **Summary:**

On March 28, 2014, 911 received a call that was disconnected (hang up) located from 38302 NE Mint View road. Dispatch returned the call back to the disconnect number. Dispatch made contact with a male who had informed them that his wife had dialed by mistake. Dispatch asked if everything was okay. The male questioned Dispatches' question, "is everything okay", as if he didn't understand. Dispatch then asked the man if they could speak to his wife. The man then hung up the phone and the call was disconnected.

Deputy Ed Bylsma was the patrol deputy assigned to this district (80) and received the call. Bylsma was dispatched at approximately 1159 hours, March 28<sup>th</sup>, with the attached message from Dispatch "your discretion." Bylsma cleared the call 1206 hours, March 28<sup>th</sup>, without responding to the call or receiving a supervisor's approval.

On March 31, 2014, 911 received a call from a man named Mike. Mike is the adult son of the persons living in the home of the previous 911 call. He expressed his concerns to 911 because he had not heard from the family for 3 days. He called the house and there was no answer, then drove to the property and knocked on the door, there was still no answer. He walked around the property looking and was unable to locate anyone. Mike then called 911 to request police assistance.

Deputy Bylsma was working and received this call for service. The location of this call is Bylsma's assigned district. Bylsma responded to the call and met the family at the home. While checking the property a family pet came out to the driveway to greet them. Bylsma observed the dog had a dried substance on its coat. After closer examination he discovered what he thought to be blood on the dog's coat. Bylsma called for a supervisor (Randall) and an additional patrol unit (K. Harrison) to assist with the search of the home.

When all the units arrived, the deputies made entry inside the house and located a male and female on a bed in the master bedroom. Both were deceased. Sgt. Randall called for Major Crimes detectives to respond to the location. Bylsma requested a Chaplin respond to the location to provide assistance and comfort for the family.

The call was reviewed by Sheriff's Office Administrative command staff it was discovered that Bylsma failed to respond to a welfare check located at this same incident address just three days prior, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014. A major complaint was filed on Deputy Bylsma

regarding his performance of basic duties, competency, and prompt response to calls. The complaint was forwarded for Internal Affairs for investigation.

Upon investigation, it was determined that Deputy Bylsma was on his way to a pre-arranged lunch when he was dispatched to the initial welfare check call. He did not see or does not recall seeing the call text indicating that upon Dispatch's call back to the residence that the male answering the phone hung up on them when they asked to speak to his wife. Though the records indicate that it was Deputy Bylsma who pushed the Q4 button to cancel this call, he said he did not recall doing that – though he acknowledged having advised Dispatch that he would be 10-8 (Clear of the call). Deputy Bylsma acknowledged that he is required to contact a sergeant to Q4 (cancel) a call, and that he did not do so in this case, but that he felt it was acceptable given the circumstances.

### **Recommended finding (s):**

Based upon the documentation, data, and statements collected, the IA unit recommends the following finding:

General Order 01.29.040 Performance of Basic duties - **SUSTAINED**

General Order 01.29.060 Competency -**SUSTAINED**

General Order 01.29.140 Prompt response to calls - **SUSTAINED**

### **Investigation:**

This investigation was initiated when Commander Warren contacted the Internal Affairs Unit in regards to this event. Sgt. Seagondollar and I, Sgt. Phil Sample, were tasked with conducting the investigation. A complaint document was drafted (6 part) and presented to Deputy Bylsma at his home. I encouraged Bylsma to read the letter (complaint document) in its entirety and I needed to ensure he understood the expectations regarding his administrative leave. Bylsma was also reminded not to discuss this case with anyone except his attorney or guild representative. I then explained to him that we would be taking possession of his county patrol vehicle and other selected county items. He was allowed the opportunity to remove his personal belongs. All items taken from Deputy Bylsma were returned to property, inventoried, and stored for further disposition.

Investigative materials covered in this report include the AVL history on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Unit History of daily events (March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014), MDC messages, phone records, call history of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014, Q4 history from a previous event, transcripts, and interviews.

All supporting documents will be filed with the master case file.

### **Interview with Dispatcher Amy Coles**

On April 14, 2014, Sgt. Seagondollar and I interviewed Amy Coles at the Cresa 911 dispatch center. Coles was read the citizen perjury statement and she said she understood. We advised her that she was speaking to us voluntarily and she agreed to speak to us and be recorded.

March 28<sup>th</sup> 2014 Coles was working as the county dispatcher (station 902). Coles received a call from her co-worker Suzie Zimmer (station 906). Zimmer was the initial call taker and

received the call then forwarded it Coles. Coles said the call was initially coded as a 911 hang up call but came to her as a welfare check. The call was upgraded because of the suspicious comments made during the call. Coles said Zimmer had documented what was said in the call. Coles said she then sent the call to Blysmas with a message saying "your discretion."

Coles explained that an incomplete call is typically where we don't talk to anybody, there's literally nothing really heard, you don't speak to somebody, basically a blank line. But if the circumstances warranted they bump it up to a welfare check. This call became a welfare check based on the fact that Zimmer talked to a male when she called the number back. He said "oh my wife called" and when the call taker (Zimmer) asked to speak to her he refused and hung the phone up. Coles said "he seemed confused on the phone with her. Didn't understand what she was asking." This is when the call was dispatched to Blysmas.

There was no radio traffic. Coles said she put the call on his screen and sent him a message saying "your discretion." Blysmas never replied back, "I believed he acknowledged it on his screen." Coles said this indicates that he had it on his screen and was looking at it. Several minutes later, Coles said Blysmas came on the radio and asked her "regarding the call on my screen is there any premise history there." Coles responded "negative no premise history." Coles said Blysmas responded "copy if they advise they don't need any help I'll be 10-8." Coles then cleared the call on the computer with a coding of Q4 (information only).

Coles explained her comment of your discretion, "you tell me, you read it, you tell me what you think, basically we don't have much information to go on here, it's a lot of perception. You read the remarks she put in there and you tell me if you want to go, do you not want to go, do you want another car?."

This concludes the interview with Amy Coles.

### **Interview with Dispatcher Suzie Zimmer**

On April 15, 2014, Sgt. Seagondollar and I interviewed Suzie Zimmer at the Cresa 911 dispatch center. Zimmer agreed to speak with us for a recorded interview. Zimmer was read the citizen perjury statement and she said she understood. We advised her that she was speaking to us voluntarily and she agreed to be recorded.

On March 28, 2014, Zimmer was working ops radio (906). She was the call taker for this incident. Zimmer said that call was an incomplete call and she heard a "beep, beep", (the beep, beep is an audible sound that comes through to Dispatch. If a person were to call Dispatch and hang up even before the caller hears it ringing, it still transmits the signal "beep, beep" to Dispatch. Which they can then identify the location and call the number back.), and as heard on the dispatchers end, it indicated it was a land line call. Zimmer identified the address and the caller's number. Zimmer said the line disconnected so she called the number back and he (a male) answered. Zimmer said she identified herself "this is 911, got a call from your home do you need any help?" He said "no, my wife did that." Zimmer said "are you sure you don't need any help?" He replied "I don't understand." Zimmer said when he didn't understand she repeated what she said and then asked to talk to her (his wife), and then he hung up on me. Zimmer said she thought that it was odd that

he didn't understand what she meant when she said does anybody need any help, and then he hung up on me.

Zimmer said she changed the call to a welfare check because the first call was an incomplete "the beep, beep". Zimmer then thought the call was no longer an incomplete call so she changed it to a welfare check. Zimmer explained the call was then transferred to the county dispatcher (902). Zimmer then moved on to the next incoming call. (When a call is raised in seriousness from an incomplete to a welfare check it also raises the priority of the call).

Zimmer was assigned to a call taking station (906). Her duty was to receive incoming calls and transfer them to their perspective dispatchers. Zimmer did not dispatch any calls (to patrol / Bylsma) nor did she continue to monitor or read additional notes from this call.

When asked, Zimmer said she did not speak to Blysm (text, message, phone calls, or MDC). Zimmer said she is not aware of any type of agency policy regarding coding a call Q4 (which is a clearance code, meaning cancelled or disregarded). I asked if it mattered if a deputy Q4'd a call. Zimmer replied "it's off my shoulder, it's his liability not mine." When asked about Q4ing a call, Zimmer said that she would contact her supervisor and have them take care of that with other supervisors. Zimmer continued by saying, "I'm a dispatcher it's not my job to tell grown men who've been trained how to do their job."

This concludes the interview with Suzie Zimmer.

### **Interview with Sergeant Linda Hayes**

On April 15, 2014, Sergeant Linda Hayes was interviewed at Clark County Sheriff's Office Central Precinct by Sgt. Phil Sample and Sgt. Mitch Seagondollar. Sgt. Hayes was provided a copy of her employee witness rights. She said she understood them and signed them. There was no one else present.

On March 31, 2014, Hayes said she logged into service, saw and then reviewed the call on Mint View Road. Hayes said she talked to Randall and received the information about the murder/ suicide call that Major Crimes was currently investigating. Hayes said she then continued to Central Precinct. (It is very common for a sergeant coming on duty to talk to off going sergeants for pass down of information especially when it pertains to a Major Crimes call out).

Hayes said she started her shift early because Randall was the only sergeant on duty for day shift. She arrived at Central and was sitting in her office at about 1330 / 1400 hours. Hayes said when she had read the details of the call she noticed the primary officer on the call was Bylsma. Bylsma later returned to the precinct and she saw him in the hall. Hayes said "I said, hey Ed are you doing okay? I'm sorry that you had to go on a call like that." Hayes said, "Ed paused, shook his head and he goes we got an incomplete call there a couple of days ago." Hayes said she looked at her calendar and saw that it was a work day for their squad (their Monday). Hayes said she looked back at Bylsma and he said, "I had taken that call, the incomplete call, and I Q4'd the call." Hayes said her response was, "What!" Bylsma replied, "yeah I Q4'd it. There was no premise history so I Q4'd it." Hayes said she had told him that others had done it in the past. Bylsma replied "yeah it will probably go downtown."

Blysma then told Hayes that he was going to write his report and wanted her to review it. So he left and Hayes said she looked up the premise history to the call. Hayes said "That's when I read the dialog that came in the incomplete, because he seemed very nervous about Q4ing it." Hayes explained that there are some calls we Q4, firework complaints, noise complaints, barking dogs. Deputies have discretion for this type of call with prior supervisor approval at the beginning of shift. Hayes went on to say that she read the information and read "that when they asked to speak to the female and he hung up, ohhh that's really not, that didn't look good to me as a supervisor." Hayes didn't know if everyone had been told or what everyone knew, so that's when she called Horch (Central Precinct Commander).

About 45 minutes later Blysma returned at Hayes office and said, "I'm ready can you read my report and do I need to add anything in here?" Hayes said, "I can't dictate your report for you. Do you feel that you have all of the required elements?" Blysma said, "yes but I'm going to leave it in work status."

I asked Hayes if there was a call with no premise history would that be of more importance as opposed to less. Hayes said "personally I don't Q4 any incomplete calls. I respond to all incomplete calls and the reason why is this specific reason. There's going to be a time when a person is going to say the child is playing on the phone it was nothing and it was in fact something different. I always thought that since I've been out here and started law enforcement. So for me I weight heavier that there's no premise history that's even more heightened for me." Also there is no call that is an incomplete that we don't respond to. Hayes said she read the premise history for the day that Blysma didn't go the incomplete. Hayes thought it was kind of strange that there was no premise history and now there was a murder / suicide. Hayes said she read the call notes of March 28, 2014, and with reading those notes she said, "I was.. that was...Holy...Holy Toledo!" Hayes said, "I don't know how we wouldn't have gone to that."

This concludes the interview with Sgt. Hayes

### **Interview with Sergeant Craig Randall**

On April 15, 2014, Sergeant Craig Randall was interviewed at Clark County Sheriff's Office Central Precinct by Sgt. Phil Sample and Sgt. Mitch Seagondollar. Sgt. Randall was provided a copy of his employee witness rights. He said he understood them and signed them. There was no one else present.

I informed Randall that I would be asking questions regarding a dispatched Welfare check, located at 38302 NE Mint View Road. This call was assigned to Deputy Blysma on March 28, 2014. I asked Randall if he remembered the call. Randall said "my knowledge of it is from March 31<sup>st</sup> about the March 28<sup>th</sup> call." We started the interview from the March 31<sup>st</sup> date.

Randall said Blysma asked for him to respond to his call and location. Randall said when he arrived there was Deputy Blysma, Deputy Harrison, and a family member which he believed to be the son of the residents. Randall said he believed the son was also the complainant on the welfare check for the call on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Randall said he was told that no one had heard from the family for a while and the family had concerns, so they (deputies)



were going to make entry into the residence to check on the status of the people inside the house. Randall said it was his understanding that no one (from within the house) had been responding to phone calls. Also, it would have been too obvious for someone in the house if they were up and moving around not to know of their (the deputies) presence while they were in the driveway.

Randall said that Bylsma told him that the family hadn't been able to get ahold of the residents. Randall said, "basically, what I've already mentioned. The family had concerns about some comments made around Christmas time about weapons used and attitudes and things over subjects I didn't go into. They (the family) were concerned about the stepdad."

Randall said up to this point Bylsma had never told him about the previous call on the 28th. Randall continued to say that they were there for a welfare check and he expected to find the worst. Randall based this on the facts of the call; welfare check, no one's responding, the family hadn't heard anything, and Bylsma just wanted the shift supervisor involved in case of a death investigation, or at least for Randall to have knowledge if he was not on scene. Randall explained to us that typically two people respond to a welfare check. Randall believed that Harrison was already in transit at the time we he was requested. Randall wasn't sure when Harrison had arrived at the location.

Randall said, "the specific issue about the 28<sup>th</sup>. I know nothing about this issue until after we've already made discovery and then Bylsma provides me some information which, I believe, is why we're here right now." It almost appears that Bylsma waited until he knew the status of the couple before he made comments to Randall about the previous call. Randall said they made entry inside the house and discovered the deceased. Randall said he advised Dispatch that they were code 4 (advising them that they are okay) and then asked for Dispatch to have Major Crimes contact him. Randall said they then backed out of the house and went outside near the vehicles. Randall hadn't spoken to Major Crimes Sergeant Kevin Allais yet, but he made an observation of Bylsma saying he had a concerned look on his face. Randall said he then spoke to Sgt. Allais directly on the telephone. Randall said he gave Allais a description of the house for the search warrant. Randall said he also informed the Command Duty Officer (CDO), Mike Cooke, of the call and what they had discovered.

(Two things should be noted here. Randall said, "It almost appears Bylsma waited until he knew the status of the couple before he made comment (the 28<sup>th</sup>) to Randall." Secondly, Randall never told Sgt. Allais or Cmdr. Cooke about the incomplete call on March 28<sup>th</sup>.)

Randall said they were standing around by the cars by the front gate entrance that led to the front door. Bylsma said to Randall "well, there-there was an incomplete call here on the 28<sup>th</sup>." Randall asked Bylsma "was that one of our working days." Bylsma replied, "Yeah, it was our Monday. Well, uh, they didn't complete the call, I Q4d it." Randall said his reply to Bylsma was "you Q4d it! I didn't know of it. Why did you Q4 it?" Randall said Bylsma then shrugged his shoulder and didn't go into much verbalization about it. Randall said he thought Bylsma said, "I called him and he said she bumped the phone." Randall said that was the conversation, "he called the address and he had said the wife bumped the phone." Randall said he then told Bylsma "well work with detectives, cause that information has to come out in the investigation and find out how they want that to be divulged in the report."

Randall said regarding the Q4'ing (Q4 taking the call for information /cancelation) he can't find in print where it is a policy but it's just become over the past couple of years a standard practice. He thinks that is the same with most all sergeants but Dispatch will accept Q-4's from deputies. Randall said, "I tell my guys nothing gets Q-4'd without me knowing about it. Now I may agree and put in the comments section of the –clearance of the call Q-4 per me." Randall explained a Q-4 means a no response call.

Randall said his understanding was the call on the 28<sup>th</sup> was an incomplete call. I explained to Randall that this call was initially an incomplete call. The call then became a welfare check (on the same day the 28<sup>th</sup>) after Dispatch had made contact with a man who had hung up after a short conversation. Randall said, "I have no knowledge of that I thought it was just an incomplete call." Randall said his understanding was that Bylsma called the house and that's how Bylsma knew the wife had bumped the phone. I corrected Randall and informed him that it was actually Dispatch that had spoken to the man and he had hung up (disconnected) with them. This is when the call was elevated by Dispatch to a welfare check. Dispatch then gave the call to Bylsma saying "your discretion." Randall replied, "No, I don't think I pulled up that call."

When asked about the circumstances of this call, Randall said he's not as much concerned about premise history as he is with the hang up to Dispatch. Randall said, "that would've alarmed me far more than no prior premise history." Randall continued to say "I would have gone to it. We do these multiple times and find out there's a reasonable explanation, but when dispatched with good intentions on their part. You don't get a reasonable explanation for what's going on and when the person hangs up on you. You know that would up the intensity of this to me. Wouldn't be going there lights and sirens, but I would certainly be going up there. Either made contact directly or by phone and talk to everybody."

Randall agreed that Bylsma never contacted him on the 28<sup>th</sup> regarding the welfare check call. The investigation showed there were no MDC messages or phone call to him from Bylsma. Randall said, "this was all apparently on his own." Randall said, "if he had called me with the case facts as that you presented it, I would say, "No we are going!"".

Randall said he never discussed this incident with Bylsma (after the fact) because he figured that this would be investigated.

I encourage the reader to read the transcript in its entirety for a better understanding of the interview with Sgt. Randall.

This concludes the interview with Sgt. Randall

### **Interview with Deputy Kateri Harrison**

On April 30, 2014, Deputy Kateri Harrison was interviewed at Clark County Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs Office by Sgt. Phil Sample and Sgt. Mitch Seagondollar. Deputy Harrison was provided a copy of her employee witness rights. She said she understood them and signed them. There was no one else present.



On March 31, 2014, Harrison was working a patrol shift as 1D82. She is assigned to a core beat within the unincorporated populated portion of the City of Vancouver. I informed Harrison of the nature of the interview. I asked her if she were working on March 28, 2014, which would have been the date of the primary call for service. Harrison was working that date and went on to explain. To the best of her memory she said she thought the call had been announced over the radio but did not respond to the call (this was not Harrison's call district). Harrison said Bylsma was the district car that day (beat 80). I asked Harrison to tell me about her participation with the call on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

Bylsma had been dispatched to the Mint View Road call. Harrison said Bylsma came on the radio and saying there was a dog that had blood on it. Harrison said she self-dispatched (remotely assigning herself the call without assistance) and then proceeded to the call. Harrison said she had arrived and was at the main gate awaiting a gate code. Sgt. Randall joined her at this time. Harrison said she could see a civilian truck there and Bylsma was talking to a guy. Harrison doesn't believe there was any radio traffic other than from Dispatch giving the premise history from March 28, 2014. There were no MDC messages, or telephone calls related to this call on her part.

Harrison said she made contact with Bylsma and the only thing he told her was "basically what you're here for is what is on the screen and that's it." Harrison said Bylsma told them (Randall and Harrison) that the dog was found with blood on its coat. Harrison said they then went to the porch to check things out. They found an unsecure door and made their entry into the kitchen. Once in the kitchen, Harrison said she was assigned the duty to cover the other two (Sgt. Randall and Bylsma) while they checked rooms. Harrison said she was watching the hallway while Randall and Bylsma went into the master bedroom. Harrison said, "while I'm holding long [meaning to provide long range cover for her partners in the home], they said okay, were closing it up." Harrison said they then closed the house up and they all walked out of the house. Harrison grabbed and picked up a dog that was at her feet and removed it from the house. Harrison said she returned the dog to the civilian truck.

Harrison said as she was walking out with the dog and Bylsma told her that he was the one that Q4'd the call. I asked if that was in regards to the incomplete on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Harrison replied "yes." Harrison said she doesn't remember the exact verbiage but it was something like he said he canceled the call. I asked Harrison if she noticed anything about Bylsma's demeanor, mannerisms, or anything else after he had told her that. Harrison replied "considering probably I would assume have just seen two dead bodies knowing now obviously, I mean obviously then there were two dead bodies, um I mean he was saddened." Harrison said, "I don't know if it was from what he had seen or what it was, but I mean that's the way he appeared."

I asked Harrison if she had ever asked Bylsma why he Q4'd the call. Harrison replied, "No I've never asked him about that. I may have asked him if it was a murder suicide and he had said, um, I don't remember what or if anything he said back, but the he had said something, yeah, he Q4'd the call."

Harrison said after they had left the house Randall cleared her from the call and she returned into service available for the next call. I asked Harrison what her understanding was regarding the clearing of calls. Harrison said "my understanding is that you ask

sergeant's blessing to Q4 the calls no matter what it is." Harrison believes that Randall had given that talk as one of his expectations.

This concludes the interview with Deputy Harrison.

### **Interview with Deputy Ed Bylsma**

On May 7, 2014, I, Sgt. Phil Sample, along with Sgt. Mitch Seagondollar interviewed Deputy Ed Bylsma. Bylsma was provided a copy of his employee rights to include Garrity Advisement. He said he understood them and signed them. Bylsma was accompanied by Guild Attorney Mark Makler and Guild Representative Robert Latter.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Bylsma stated he was dispatched to this call. Bylsma was northbound on State Route 503 and Dispatch gave him the call. Bylsma said, "I remember glancing down at the computer." Bylsma said the call was a 911 incomplete. He said Dispatch said (written notes in the call) that a man had answered the phone and said that his wife must have done this and it was accidental. I asked Bylsma if he remembered if the call was a welfare check or an incomplete. Bylsma thought the call was an incomplete. I informed Bylsma that the incomplete had changed to a welfare check. Dispatch had also typed to Bylsma "your discretion." Bylsma said he doesn't remember receiving that MDC message and he doesn't remember pushing the Q4 or clearing the call, saying he thought that Dispatch took the call off of his screen.

I asked Bylsma if there was any premise history at the house. He replied, "there was no premise history." Bylsma explained premise history as, "has there been any other calls there, you know regardless of what they are, yea they called in a traffic accident or whatever it was." That would basically be any calls made from the phone at that address. I asked Bylsma why would he ask a question like that? Bylsma replied "to see if there were any other kind of disturbances that would bring up any red flags for me." I asked Bylsma if there was anything about this call on this date that was a red flag to him. Bylsma replied "none." Bylsma stated that there were no concerns to him that he had saw for this call on this date. I asked if Bylsma had a chance to read the call on his screen. He replied "I read through it glanced at it, yeah, because Dispatch was giving it to me on the air." Bylsma said he was driving at the time.

I informed Bylsma about the transcript of radio traffic which had been documented in text format. I asked if there were any different channels / alternatives channels used. (Alternative channels are used when deputies want to ask additional of lengthy questions for clarification on a call. This way they are not monopolizing or tying up the primary channel). There were no other channels used for any communication.

I asked Bylsma if he remembered calling the residence. Bylsma said "no I didn't, I don't think I called it. If I called it I don't remember calling it." I showed Bylsma his phone records and pointed out the two made to the residence. Both call were labeled as one minute (this could also indicated the call was under a minute). Bylsma said "if it says I did then I did, I just don't remember doing that."

I asked Bylsma "so you get the call on the MDC and you ask about the premise history, they give you an answer, you call the residence. What else did you do?" Bylsma said, "I

don't remember doing anything more other than just saying I'll be 10-8 (back in service /clear) then if they're okay." I asked Bylsma, at any other time did you contact Randall or any other supervisor? Bylsma said "no, I didn't."

I asked Bylsma what was the standard protocols or policies as far as when you don't take a call. Bylsma said "Yeah we will commonly clear a call if it doesn't meet a criteria that we would respond to and if there was no call back to 911 I would have continued on to the call. But when they told that it was accidental and there was no premise history there that pretty common for us to go okay, especially like with kids." I asked if he was aware if Dispatch had talked to a male and that person had hung the phone up on Dispatch. Bylsma said he was unaware that the male had hung up on Dispatch. He continued to say all he knew is that they said they had talked to him and he said it was his wife and it was accidental.

I showed Bylsma a copy of the call which (this is a photo copy as it would appear on his MDC (computer screen)). Bylsma said he doesn't remember seeing the call in its entirety. According to Bylsma he received the call while he was driving and didn't read the entire call. Bylsma pointed out on the paper up to the point where he actually read the call. Bylsma pointed out that he doesn't remember or didn't see the part "I asked to speak w/wife and he hung up on me. I asked again he said "No she does not." Bylsma said he believes he remembers reading the line, "I asked if she was okay did she need any help and he said he didn't understand". Bylsma said he doesn't remember seeing the other information because he was driving and talking to Dispatch on the radio. Bylsma's radio traffic to Dispatch was "regarding the call on my screen, is there any premise history there?" Dispatch replied, "Negative no premise history." Bylsma said, "Copy if they advised they don't need any help I'll be 10-8." Bylsma then cleared the call Q4 (information only).

*I encourage the reader to read the call record in its entirety for a better understanding of the information appearing on Bylsma's computer screen (the call /notes in the call).*

I asked Bylsma "why did you cancel the call?" Bylsma stated Dispatch usually will call the caller back right away and then tell us what they had found out. Bylsma said when Dispatch told him there was no premise history and it was accidental, "I was like okay well I guess they don't need any help and I'll be 10-8 (back in service/clear). Bylsma said he doesn't remember physically pushing the button to clear the call.

I asked if Bylsma had received any expectation about clearing calls. Bylsma replied "on some calls but I was taking this call like it was a cancelation basically, it was basically being canceled." I asked if Sgt. Randall had ever given the expectation on clearing calls. Bylsma responded "yes, we've had that discussion, yes." I showed Bylsma a copy of an event where he had sought out his supervisor and requested permission to Q4 a call. Bylsma said he thought that this call was basically being canceled. Bylsma said Dispatch will also cancel calls. Bylsma said with what he had read, he thought that it was being canceled.

I asked Bylsma regarding the Mint View Road call if a lack of premise history should change things for him. Bylsma said "no" because when he got the call and heard the man had said that it was his wife. Bylsma was asked about the information on the screen. Seagondollar asked Bylsma since Dispatch had taken the call and documented the information prior to dispatching it to him, would he have seen the information or wouldn't it

have been on his screen in its entirety. Bylsma informed Seagondollar that Dispatch can add information to the call. Seagondollar acknowledge that but reminded Bylsma that there was nothing added and all information had been entered at 1157hours and Bylsma acknowledged the call (via MDC) at 1202 hours. Bylsma agreed that all of that information might have been on the screen but he was driving at the time and having conversation with them. It was brought up and acknowledged that there is a limited amount of space on the computer screen and sometimes it is necessary to scroll up or down to view information in its entirety. Seagondollar asked Bylsma if he would check to see if there were any additional information regarding a call prior to clearing. Bylsma replied "not all the time." Bylsma made no other attempts to get clarification on the call or to have anyone else respond.

This concluded the interview with Deputy Ed Bylsma

### **Interview with Deputy Doug Paulson**

On May 28, 2014, Deputy Doug Paulson was interviewed by phone from The Clark County Sheriff's Office Internal Affairs Office by Sgt. Phil Sample. Deputy Paulson was read his employee witness rights. He said he understood them. There was no one else present.

This interview was for clarification regarding the lunch meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Paulson stated he, Bylsma, and Bylsma's girlfriend (Cindee Shaffer) were all present for lunch on this date.

Deputy Paulson is currently assigned to the Central Precinct desk and was on duty March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Paulson stated his normal lunch timeframe is daily from 1200 (noon) to about 1230 hours. Paulson said his lunch time is also flexible depending on his call load. Paulson stated he and Bylsma have taken lunch together before and it is normally based on Paulson's schedule. Paulson said his break is normally 30 minutes in duration. I asked Paulson they (Paulson and Bylsma) make arrangements to meet for lunch. Paulson said to the best of his memory Bylsma called him to make arrangements to go to lunch together. Then they typically meet at the place agreed upon to eat. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, they all went to Itchy Teriyaki in Battle Ground. Paulson said they have had lunch together at this location in the past. Paulson doesn't remember how long they were there but said Ed had arrived just after 1200 hours. Paulson does not recall Bylsma making reference or remarks about any calls he's been on that day.

This concludes the interview with Deputy Doug Paulson

### **Conclusion:**

Bylsma is a deputy with 24 years of experience and his interpretation explaining the call was; my mind set is receiving a 911 call and I need to go to this call. As the call came out they said the call was accidental and they actually talked to someone there. Well sometimes you can believe that and sometimes you can't. I asked if there was any premise history there and they said "no". That matched the normal protocol for what we always did and this point "it's almost like an alarm call that gets timed out, nobody even responds to it."

Bylsma said, "On a 911 call these are your thought patterns when going to the call. Well they said it was accidental and you got a whole lot of other things on your plate that day. Doing investigations on other things, it's your Monday and you're trying to get back into your routine of what you're going to do or who you're going to see and what you gotta do. And on this particular call they said it was accidental and I wanted to go a step further and asked about the premise history there, which is a typical thing to ask. When they said there was no history dispatch, never said this was out of the norm, I didn't take the call." Bylsma even explained his phone calls to the number as such, "I work in a very rural beat people are out there and they are not always by their phone. I was thinking this guy was out on his property working in the yard." Based upon this information Bylsma didn't find it as alarming.

Bylsma said when he was dispatched to that same address on Monday (31<sup>st</sup>) and he read the comments (about the male having hung up on Dispatch) he said it changed his thought process. Bylsma said he never saw or heard that information on the other call (28<sup>th</sup>). I asked "What makes the decision making process different?" Bylsma said had he of seen the extra information he would have went the extra step for the call. When asked about that particular day, the 31<sup>st</sup>, what was the red flag? Bylsma said when the question was asked to speak to the wife and he hung up on them. Bylsma cleared the call and said he went to lunch and met Deputy Paulson and his girlfriend Cindy.

On March 31, 2014, Bylsma was dispatched to a welfare check at the Mint View Road address. Bylsma said he immediately remembered the address and he then pulled up the premise history from that call, and that's when he saw the other details (about the hang up on Dispatch) in the call. Bylsma said he received the call and then responded. He met with the son, Mike. Bylsma greeted him and told him he thought they had a 911 call there on Friday. Bylsma said he "wasn't going to hide anything", adding that "it is what it is". Bylsma said they walked up to the front of the house and knocked on the door. The windows were open, and they didn't hear anything or anybody. One of the dogs came up to him them and the son noticed some dried blood on the dog. Bylsma checked the windows and couldn't see anything so he then requested a supervisor and another deputy respond to the call. Bylsma said he told Randall that there was a 911 call there on Friday. Bylsma didn't think Randall heard him and so he said let's just go check the house. They all entered through the man door and entered the house. Randall and Bylsma went to the bedroom and that's when they found the deceased. After they had backed out of the house that's when Bylsma told Randall "we had a 911 call here on Friday." Bylsma said they didn't have a lot of discussion about this. He doesn't remember Randall being upset. Bylsma said "I was in my own world at this time, this is not good." Bylsma said, "there was a 911 call here that basically got cancelled and in 24 years of doing this we don't normally run into this".

Bylsma said he left the call and returned to Central Precinct. He said he talked to Sgt. Linda Hayes and "laid it out." He said he told her exactly what had happened, "there was a 911 call and I cancelled the call, 10-8. Because they said it was accidental." Bylsma stated, "I feel bad today for had happened."

Bylsma acknowledged that he responded to a welfare check on the 28<sup>th</sup>. On the 31<sup>st</sup> he returned to the same welfare check. Bylsma read the call in its entirety prior to going to the call on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Bylsma stated he is aware of county policy relating to response to calls and performance of duties. When asked if he thought his actions violated any policies Bylsma responded, "I don't think so or I wouldn't have done it." I asked Bylsma if he has



the authority to cancel calls. Bylsma responded “yes, we take things as district information.” When asked about the call on the 28th and if he ever talked to Randall about that call, Bylsma replied “I don’t think I did, no.”

Deputy Ed Bylsma has been working in the law enforcement field for 24 years. Over the course of his tenure he has said to have responded to several calls of the same nature. Bylsma said Sgt. Randall “his sergeant” had given his expectations about Q4ing calls and he clearly understood them - and this was evident with a previous call (not related to this event) where Bylsma requested permission from Sgt. Randall to cancel (Q4) the call.

During this investigation Deputy Bylsma admitted he had only briefly read the details on this call. In doing so he missed some of the most important facts for this call. Deputy Bylsma stated his attention to detail was diverted because he was driving his patrol vehicle while he tried to read the call. It should also be noted that Deputy Bylsma’s attention could have also been possibly diverted because he was en route to a pre-arranged lunch engagement with a co-worker and his (Bylsma’s) girlfriend when he received this call. Just a few short moments after he removed himself from the call, he went to lunch.

Bylsma said his interpretation, had he read all of the comments explaining the call, is that he needed to go to the call. He continued to explain with regards to his thought process that the call was accidental, and Dispatch had actually talked to someone there. Bylsma did in fact ask Dispatch (via radio transmission) if they requested assistance he would continue to the call, if not he’d be back in service, 10-8. Bylsma also attempted to call the home twice. Both phone calls where only a minute in length of time. He never spoke to anyone. Bylsma asked Dispatch if there was any premise history there and they said “no”. Bylsma said that matched the normal protocol for what we always did and he likened it to an alarm call that gets timed out, saying that nobody even responds to it.

During this interview Deputy Bylsma said he felt remorse for his actions (or lack thereof) pertaining to this call. Bylsma stated, “I feel bad still today...that something bad happened...”

This investigation shows a preponderance of evidence that in conducting himself in such a manner as described in the foregoing pages, and in the more detailed investigative report, and in the interview transcripts, that Deputy Bylsma violated each of the below policies:

A recommended finding for 01.29.040 PERFORMANCE OF BASIC DUTIES - **SUSTAINED**

A recommended finding for 01.29.060 COMPETENCY - **SUSTAINED**

A recommended finding for 01.29.140 PROMPT RESPONSE TO CALLS - **SUSTAINED**

**End of report**



**Attached documents:**

Deputy Ed Bylsma

- Selected CCSO Phone records
- Selected AVL records
- Interview Transcripts
- Selected MDC Messages
- Selected Unit History Records

Sgt. Craig Randall Interview Transcripts

Sgt. Linda Hayes Interview Transcripts

Deputy Kateri Harrison Interview Transcripts

Dispatcher Amy Coles Interview Transcripts

Dispatcher Suzie Zimmer Interview Transcripts

Deputy Doug Paulson Interview Transcripts

Interview notice/waiver