

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Lacey White. I was a full-time police officer from 2015-2017 with the City of Turner. Before being employed full time with Turner PD, I was a full-time criminal justice student at Western Oregon University and a Law Enforcement student in the L.E.R.E. Program at Chemeketa. I graduated with honors as my class leader and went on to become a reserve officer. I have completed hundreds of hours of training and volunteer work before becoming a full-time officer and received numerous letters of recommendation and commendation for my work as a reserve police officer. I received excellent evaluations and praise from the city of Turner and was ultimately hired full time. I did well at the police academy and began working full time under the direct supervision of Chief Don Taylor in the City of Turner.

It wasn't until I had training and experience working with other agencies that I began to notice how poor an example Don Taylor was setting for new officers and what an embarrassment his standards and practices were. The City had adopted Lexipol policies, which are a robust policy package sold to law enforcement agencies as an alternative to developing their own. All officers were required to regularly train on these policies. I became familiar with the policies and this too informed my opinion Chief Taylor was not only failing to follow adopted policy, but his practices included dangerous deviations from the policies.

I began to bring up issues and policy violations to him that I noticed taking place with hopes that we could work together on improving the quality of service we offered to the community and the adherence to department policies and DPSST standards. I was never taken seriously and was always met with resistance to change whenever I attempted to discuss any mismanagement, observed violations or possible remedies and solutions to the problems.

After I observed this conduct for a total of five years, both as a reserve and a full-time officer and after addressing them multiple times with Chief Taylor without any resolutions, it became obvious that his behavior was chronic and contributed to the erosion of public trust within the profession and my confidence in him as the Chief of the department.

I received complaints from citizens about their own observations of the Chief and from fellow officers and deputies on a weekly basis. I felt that the general tone in Turner was that the police force was useless and corrupt. The public did not trust us to effectively perform the duties of a public safety officer within their city. I tried very hard to change this tone and used every call and citizen contact as an opportunity to make a positive impact on the community we served.

I believe I was making a difference in how the general public and fellow agencies viewed the Turner Police Department but was still unable to change the Chief's conduct and behaviors, ultimately keeping me from excelling, advancing, and moving forward with my career.

Whenever I confronted the Chief about the issues I was observing, his responses were dismissive, and he would downplay the seriousness of the issues I was presenting to him. When complaints were made specifically about him and his own conduct, he would laugh it off.

No one was in a position above him to hold him accountable, especially not the City Manager. I felt unheard and the issues were ultimately unaddressed. There was no chain of command because the department consisted of only two officers: Chief Taylor and me. According to Chief Taylor, the city manager was “clueless” when it came to the police force and he was “not to be bothered with police department issues” unless it was coming straight from the Chief himself. I once tried to bring an issue to the City managers attention about a building safety concern and was shot down by the Chief saying that my complaint made the manager “very unhappy” and I was instructed to not bring such things to his attention again. After my attempts to discuss these violations with the Chief were met with no resolution, I started keeping documentation in writing of such violations.

I believed that I was taking the proper steps to correct the issues with regards to reporting the misconduct and policy violations to the Chief and city administration, however, I was made to believe that was inappropriate and unwelcomed. I did not know how to address my complaints further or whom to report them to. I feared retaliation was imminent if I brought it up to the Chief, the city manager or other city staff again. I believed that having documentation of the misconduct might protect me from any liability that the Chief was creating. I began applying for full time positions with other local agencies and knew that I would have an exit interview where I could address these complaints and issues upon my separation from the department.

I personally observed many of Chief Taylor’s behaviors, and had others reported to me. His conduct unquestionably compromised his ability to efficiently run the department with integrity and competence. I documented violations and misconduct including:

- Failing to investigate DHS reports in a timely manner- especially those involving vulnerable victims who were at risk of being further victimized;
- Purposefully refusing and failing investigate reports of sexual assault;
- Using tobacco while on duty and in a city owned building and vehicle;
- Failing to wear a seatbelt while on duty;
- Operating his city owned patrol vehicle in an unsafe manner resulting in multiple citizen complaints;
- Failing to wear body armor as required by policy;
- Failing to maintain the cleanliness of his city owned vehicle – also resulting in complaints;
- Failing to maintain the city owned vehicle in good operable condition leading to unsafe operation and citizen complaints;
- Failing to accept and investigate citizen complaints and reports regarding crimes within the community;
- Failing to properly train officers and falsifying documents submitted to DPSST asserting the trainings had been performed;
- Sharing information about internal affairs investigations involving his subordinates and spreading rumors with other officers and rank from other departments about those

officers, essentially embarrassing his employees and damaging their reputations and the trust of their co-workers;

- Failure to attend range qualifications for several years and failing to provide range and firearms training on a regular basis to officers of his agency as required by DPSST for certification maintenance;
- Failing to provide officers with locking storage for evidence and a proper and safe way to store weapons and ammunition;
- Failing to comply with FBI Criminal Justice Information Systems security standards within the department offices and recognizing it but failing to correct it;
- Allowing reserve officers to access the report writing system, PRIORS and WEBLEDS, on unsecured and unapproved terminals (their home computers) and not addressing the issue since it was brought to his attention in 2014;
- Running personal errands outside the city of Turner while on duty in a city owned patrol vehicle on the clock while being paid by the City;
- Making derogatory and sexually suggestive statements about women in the community while on duty while sitting outside of the elementary school to other officers and employees (specifically instructing officers to drive him to the school as parents pick up their children so he can “check out the sugar tits”);
- Sending racist and sexual jokes to employees via text messages;
- Making offensive and disparaging comments about the sexual orientation of current and former members of the police department ;
- Making belittling and insensitive comments about the religious preferences of members of the police department and city staff;
- Making disrespectful and discourteous remarks about other constituted authorities and local law enforcement agencies and officers;
- Sending sexually suggestive and harassing messages to members of the community on social media (again, resulting in citizen complaints and documented in messages that I have from them);
- Driving while intoxicated, multiple times, after leaving bars in South Salem - specifically Wind Jammers;
- Requesting officers “take the night off” and come out to the bar with he and his wife, without the “proper permission and approval” regarding taking the night off, as he is now alleging was mandatory;
- Drinking at a bar in South Salem and requesting his officers come to his residence and use a department/city owned tool to run a portable breath test on him after he drove home;
- Failing to follow up with complaints made against the him by members of the community, laughing them off and not holding himself accountable, knowing no one else would either;
- Failing to conduct and implement proper training with full time officers;

- Falsely reporting hours on official training records that he submitted to DPSST in order to escape the burden of having to train his own officers;
- Falsifying hours on training records of training sessions that he did not attend in full with other officers of the department;
- Retaliation, discrimination, and creating a hostile work environment for numerous former employees;
- Purposely spreading untrue rumors about members of his department to other local officers in an attempt to damage their credibility and reputations;
- Failing to take reports of criminal activity seriously and not conducting follow-up or generating reports on citizen's complaints;
- Complete incompetence when it comes to running a department and training new officers, specifically telling new officers to "call the Sheriff's office dispatch, ask for a supervisor to call you back and ask them your question" on a regular basis because he did not possess the knowledge to effectively train his own officers or advise them;
- Not providing basic equipment to his officers such as ballistic vests (allowing a full-time officer to wear one for two years that was a demo vest without being properly sized or tested) and making his officer drive around to local tire shops asking for used tires for his city owned patrol vehicle;
- Falsely reporting that he completed the practical exercises for the radar/LIDAR certification for new officers "for the sake of time and having to go to court on a traffic violation and getting it thrown out" and telling his new officers "they would finish completing it later" and never did.

On Thursday, March 16, 2017 after being a full-time employee for a year and a half, I discovered my documentation of the violations was missing from my desk. I found my documents destroyed in Chief Taylor's office, in his personal trash can. He had taken the papers from my office, ripped it up into tiny pieces and discarded them in his trash can. The torn bits of paper were covered with his tobacco pouches (he was the only person in the building who used those particular tobacco pouches). I recognized my paper, handwriting, and highlighter on the ripped-up papers. Also, in the trash can was a letter of notice placing me on administrative leave pending an investigation into an attendance policy violation with the same tear pattern as my handwritten documents, as if he stacked them together and ripped them in pieces while stacked. I photographed these documents inside the trashcan and outside of the trashcan laid out on the office floor.

I immediately knew that this was retaliation and contacted my Teamsters Union Representative, Derek Cutter, via email. I was familiar with the policy in the Turner manual that addresses retaliation in the workplace, specifically the Oregon Revised Statute [659A.230](#) that protects "whistleblower" activity. An employer cannot retaliate against an employee who in good faith causes reports wrongdoing and misconduct. Moreover, the Turner Police

Department Policy Manual also has a section pertaining to the “whistleblower” statute explicitly.

When I discovered my documentation was taken from my office and destroyed by the Chief, I expected him to discuss it with me and to handle it internally. To my surprise, he did not mention it at all for the next several days. He did not bring up any issues to me or address anything relevant to my documents. Neither did he mention he had drafted a letter of administrative leave.

His behavior made me feel like there was no trust or leadership within the department and it put the department in turmoil. I felt that I had a duty to report the things I had been documenting and now I was being unfairly punished for it.

While waiting for Chief Taylor to address my documents, I left town for a planned vacation. When I came back, I found a letter of administrative leave in my mail. It was identical to the one from the Chief’s trash. It was dated and mailed out to me after I left for vacation. The Chief never personally brought it to my attention. I was placed on administrative leave and was investigated for violating a laundry list of alleged policy violations related to discrepancies in my time keeping and dispatch logs.

In addition to the above-mentioned violations, Chief Taylor has a reputation for being dishonest, disgraceful, an embarrassment to the profession. He is incompetent when it comes to operating a police department and training new officers. Chief Taylor is the only other employee for the police department and is the only training officer for new recruits and reserves within that department. Individuals look to him for guidance, but his professionalism and standards are not up to par, I quickly took notice to this when I began working full time and my husband who was a full time officer there before me took notice to it also.

Chief Taylor has shown a pattern of poor decision-making related to training and supervising other officers. The Chief continuously falsified training records for the sake of time and resources available for proper training and certification. When I brought up issues with this, I was reprimanded. I believe that the Chief’s untruthfulness in completing training records for new recruits constitutes misconduct as he has repeatedly submitted training records for himself and other officers that suggests hours of training was completed when it wasn’t satisfactory or complete at all.

He told me that for the sake of time and resources, it didn’t matter if we completed the hours as DPSST requires and we would complete it later but never did. I felt totally cheated in my training experience at Turner PD with Don Taylor as a Chief and “Field Training Officer”. He told me that because Turner was so small, we would never complete all of the training or an FTEP Manual in a timely manner so we had to turn it in as is. He did not go over a single thing in the FTEP Manual with me and told me to give him the last page of it so he could sign it and turn it in, making it appear that it was completed. He questioned me when I tired going through it page by page and requested him to go over it with me and sign off on it. He said that he might

“quiz me on it later” and never did. I felt he that he rushed me to get my certification so that he would not have to deal with it or train me further and to please the city administration who wanted another solo full-time officer on patrol as soon as possible.

After the investigation into an “attendance policy violation” continued for over four months, I was ultimately terminated and the Chief filed an inquiry with the DA’s office to have me Brady listed for being “untruthful” for allegedly falsifying records and making misleading statements with the intent to deceive.

Through my lawyer I attempted to get the DA’s office and DPSST to look at Chief Taylor’s conduct, truthfulness, and moral fitness. Paige Clarkson (then DDA and currently the DA) told me the DA would not be investigating Chief Taylor. It was apparently “outside of their scope.” DPSST similarly informed me they lacked the power to review the conduct of a law enforcement officer without a referral from that officer’s superior. I cannot stress this point enough, **there is no superior to the Chief**. Clearly no mechanism exists to address corruption, misconduct, and unfitness at the top of the chain of command.

At no point in the entire investigation was I accused or confronted about being dishonest and making misleading statements or entries on my timecards with the intent to deceive. It “appeared” that the discrepancies showed a pattern of entering hours worked on my timesheets that exceeded the amount of time on my MDT log. However, I explained to the investigator, Sgt. Steve Smith with Salem PD, that this was because Turner officers were allowed to use flex time on a daily basis in lieu of working a full 10 hours or using/earning comp-time. This practice pre-dated Chief Taylor. We had fewer calls for service than a big city, we were paid less, and we were not allowed to take overtime. Consequentially we were allowed to be flexible with our schedules. Despite this flexibility, we were consistently told to mark regular hours on our timesheets to make it easier for the City’s accounting.

At no point did they prove that my timecards and MDT logs did not match **as a result of my intent to deceive or the intentional falsification of such records**. I did not admit to any incorrect entries being purposeful or intentional. They did not prove there was any intent for me to be untruthful. They did not provide me with adequate time to look over my timecards and MDT logs and cross them with my own calendars and notebooks to find any exculpatory evidence. I was only given the opportunity to review those documents during the interview as they showed them to me and after the investigation was complete.

After my investigation was concluded I was provided with the complete file. I discovered then Chief Taylor provided false information to the investigator. The Chief intentionally deceived Sgt. Smith by telling him **there was no reason for there to be any discrepancies** in my time keeping. The Chief knew this was an outright lie, but he felt unaccountable. Chief Taylor’s own time sheets and dispatch logs revealed significantly more serious discrepancies than my own, a fact which was never addressed.

The Chief of Police should be held to a higher standard. While the Turner Police Department reserves the right to revise any policy content, in whole or in part and the Chief of Police has the authority and responsibility for the management, direction, and control of the operations and administration of the department, none of the observed violations reasonably warrant departure from these guidelines.

The totality of the circumstances surrounding this entire investigation can be summed up to the fact that the Chief was retaliating against me for keeping track of his misconduct and mismanagement. A clear violation of the ORS protecting "whistleblowing" activity. He took my statements and conduct out of context to purposely make me look dishonest and call my character and integrity into question to protect his own from being called into question.

Chief Taylor continued to minimize his conduct and engage in dishonesty throughout the entire investigation and subsequent lawsuit and depositions. His conduct during the IA investigation and his continuing dishonesty attempting to silence me and decertify me constitutes gross misconduct and the misuse of authority. Throughout this tribulation, he has been very cavalier and shown no remorse. His actions along with statements he has made and the minimization of his own toxic practices, conduct, and behavior during the investigation also constitutes dishonesty for which he should be investigated and reprimanded. But by whom? If DPSST is unable to investigate him due to their procedure for filing complaints and the DA's office says it is outside their "scope", then who will hold him accountable?

My complaint has gone uninvestigated and my voice has been silenced through means of termination and the Brady listing. I felt that I had nowhere to report my complaints to. I have been ignored by the district attorney, Paige Clarkson, The Department of Public Safety, Standards and Training, the Salem Police Department and the City of Turner.

In review of the Chief of Police Preface section in the Turner Police Department Policy Manual, it is printed that, *"we shall strive to encourage all police personnel to achieve and maintain the highest standards of ethics, integrity, community interaction and professional conduct."* I directly observed that the Chief's conduct continually violated this and the practices and standards generally followed in the Oregon Public Safety profession and those standards that a Chief of Police is expected and entrusted to uphold. But no one would listen to my complaints about these observations.

I was a good cop, I set my limits and applied them to everyone without bias. I worked hard to eliminate my implicit bias always and to treat everyone with dignity and respect. I believe the police should be held to a higher standard than civilians and that even police at the top of the chain of command need to be held accountable, always. Ranking officers shouldn't be untouchable while subordinates are used, discarded, and made out to be examples. The impunity I witnessed at Turner is what creates an internal culture of fear regarding whistleblowing and calling out wrongdoing.

I got into law enforcement to be the change I wanted to see. I got into it to fix the problems I was recognizing and to bridge the gap between law enforcement and the communities they served. I was welcomed into the “brotherhood” and as soon as I started to speak out against them, I was ignored, I was heard but not listened to, I was ostracized and discarded from the profession that I worked so hard to get into.

We all recognize that policing needs to change, and that change should not ignore the bad actors at the top. Power should not be concentrated in the hands of individuals who are unaccountable. Chief Taylor, and those like him, must be held accountable for their wrongdoings.

Lacey White
Former Turner Police Officer