

Keene Police Department
Keene, New Hampshire 03431

15 March 1988

Letter of Reprimand

Patrol Officer James McLaughlin

On August 16, 1987, you were involved in a verbal altercation with Glenn [Privacy (PII)] in the police desk area of City Hall. The situation was mediated by Sergeant Ed [Privacy] and was subsequently reported to City Manager Patrick MacQueen, Acting Police Chief.

Subsequent to the incident, it was learned that the Dictaphone logging recorder tapes were not properly filed and that a section of the tape for August 16, 1987, at the time of an initial telephone altercation between you and [Privacy (PII)], the complainant, was erased. In the subsequent interviews concerning the incident, no reasonable reason for the blank tape was found and an electronic examination of the tape revealed unintelligible voices.

Upon my appointment as Chief, I was assigned the matter by the City Manager and have sought a resolution to the matter. The two senior officers, assigned to review the information and further gather the facts, found that many matters were handled poorly, at best, in this matter. You provided statements that you had "words" with the complainant and had rewound the tape to get his name, yet did not purposely erase any part thereof. You could not explain the misfiling of the tapes, nor why the log did not indicate the tape cleaning or changing at 2400 hours.

Upon my questioning of you, you had little to add, yet your memory seemed to fail you on specifics despite the severity of the matter. I further noted your propensity for the use of vulgar language, a practice I have observed a number of times since.

After my last discussion with you, and after completely reviewing the file submitted by Lieutenants Fish and McLellan, I reviewed your personnel file and several internal investigations. While you have accumulated a number of praises in your career, a disproportionate number of serious accusations and violations have significantly detracted from your record, including a one week suspension.

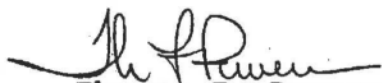
As the Chief of Police, I can not, and will not, tolerate misconduct, falsifications and profanity toward the public or

others and I will not accept substandard performance or conduct that is **Privacy**ly inappropriate and adversely affecting the image of the police department.

While I am not imposing any loss time discipline in this matter (basically because of the time span), I do not accept your language toward **Privacy (PII)**, your swift exit to the public foyer and your operation of the logging recorder as acceptable. Further, your failure to note, in the log as required, the tape changing and cleaning, and your loss of memory of this, is unacceptable.

Your current personal attitude and propensity to do just what can get you by will not be accepted as satisfactory performance either. By issuance of this reprimand, I encourage you to take positive steps to improve your productivity, your attitude and your complete outlook on law enforcement in general. Your talents and interests are noted and could well be utilized should you take this reprimand in a positive manner.

In light of the significance of this incident and the existence of prior progressive discipline, this letter shall be permanent in nature and, any further violations of city or departmental procedure, as well as state and federal law, shall result in serious progressive discipline or discharge.


Thomas F. Powers
Chief of Police