



# City of Phoenix

PUBLIC RECORDS  
Released pursuant to  
A.R.S. 39-121, Et. Seq.

**To:** Jeri L. Williams  
Police Chief

**Date:** October 9, 2019

**From:** Shane A. Disotell, Commander <sup>EP</sup>  
Professional Standards Bureau <sub>A DC</sub>

**Subject:** INTERNAL INVESTIGATION – PSB19-0074

**Internal Investigators:** Lieutenant Eric Pagone (Investigative Review)  
Sergeant Todd Murphy (Primary Investigator)  
Sergeant Jason Robidoux (Secondary Investigator)

**Allegation #1:** It is alleged, on March 7, 2018, Officer Jeffrey Anders #6528 violated Social Media Use policy when he posted inappropriate content on his personal Facebook account.

**Findings:** Sustained

**Employee/s Involved:** Officer Jeffrey Anders #6528  
Cactus Park Precinct / 91A Squad

**Complainant:** Department Initiated  
(Plain View Project)

**Attachments:** See Attachments Section

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## **SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION:**

On March 7, 2018, Officer Jeffrey Anders #6528 posted an inappropriate meme on his personal Facebook page. The Facebook post contained insensitive racial, sexual orientation, and gender equality context. The post was discovered by the Plain View Project (PVP) and released to the public and various media outlets on June 1, 2019. Officer Anders' Facebook post caused major reputation damage to the Phoenix Police Department, exposed himself and the Phoenix Police Department to public mistrust, and violated the basic Department values.

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**DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION:**

On June 1, 2019, the PVP released a collection of Facebook posts to the public and various media outlets. These Facebook posts were compiled from, what was believed to be, verified Facebook profiles of Phoenix Police Officers as well as officers from seven additional jurisdictions. According to the PVP website, the posts were comprised of excerpts from officers' public Facebook activity. All posts collected by the PVP were considered to possibly undermine public trust and confidence in police. The PVP website states, "The posts and comments are open to various interpretations. We do not know what a poster meant when he or she typed them; we only know that when we saw them, they concerned us."<sup>1</sup>

On June 1, 2019, the PVP published information on their searchable website which resulted in a wide array of negative local and national media coverage involving the Phoenix Police Department. The exposure from the officers' Facebook posts by the PVP were subsequently used by the media in local headlines that damaged the reputation of the Phoenix Police Department (see Attachments Section).<sup>2</sup> Some of the headlines read as follows:

- June 3, 2019, "Phoenix officers exposed for racist, violent Facebook posts," <https://www.abc15.com><sup>3</sup>
- June 3, 2019, "Phoenix Cops Bash Muslims, Immigrants, and Black People Online...," <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com><sup>4</sup>
- June 4, 2019, "Phoenix Police investigating 'embarrassing and disturbing' posts...," <https://www.12news.com><sup>5</sup>
- June 5, 2019, "Plain View Project brings police under fire for 'shameful' web posts," <https://www.azcentral.com><sup>6</sup>

On June 3, 2019, the Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) initiated an internal investigation concerning the Phoenix Police officers listed on the PVP website. PSB investigators reviewed the PVP database via [www.plainviewproject.org](http://www.plainviewproject.org). During the review, PSB discovered Officer Anders' name under the Facebook account [REDACTED]. The PVP listed seven (7) of his personal Facebook posts on the website as a matter of public concern.<sup>7</sup>

Officer Anders was questioned about one (1) of the posts, which contained insensitive racial, sexual orientation, and gender equality context.<sup>8</sup> This Facebook post was identified as

potentially inappropriate and/or unprofessional based on the inception of the Department's Social Media Use policy, Operations Order 3.27, which was added to Phoenix Police Department policy in August 2013.

*PSB Interview with Officer Jeffrey Anders #6528:*

On June 18, 2019, PSB investigators interviewed Officer Anders. Officer Anders acknowledged he has a Facebook account under his name and posts on the account. Officer Anders said his Facebook account has been private since 2014. Officer Anders denied he posted photos or text identifying himself as a Phoenix Police officer or a City of Phoenix employee.

Officer Anders was questioned by PSB investigators about the Facebook post, identified as Facebook Post #1.



Officer Anders said he posted the meme on his Facebook account. Officer Anders stated, "Just a, kind of a Second Amendment post where, um, everybody now a days is complaining on how there, you know, they can make up whatever rules they want, so instead of being an assault rifle, well this one wants to identify by himself as a hunting rifle, and this one wants to be a BB gun, this one does not know which gun locker to put himself in, um, this one does not want to be labeled, and the others are just black rifles matter, tactical rifles matter."<sup>9</sup>

Officer Anders said he thought the post was funny. Officer Anders said he understood the post to be a parody related to Second Amendment issues and assault rifles. Officer Anders said his intention was not to offend anyone's sexual orientation. Officer Anders stated, "I wouldn't know

what they would take out of that, I don't know where they would get that from, as they are just rifles, it doesn't say anything about people or anything like that."<sup>10</sup>

Officer Anders denied the post hindered the Phoenix Police Department's mission of trying to build transparency and relationships within the community and stated, "It doesn't mean anything, it's just rifles."<sup>11</sup> Officer Anders denied the post brought embarrassment and/or discredit to the department and stated, "They issued me one of these rifles."<sup>12</sup> Officer Anders said the post does not support the P.R.I.D.E statement, but also does not violate it either.<sup>13</sup>

The job description for the classification of Police Officer (job code 62210) has numerous distinguishing features of the class, essential functions, and required knowledge.<sup>14</sup> One of the fundamental reasons the classification of Police Officer exists is to, "...serve the community...while treating everyone with dignity and respect." The duties of this classification are partially achieved through communication and partnerships with the community. One aspect of rating an officer's performance is through gathering citizen feedback. All duties and tasks performed by Police Officers, including essential functions, require compliance with City and Department policies and procedures.

The essential functions for the classification of Police Officer include to, "Protect, serve, and earn the trust and respect of the community," and "Working with the community and community groups to reduce crime." Additionally, a Police Officer must maintain a professional appearance and attitude always. Another essential function of a Police Officer is to, "Present legal testimony in a court setting, in both criminal and civil matters; and communicating with members of the public in challenging settings." Furthermore, it is essential for individuals within the Police Officer classification to, "Model the City's mission, vision and values," by committing to "Exceptional customer service, integrity, transparency, diversity, personal empowerment, teamwork, and professionalism."

The Police Officer classification requires an officer to have knowledge of general social problems and cultural diversity of the public. In addition, an officer needs to have knowledge of modern police methods, practices, and procedures.

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**CONCLUSION:**

The Phoenix Police Department's Social Media Use policy became effective in August 2013. As described in Operations Order 3.27.9.A.(1)(2), "When using social media, Department personnel should be mindful their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain.

Therefore, adherence to City and Department policies is required in the personal use of social media. Employees are prohibited from using social media in a manner that would cause embarrassment to or discredit the Department in any way. Employees are responsible for their social media postings if they are found to be in violation of any City or Department policy.”

On March 7, 2018, Officer Anders posted a satirical meme about current transgender and racial topics. Officer Anders said his Facebook account was set to private, however, the post was still available to be viewed and accessed in a public media outlet. As a result, Officer Anders exposed himself and the Phoenix Police Department to public mistrust.

In the days following the release of the PVP, media outlets and members of the community interpreted the officers' posts as “racist, violent, embarrassing, disturbing and/or shameful.”<sup>15</sup> The story pertaining to the Facebook posts by members of the Phoenix Police Department was widely circulated within Phoenix, as well as throughout the country. This overwhelming media coverage resulted in major reputation damage to the City of Phoenix Police Department.<sup>16</sup> Officer Anders' Facebook posts potentially reduced or contributed to the erosion of public trust, was inflammatory to certain groups, and/or created dissension in the community by promoting hate, violence, racism, bias, or beliefs inconsistent with the Phoenix Police Department's Purpose Statement and Guiding Values.

PSB investigators reviewed Officer Anders' Facebook posts since the inception of the Phoenix Police Department's Social Media Use policy. One (1) Facebook post authored by Officer Anders was analyzed by PSB investigators based on the subject matter content.

Although Officer Anders may have believed the Facebook post contained Second Amendment context, his Facebook post primarily contained inflammatory racial, sexual orientation, and gender identity context; posting this meme demonstrated insensitivity to these communities. Officer Anders' conduct was inconsistent with the Department's Purpose Statement and Guiding Values to respect and honor the inherent dignity of all people, including ourselves, and pledge fair and equal treatment for all, as well as maintaining the highest ideals of personal conduct in every word and deed.

Officer Anders' Facebook post is not compatible with the expectations of the City of Phoenix and the requirements set forth within the description for the job classification of Police Officer. Police Officers are expected to serve the community and treat everyone with dignity and respect. This is achieved through communication and partnerships with the community. It is imperative for a police officer to earn the trust and respect of the community, maintain a

professional appearance and attitude, and work with the community. Additionally, Police Officers are required to present legal testimony, a task that is complicated if an officer is found to have engaged in behavior that demonstrates bias. Moreover, an employee within the classification of Police Officer should have an understanding about general social problems, cultural diversity, and modern police methods, practices, and procedures. The Facebook posting made by Officer Anders, now public, does not meet the expectations of the community or the City and does not support the distinguishing features, essential functions, and required knowledge as outlined in the City of Phoenix classification for Police Officer.

Officer Anders' Facebook post potentially reduced the public's trust, was inflammatory to certain groups, and/or created dissension in the community by promoting hate, violence, racism, bias, or beliefs inconsistent with the Phoenix Police Department's Purpose Statement and Guiding Values.

Therefore, the allegation that Officer Anders violated the Department's Social Media Use policy when he posted inappropriate content on his personal Facebook account is sustained.

This investigation has concluded that Officer Anders' actions are in violation of the following policy:

- Operations Order 3.27.9.B.(6) 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 working relationships of this Department, are detrimental to the mission and functions of the Department, that undermine respect or public confidence in the Department, cause embarrassment to the Department or City, discredit the Department or City, or undermine the goals and mission of the Department or City."
- Operations Order 1.1.2.B.(3), which states, "Responsibility and Respect: We respect and honor the inherent dignity of all people, including ourselves, and pledge fair and equal treatment for all."
- Operations Order 1.1.2.C.(3), which states, "Integrity and Ideals: We aspire to the highest ideals of personal conduct in every word and deed, and our behavior should inspire and sustain the confidence of our community."

Accordingly, the applicable discipline for the most significant policy violation outlined above is designated in Operations Order 3.18, Addendum A, subsection 3.B.(1)(I), which states, "As

defined in the Classification Guidance Criteria, section 4, of this addendum,” and is further defined in Operations Order 3.18, Addendum A, subsection 4.C.(2), where, “Aggravated circumstances outweigh all other factors where conduct is egregious to the extent that a suspension is prudent.” This is a Class I violation, which will be referred to the Police Chief for an eight (8) or 24-hour suspension.

**CLOSING:**

This Professional Standards Bureau investigation is complete. The investigation was reviewed by the involved employee. This investigation will be retained in the Professional Standards Bureau in accordance with retention policies/law.

**Endnotes:**

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<sup>1</sup> Not attached; reference [www.plainviewproject.org](http://www.plainviewproject.org)

<sup>2</sup> “PVP Phoenix news,” Google search

<sup>3</sup> “PVP Phoenix news,” Google search

<sup>4</sup> “PVP Phoenix news,” Google search

<sup>5</sup> “PVP Phoenix news,” Google search

<sup>6</sup> “PVP Phoenix news,” Google search

<sup>7</sup> Officer Anders (6) FB post- not questioned about

<sup>8</sup> Officer Anders (1) FB post- questioned about

<sup>9</sup> PSB interview with Officer Anders, Begin: 3:40

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<sup>10</sup> PSB interview with Officer Anders, Begin: 4:17

<sup>11</sup> PSB interview with Officer Anders, Begin: 4:28

<sup>12</sup> PSB interview with Officer Anders, Begin: 5:35

<sup>13</sup> PSB interview with Officer Anders, Begin: 7:23

<sup>14</sup> City of Phoenix Job Description for Police Officer – see attachment

<sup>15</sup> Attachment; "Plain View Project Phoenix News," Google Search (07/09/2019)

<sup>16</sup> Attached; ENS (06/03/2019) – Message from the Chief – Employee Social Media Use