

Correcting the Record for the ALADS Dispatcher

Because the ALADS Dispatcher is widely distributed to deputy sheriffs of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, it would be expected that the contributors would have an interest in reporting that is factually accurate. Recognizing that interest, we submit the following corrections to factually inaccurate information that appears in recent editions of the Dispatcher:

In the June 2013 edition of the Dispatcher, ALADS Counsel Richard Shinee made claims about the discharge of a deputy in the context that the LASD has "turned over the discipline process to OIR who has complete veto power." Not only is that claim completely untrue, but Mr. Shinee failed to properly understand the facts of one of his primary examples of a recent employee discharge. Mr. Shinee wrote:

One deputy was fired for transferring inmates, allegedly yelling at inmates, and keeping an inmate in a search position for too long while searching him. The only prior discipline for this employee, a 29 year deputy sheriff, was 17 years ago for an off duty incident.

It would be inappropriate to disclose the discipline history of the employee, but needless to say, Mr. Shinee was not only inaccurate about the time span since the employee's most recent discipline but also with the number of times the employee had received discipline during his tenure with the County.

More importantly, Mr. Shinee omitted certain facts and glossed over details which were learned during the Department's investigation:

- The deputy ordered inmate workers to secretly move a desk which belonged to the medical staff and switch it with his desk. When deputies from the next shift noticed what had happened they had the same workers return the desk to its rightful user.
- When the deputy returned the next day he was angered that the desk had been moved. He blamed the workers for being disloyal to him, revoked their inmate worker status and transferred them without seeking the required authorization. He pushed one of the inmates so that he fell into the metal frame of a bed and suffered a cut and bruise. He did not report the force and did not seek medical treatment for the injury to the inmate.
- When another deputy discovered that the inmate workers had been transferred without authorization – placing their safety in jeopardy – he returned them to their original location and returned them to their inmate worker status.
- When the deputy in question returned to work and discovered the inmate workers had been returned he became angry, yelled at them, threatened to make their lives miserable and told them that he would transfer them to a location where their families

could never visit them. He also allegedly told one of the workers, “Who has more juice, me or the deputy who brought you back?”

- The deputy conducted searches of the inmate workers’ living quarters – a storage room – multiple times. The inmate workers noted one occasion where they were wearing only shorts and t-shirts and the deputy kept the workers on their knees with feet crossed and hands behind their heads for what they estimated was from 15 to 45 minutes. Two inmate workers later described that they were kept in the position long enough so that they fell over in pain. On multiple occasions, the deputy allegedly took all of their property, their jail issued uniforms, bedding and mattresses and locked the workers into the storage room for the entire shift.
- Another deputy from another shift became concerned when he learned the deputy told others to not return the inmate workers’ property. When he went to check on their welfare, he found them cold and locked into the storage room in their underwear with no bedding, blankets or other clothing. The inmates told him that they wanted to make a complaint so he promptly notified his supervisor.
- During the subsequent investigation the inmate workers described an incident where the deputy grabbed their faces or necks and simulated stabbing the inmates in the neck with a pencil. He repeatedly yelled at them, used profanity and on one occasion threw books at one of the inmate workers.
- A deputy from another shift described that one of the inmate workers spoke English and came to him and informed about the incidents of having their property taken and being left on their knees for extended periods of time.
- Multiple deputies reported that it was common knowledge that these particular inmate workers were not supposed to be moved without specific authorization. The transfer not only jeopardized the inmates’ safety but also the security of other law enforcement operations.
- During the investigation, the deputy denied the allegations. He said that he moved the inmate workers because an informant told him that the workers were dealing contraband. He said he did not investigate the allegation but just moved the workers. When investigators asked the deputy to disclose the alleged informant, the deputy refused. When he was asked if he was familiar with the Department’s informant policy he said that he was not (despite being a 29 year veteran). He then told the investigator that he had been misunderstood and that it was a random unnamed inmate who told him about the contraband dealing, not an actual informant.
- The deputy also denied having the inmates on their knees, even though his partner deputy did say that inmates were on their knees but for only five minutes and that she left when the deputy began taking the inmates’ property away.

In light of all of the above that Mr. Shinee neglected to mention, the Department decided to terminate the deputy.

In the July 2013 edition of the Dispatcher, ALADS Executive Director Steve Remige casts aspersions on the quality of an investigation. One of his stated concerns about the investigation is that IAB did not re-interview the subject deputy. His stated concern would be a valid one except the record shows that the deputy was re-interviewed by IAB with her ALADS representative present. Without getting into more details about the incident, suffice to say that Mr. Remige's characterization of the incident and the investigation suffers from the same level of imprecision and inaccuracy than does any concern he raises about the investigation itself.

In the September 2013 edition of the Dispatcher, Executive Director Remige bemoans the fact that a deputy may be disciplined for standing in his house and telling a solicitor to get off his property. We are not aware of anyone being so disciplined. We are aware of a case in which a deputy has been criminally charged with telling a mother and her son to get off his property while pointing a firearm at the two of them and using his laser sight on them. We assume that Mr. Remige was not aware of the additional details in this case or he would have included them in his account in the Dispatcher.

We again urge that the Dispatcher work to improve factual accuracy in its missives to its important membership, Los Angeles County deputy sheriffs.