OLEO2026-015

Executive Summary

Date of Incident	Various
Location of Incident	Shoreline
Date of Complaint	January 15, 2026
Corresponding IIU Case Number	IIU2026-010
Allegation Types	Conduct Unbecoming; Inappropriate Conduct; Dishonesty

On January 28, 2026, the King County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office) Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) notified the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO) that it was initiating an investigation of interactions and behaviors exhibited by the subject employee at the King County District Court – Shoreline Division (Shoreline District Court). Specifically, the subject employee had brought political and religiously-charged items into the courthouse creating an uncomfortable work environment and had reportedly exhibited flirtatious and harassing behavior towards at least one female staff at the courthouse. Following a discussion between the subject employee's supervisor and court administrators about the subject employee's behavior, and after it was requested that the subject employee be moved from Shoreline and reassigned elsewhere as soon as possible, the complaint was referred to IIU for investigation.

As a part of its investigation, OLEO interviewed five Shoreline District Court employee witnesses, four employee witnesses with the Sheriff's Office, and the subject employee jointly with IIU investigators.

OLEO finds that the allegation of Conduct Unbecoming is **Sustained** because the subject employee demonstrated a repeated pattern of behavior that diminished respect for him and confidence in the operation of Sheriff's Office. OLEO further finds that the allegation of Inappropriate Conduct is **Sustained** because the subject employee acted and interacted in a way that made his female colleagues uncomfortable. Finally, OLEO finds that the allegation for Dishonesty is **Non-Sustained** because while the subject employee's statements are inconsistent with what was reflected in evidence and his supervisor's statement and calls into question the subject employees credibility, the evidence available does not meet the "clear and convincing evidence"[1] standard of proof.

[1] The Sheriff's Office uses the "clear and convincing evidence" standard of proof for investigations of alleged serious misconduct. OLEO also applies this standard in the analysis in this report, however, OLEO believes the applicable standard should be "preponderance of the evidence" standard used in all other similar proceedings.

Allegations and Findings

Sheriff's Office Personnel	Allegation	*OLEO Descriptive Allegation*	Finding
Marshal Peter K. Thalhofer	Conduct Unbecoming	*Administrative Violation*	Sustained
	Inappropriate Conduct	*HR Violation*	Sustained
	Dishonesty	*Dishonesty*	Non-Sustained

Applicable Laws and GOM Policies[2]

1. Court Protection Unit: Standard Operating Procedures
2. GOM 3.00.015(1)(a): Dishonesty
3. GOM 3.00.015(2)(g): Inappropriate Conduct
4. GOM 3.00.015(2)(h): Conduct Unbecoming
5. GOM 3.00.025: Ethics, Conflicts, and Appearance of Conflicts
6. King County Code of Ethics

Investigative Summary

Interviews

OLEO conducted interviews with:

1. District Court Clerk [redacted] (witness employee)
2. District Court Coordinator [redacted] (witness employee)
3. District Court Central Services Director [redacted] (witness employee)
4. District Court Clerk [redacted] (witness employee)
5. District Court Clerk [redacted] (witness employee)
6. Security Screener Kevin T. Warren (witness employee)
7. Sergeant Eric White (witness employee)
8. Captain Shane Watkins (witness employee)
9. Lead Marshal Carlos Bratcher (witness employee)
10. Marshal Peter K. Thalhofer (subject employee)

Evidence

OLEO reviewed the following additional evidence:

1. Photograph associated with District Court Clerk [redacted] statement, January 15, 2026
2. Photographs of the screening area, Marshal desk, and customer service windows at Shoreline District Court taken on February 19, 2026 and March 4, 2026
3. OLEO Fieldwork Memo, February 19, 2026
4. Photographs of Marshal Peter Thalhofer's workstation at Shoreline District Court provided by Marshal Peter Thalhofer on May 5, 2026
5. Written statement provided by Sergeant Eric White, May 15, 2026

[2] The General Orders Manual (GOM) contains policies of the Sheriff's Office. Policies applied are those that were in effect when the underlying incident giving rise to the complaint occurred.

6. Email correspondence between Legal Advisor Erin Overby, Sergeant Eric White, and Lead Marshal Carlos Bratcher, June 25, 2025 to June 30, 2025
7. Email correspondence and attachment from Sergeant Eric White to Marshal Peter Thalhofer, June 30, 2025
8. Text messages from Marshal Peter Thalhofer to Sergeant Eric White, November 13, 2025

Fact Summary

On January 15, 2026, Central Services Director for the King County District Court, Kevin Whitley, reached out to Court Protection Unit (CPU) supervisor, Sergeant Eric White, with a request to discuss some concerning behavior that had been exhibited by Marshal Peter Thalhofer at the Shoreline District Court. Because this wasn't the first incident that involved disruptive behavior by Marshal Thalhofer, the request was made that Marshal Thalhofer be reassigned to a new post as soon as possible. The following day, Marshal Thalhofer was transferred.

Through interviews with five Shoreline District Court employees, it was reported that Marshal Thalhofer had, on multiple occasions, imposed his personal, religious, and political beliefs on others in the workplace, both passively and actively. Passively, it was reported that Marshal Thalhofer played audiobooks in Hebrew without headphones; brought in food items on several occasions with political and/or religious messages about the persecution of Jews and/or the celebration religious holidays; displayed a book at the Marshal workstation that he had written about the first five books of the Hebrew Bible; wore clothing with images and phrases promotive of President Donald Trump; and posted a photograph of President Trump at the Marshal workstation that was viewable to the public. Actively, Marshal Thalhofer regularly engaged colleagues in conversations about "the Promised Land" and his love for Israel.

It was reported that Marshal Thalhofer had posted a photograph of President Donald Trump at the Marshal station located in the lobby just inside the courthouse entrance that was openly viewable by the public. Courthouse personnel reported frustration and concern that this type of conduct exhibited by Marshal Thalhofer seemed intentionally confrontational and disruptive and did not match the neutrality requirements expected of the courthouse environment. When a colleague with the CPU also learned about the photograph of President Trump, the matter was escalated to command staff. The timeline of events regarding the photograph of President Trump is as follows:

- On June 25, 2025, Lead Marshal Carlos Bratcher sent out an email titled "Conflict of Interest" to CPU personnel that stated, "This is a reminder that we are not allowed to post or display messages or images that are political in nature in our workspaces specifically, where it can be seen by the public or other non KCSO county employees. Please review KCSO GOM 3.00.0254 and King County Code of Ethics section 3.04 for further information. Should you have any questions please contact myself or Sgt. White."

- On June 26, 2025, Marshal Thalhofer sent an email to Sheriff's Office Legal Advisor Erin Overbey that referenced the email from Marshal Bratcher and asked, "Does the rule also cover pictures of the sitting US president? It seems those have always been allowed in government offices." Because Ms. Overbey lacked the context around Marshal Thalhofer's question, she forwarded the email back to Marshal Bratcher and said, "I wonder if you have any background on this issue? I don't like to answer questions like the one I am forwarding without having a full understanding of the facts. Are you concerned about a picture of the president or is it something beyond that which is leading to the messaging?" Marshal Bratcher then deferred the matter to Sergeant White who informed Ms. Overbey that he would follow up with Marshal Thalhofer.

- On June 30, 2025, at 9:18 a.m., Sergeant White called Marshal Thalhofer and spoke with him about the photograph for a reported 22 minutes. That same day at 9:30 a.m., Sergeant White sent Marshal Thalhofer an email that said, "Per our conversation," and contained an attachment titled "KCC_EthicsCode 3.04." The photograph remained posted at the Marshal workstation, and the matter was not discussed again with the CPU until additional complaints were made about Marshal Thalhofer's escalating behavior.

- On November 12, 2025, following a phone call from Central Services Director [redacted] regarding the continued presence of the photograph of President Trump, Sergeant White reached out to Captain Shane Watkins to discuss what had been reported, and a direct order was issued by Captain Watkins to take the photograph down and never to post it again. Because Marshal Thalhofer was at the gun range that day to fulfill his firearm qualification requirements, another marshal covering his shift at the Shoreline District Court was instructed to take the photograph down. Marshal Thalhofer then sent a text message to Sergeant White that stated, "Sgt. Who is the captain that said the picture of President Trump had to come down?" Sergeant White then called Marshal Thalhofer at the gun range and briefly explained that the order had been issued by Captain Watkins, that the photograph had been removed, and that Marshal Thalhofer was not to repost it.

In a more targeted fashion, it was also reported that Marshal Thalhofer had directed a pattern of inappropriate behavior towards Court Clerk [redacted], including unwelcome comments and what she described was sexually suggestive behavior. More specifically, the behavior directed at [redacted] included making her uncomfortable by kneeling extremely close to her at her desk, commenting on her fair skin, leaving an unsolicited bottle of vitamins for her, and previous instances (approximately five to ten in total) of looking her up and down while licking his lips. [redacted] reported during her statement that she used to have a positive relationship with the previous marshal and partnering screener at the courthouse and that she tried to keep that same attitude when Marshal Thalhofer started working at the courthouse but quickly became more uncomfortable with various things he said or did. While she initially gave Marshal Thalhofer the benefit of the doubt, she found herself increasingly and actively avoiding having to engage with him whenever possible. However, this was made difficult at times by the fact that Marshal Thalhofer had access to the same staff areas as the rest of the courthouse personnel.

According to [redacted], the final interaction that led her to reach out to her supervisor for assistance occurred between January 14 and January 15, 2026. [redacted] reported she was working in her cubicle and Marshal Thalhofer entered the confines of that space, knelt very close to her, approximately a foot away, and started to ask her personal questions about her upbringing. Marshal Thalhofer followed that up by sharing about his time in Seattle, his love of the sun, and his plan to move to Israel after retirement. The discussion then shifted to [redacted] complexion and his observation that her behavior had changed recently. He opined to her that it had something to do with the Seattle environment and a lack of Vitamin D. [redacted], however, indicated in her statement that her change in attitude was directly related to Marshal Thalhofer and the unwanted attention he gave her. [redacted] reported that during the interaction, she tried to appear disinterested without being rude and returned to her work to signal the end the conversation. However, the following day, [redacted] found an unopened and unsolicited bottle of vitamins on her desk that led her to escalate the matter to her supervisor. [redacted] reported she ultimately struggled to come up with a way to end the unwanted encounters she had with Marshal Thalhofer because, at the end of the day, he was an officer that she entrusted to protect her, and if she was rude, she feared her safety might be compromised in a retaliatory way. Others who witnessed that encounter on January 14, 2026 expressed similar apprehension about what they observed and described Marshal Thalhofer's particular focus on [redacted] as bizarre enough to be noteworthy. Finally, other courthouse personnel provided similar

statements about Marshal Thalhofer's behavior toward women in which single occurrences may not have caused immediate concern, but when examined in their totality led to a consistent and escalated unease toward Marshal Thalhofer. Court Clerk [redacted] reported that Marshal Thalhofer, on two separate occasions, commented to her about her appearance, specifically that she had lost weight. [redacted] reported that it wasn't just the comment itself, but the tone and delivery of the comment that made her uncomfortable.

[redacted] and her colleague [redacted] also reported another encounter of concern with Marshal Thalhofer where they had been sharing about experiences they had at a local grocery chain when Marshal Thalhofer inserted himself into the conversation and recounted an event where he had arrested somebody at the same chain and while in the process of taking the suspect into custody, slammed the individual on the hood of his car so hard that snot and spit flew out of his mouth. What troubled [redacted] and [redacted] was the way in which Marshal Thalhofer bragged and laughed about an instance of police brutality and having the ability afterwards to tell others that he "had beat the snot out of someone before."

Analysis

Conduct Unbecoming: Sustained

It is alleged Marshal Thalhofer demonstrated conduct unbecoming as a member of the Sheriff's Office when he engaged in a repeated pattern of disruptive behavior that made colleagues uncomfortable and reflected a disregard for the neutrality requirements of the courthouse.

Pursuant to GOM 3.00.015(2)(h), conduct unbecoming is "conduct that generally tends to:

- Diminish respect for the Sheriff's Office or member.
- Diminish confidence in the operation of the Sheriff's Office.
- Adversely affect or impair the efficiency of a member.
- Adversely affect the morale or discipline of the Sheriff's Office."

The evidence is overwhelming that Marshal Thalhofer engaged in a pattern of conduct inconsistent with the standards of professionalism, impartiality, and decorum expected of a marshal assigned to monitor and ensure the safety of the courthouse and its staff.

First, courthouses are institutions that rely on the public's trust in their impartiality and political neutrality. Displaying a partisan political image—in this instance, a photograph of President Trump—in a public-facing government workspace, detracts from the overall objective that the judicial system is free of bias and serves everyone regardless of their circumstances and beliefs. It was discovered during an interview that Security Screener Kevin Warren, who works directly opposite Marshal Thalhofer's workstation in the entrance of the courthouse, overheard multiple community members call attention to the photograph and comment sarcastically about it in an expression of disapproval of its presence. Additionally, it was reported that Screener Warren observed several instances in which other marshals covering for Marshal Thalhofer would take down the photograph of President Trump during their shift, but upon Marshal Thalhofer's return, the photograph would be reposted. Whether the removal of the photograph by other members of the CPU is due to conflicting personal views or an awareness that such political imagery is inappropriate in the courthouse remains to be seen, but for Marshal Thalhofer to return to work and repost the photograph reflects a disregard for the opinions of colleagues and the public that is very concerning given the environment in which he works. Each of the witnesses interviewed, whether within the Shoreline District Court or the Sheriff's Office, acknowledge that

Marshal Thalhofer's behavior conflicted with even the appearance of neutrality obligatory in the courthouse setting, let alone neutrality in practice.

Another instance in which Marshal Thalhofer's behavior was reflective of conduct unbecoming occurred during a reported unsolicited detailing of the grocery store arrest and associated force he illustrated first to [redacted] and [redacted], and then again to investigators during his first interview.

> IIU Investigator:
> Okay. During the conversation, it was alleged that you told [redacted] and [redacted] that you slammed this person on the hood of your car so hard that snot and spit flew out of their mouth.
>
> Marshal Thalhofer:
> Yes.
>
> IIU Investigator:
> Okay.
>
> Marshal Thalhofer:
> Well, out of his nose.
>
> IIU Investigator:
> Out of his nose, okay. So that's the same thing that you were recalling, I guess, just now?
>
> Marshal Thalhofer:
> Oh, yeah.
>
> IIU Investigator:
> Okay.
>
> Marshal Thalhofer:
> Yeah.
>
> IIU Investigator:
> You don't recall specifically having that conversation with them?
>
> Marshal Thalhofer:
> No.
>
> IIU Investigator:
> Okay. If you were to have a conversation and describe that arrest to somebody, is that something you would explain in detail?
>
> Marshal Thalhofer:
> That's the fun thing about it, is I can say I've actually knocked the snot out of someone. The only reason I know that happened is because it's on video. Fred Meyer was videoing it because I got called with a man with a gun threatening clerks. They were screaming, and the operator started screaming, and I was the only one responding. It was weird. It was Burien and I'm the only one. There's no backup. I get the three guys and I find out which one was the one that was... They're taking shelter behind this guy's relative because they're afraid they're going to get shot. I get him and I put him down on my hood of my car to cuff him and he gets up, and I put him down and he

gets up. I went, boom, like that. When he bounced, you can see on the video that they took that snot came out of his nose.

IIU Investigator:
Okay.

Marshal Thalhofer:
It's a great story.

IIU Investigator:
Okay.

Before questioning continued, a brief recess was requested and when the interview resumed, it was again confirmed that what [redacted] and [redacted] had reported during their statements was accurate, regardless of whether Marshal Thalhofer recalled having the conversation with them or not. To be clear, while the incident itself isn't part of this investigation, Marshal Thalhofer's cavalier attitude in retelling the incident to two colleagues is demonstrative of his gravitation toward unprofessional conduct and substantiates the complaint that he was inappropriately boasting about a use of force incident, regardless of whether the force itself was deemed "within policy." That interaction alone sheds additional light about the lack of social and emotional insight that Marshal Thalhofer possesses when it comes to his role at the courthouse and clearly diminishes respect for him as a member of the Sheriff's Office.

For the reasons stated above, OLEO finds that the allegation of Conduct Unbecoming is **Sustained.**

Inappropriate Conduct: Sustained

It is alleged that Marshal Thalhofer exhibited inappropriate conduct at the Shoreline District Court when he made female colleagues uncomfortable through actions and remarks he made about their appearances.

Per GOM 3.00.015(2)(g), Inappropriate Conduct is, "conduct directed at either a community member or another King County employee that, while not rising to the level of unlawful discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, or retaliation, communicates a hostile, derogatory, unwelcome, or negative message about persons based on a protected status." The behavior can be either spoken or unspoken and includes "slights, insults, and other conduct that a reasonable person would find offensive."

The evidence in this investigation supports the allegation that Marshal Thalhofer engaged in inappropriate conduct by repeatedly directing unwelcome and objectively offensive behavior toward several of his female colleagues. Although each incident viewed separately might be characterized as a lapse in judgement or reflective of poor professional boundaries, the pattern collectively communicates a message that a reasonable employee could perceive as hostile or unwelcome based on gender.

[redacted] reported that she witnessed Marshal Thalhofer look at her body and lick his lips approximately five to ten times. [redacted] reported she tried to initially give Marshal Thalhofer the benefit of the doubt because she rationalized that it's common to zone out or not realize the expressions being given, but the number of times this occurred speaks to a more repeated pattern of objectifying behavior versus an isolated incident. In the primary escalating incident, [redacted] reported that despite her attempts to avoid Marshal Thalhofer in the public spaces of the courthouse, Marshal Thalhofer entered her personal space unsolicited to ask her private questions unrelated to work. Marshal Thalhofer reported he did this because he noticed that [redacted] "was acting kind of

grumpy lately" and "hadn't heard her laugh in months." Marshal Thalhofer explained that the intent behind the conversation in her cubicle regarding her "fair skin tone" was only an attempt to help her with what he suspected was low vitamin D, something he apparently had suffered from in the past. Marshal Thalhofer admitted to squatting unnecessarily close to her during this conversation and leaving a $30 bottle of vitamins on her desk the next day without her request. Regardless of his reported intent, the expensive bottle of vitamins, combined with the comments he made about her appearance, could reasonably be perceived as unwelcome personal attention that holds no legitimate business purpose as it relates to the courthouse environment. Marshal Thalhofer even reported he recognized that [redacted] grew disinterested during their conversation and turned away from him, and yet the following day he still felt it appropriate to leave the vitamins on her desk with no other explanation, demonstrating a lack of social etiquette and awareness for how discussions about a female colleague's appearance can be perceived.

When asked about comments he allegedly made about a female colleague and whether she had lost weight, he admitted it occurred. While it is not obvious in transcripts from the interview, Marshal Thalhofer took several uncomfortable moments to try and recall who he had made the remark to. It goes without saying that comments concerning an employee's body or physical appearance are generally inappropriate in workplace settings and it stands to reason that the recipient of such comments would find them uncomfortable, particularly when directed at a female employee by a male colleague.

Therefore, when viewed collectively, Marshal Thalhofer's verbal and nonverbal actions towards his female colleagues, of whom he has no personal relationships other than idle chat in passing, can reasonably be perceived as hostile, derogatory, and/or unwelcome. For these reasons, OLEO finds the allegation of Inappropriate Conduct is **Sustained.**

Dishonesty: Non-Sustained

The crux of this allegation is whether Marshal Thalhofer lied about the permission he was given to continue displaying the photograph of President Trump at the Marshal workstation and then intentionally omitted or altered the narrative of facts during his interview to justify his failure to remove the photograph despite witness accounts to the contrary.

GOM 3.00.015(1)(a) states, "members shall be truthful in all matters and shall not lie, falsify, conceal, purposely distort, diminish, embellish, or fail to fully disclose facts associated with any law enforcement business." Per Marshal Thalhofer's acknowledgement during his first interview and based on emails provided by employee witnesses, it is undisputed that on June 25, 2025, Marshal Thalhofer received and read the email from Marshal Bratcher reminding him of department policy surrounding the display of political imagery in view of the public. It is also undisputed that on June 26, 2025, Marshal Thalhofer sent Legal Advisor, Ms. Overbey, an email about the photograph; that on June 30, 2025, at 9:18 a.m., Sergeant White called Marshal Thalhofer to discuss the photograph; and that the photograph remained in place until the order was issued by Captain Watkins to remove it on November 13, 2025. What remains to be seen is whether Sergeant White issued a similar directive to Marshal Thalhofer in June 2025, and whether Marshal Thalhofer believed he had permission to display the photograph, or simply kept the photograph posted in opposition to what he was told.

Although there is insufficient evidence to conclude that Marshal Thalhofer knowingly made a false statement, when looking at the totality of the evidence, there are several material inconsistencies in his account concerning whether he obtained permission to display the photograph of President Trump at the Marshal workstation. These inconsistencies highlight substantial concerns regarding Marshal Thalhofer's credibility.

During Marshal Thalhofer's first interview, he reported that sometime after the 2024 election, he printed a photograph of President Trump from the White House website and posted it at the Marshal station. Marshal Thalhofer reported that sometime after he posted the photograph, he personally questioned whether he was actually allowed to do that and reached out to Ms. Overbey to confirm that it was permitted. Marshal Thalhofer reported he did not receive a response from Ms. Overbey but did receive a call from Sergeant White and that the determination afterwards was that he could continue displaying the photograph. Marshal Thalhofer reported it remained posted until November 2025 when Captain Watkins ordered it be taken down and that at no time prior, specifically during his June conversation with Sergeant White, was that same directive issued.

However, Marshal Thalhofer's statements directly conflict with both the written and interview statements provided by Sergeant White, who reported that following the email that was sent out by Marshal Bratcher, he was notified that Marshal Thalhofer had reached out to Ms. Overbey. Sergeant White reported that it was the forwarded email from Ms. Overbey that prompted him to call Marshal Thalhofer and issue the directive to take photograph down. Ultimately, Sergeant White denied multiple times that Marshal Thalhofer had been given permission to leave the photograph posted. During his interview, Sergeant White reported:

> Sergeant White:
> ...So on the 30th, that's when I reached out to him and had a very lengthy conversation with him about it. Part of that conversation was, Peter believed that it was okay to display a picture of a sitting president. I really don't know where he got that. In all my years of working at the Sheriff's Office, I don't ever recollect seeing a picture of a sitting president displayed anywhere and very few elected officials have I seen pictures displayed in any of the county buildings, especially the courthouse. In fact, I only have seen one picture of a elected official displayed in the courthouses and that's here at the Clark Family Justice Center, which it's named after former Superior Court Judge Patricia Clark, hence the Clark Child and Family Justice Center. So, in that conversation, which I listened to Peter at length talk, he was kind of hesitant and very resistive to taking it down, but I gave him notice that he needed to take it down.
>
> ...
>
> IIU Investigator:
> All right. Thank you. You just kind of spoke about it, but in your OWS, you stated that he was resistant to taking the photo down. Can you explain what you mean by resistant?
>
> Sergeant White:
> He didn't believe that it was a GOM, which I politely reminded him that, yeah, there is a GOM against political stuff. The second thing is, is that it's not our building. It belongs to the courts or it's owned by the executive's office, but the courts have it and they have a policy against that kind of, things of remaining politically neutral. So, in explaining that to him, it didn't seem like he wanted to accept that as the reason for me telling him to take down the photo.
>
> IIU Investigator:
> Okay. Did he indicate to you whether or not he planned on taking it down or what was his response to that? Did he at any point tell you that he understood and would take it down?
>
> Sergeant White:
> No, he didn't. And in retrospect, I mean, I could have said to him, "Could you restate to me what

your understanding is of what I'm asking of you?" Which I didn't ask him that.

IIU Investigator:
Okay. And you stated you had, in your OWS, you stated you had directed him to take it down. Do you recall... I know it's been a while, but do you recall the exact words that you used?

Sergeant White:
No. I mean, yeah, I don't remember the exact words, but I know I told him he needed to take it down, so, "I'm telling you that you need to take it down, Peter."

IIU Investigator:
Okay. And during the conversation you had with him on June 30th, do you recall if he asked you if it was okay to keep the photo up?

Sergeant White:
No, No, I don't remember him asking that. And I would've told him, "No, you need to take it down."

IIU Investigator:
Okay. At any point during the conversation with Marshal Thalhofer, did you respond to him in any way
that it was fine to leave the photo up?

Sergeant White:
No.

IIU Investigator:
Okay. Do you believe during your conversation with him on June 30th, 2025, you suggested, alluded to, or otherwise communicated in any way it was okay for him to keep the photo up on his desk?

Sergeant White:
No.

IIU Investigator:
Do you believe this could have been perceived on his end, any way that it was okay to keep the photo up?

Sergeant White:
I mean, it's possible. I don't know what his total understanding of what was directed of him was because I didn't, like I said, I could have probably asked him what his understanding was of me asking him or I could have sent a follow-up email saying to him... Just to go over what we talked about and outlined it and said, "If I missed anything, please let me know."

IIU Investigator:
Okay. So, to recap essentially is, you had a conversation with him, he was resistant in that he didn't believe that it was a violation of the GOM. Is that accurate?

Sergeant White:
Yes.

IIU Investigator:
But you did direct him that he needs to take the photo down and you didn't do a recap with him as in, "Do you understand that you have to take this down," but you told him he needed to take the photo down. Is that accurate?

Sergeant White:
That's accurate.

Before the interview concluded with Sergeant White, he was asked again:

IIU Investigator:
Okay. I just want to make sure I'm fully understanding. Eric, do you believe that your directive to Peter or to Marshal Thalhofer to take the photo down was clear?

Sergeant White:
Yes, I believe it was clear.

IIU Investigator:
Okay. And you in no way gave him permission to keep the photo up on his desk, correct?

Sergeant White:
No, I did not.

During Marshal Thalhofer's second interview, he reported that he had originally forgotten what had prompted him to reach out to Ms. Overbey about the photograph, but when presented with the contents of Marshal Bratcher's email, he remembered. Marshal Thalhofer reported that when he received the email from Marshal Bratcher, he wondered if the email had been directed at him, that he had expressed that concern to Sergeant White, but that Sergeant White gave him permission to keep the photograph posted.

Marshal Thalhofer:
First, let me say I, I do now remember the email from Carlos Bratcher, which I'd forgotten about. Okay. And when that email came out, I wondered if it was directed at me. It was a general thing to everybody, but I wondered if it was about the Trump thing and that might be why I emailed the legal advisor. That might be why I did that. I don't remember. Um, secondly, uh, you asked me how I can explain the discrepancy. The only way I can explain that is that Sergeant White is not remembering this conversation correctly or not expressing it correctly.

Still, Marshal Thalhofer asserted that he had permission to post the photograph.

Marshal Thalhofer:
Well, again, I remember the thing coming up about the email and I might have told him I thought that was because of my picture, but again, it was okay. He said it was okay.

IIU Investigator:
Okay. Um, we'll get into that email in a minute, okay? Um, during your conversation with Sergeant White on June 30th, 2025, did he explain to you the Shoreline Courthouse does not belong to KCSO and the courts have policies regarding remaining politically neutral?

Marshal Thalhofer:
No. I mean, if, if he had gone into that then, okay, there's two ways to look at that. One, he's saying that the courts have this, but it doesn't apply to us, or he's saying the courts have this and it does apply to us. If I had taken from that, that it applies to us and he's telling me that, then I would have taken the picture down.

IIU Investigator:
In that conversation, you initially said no, so I'm, I'm curious. Do you recall this conversation about, um, him stating that, um, the courts have policies regarding the remaining politically neutral? Do you recall that part of the conversation?

Marshal Thalhofer:
But I don't, but again, it could be meant either way and if it had meant they have policy but doesn't apply to us or they have policy and it applies to us, then I would have had to take the picture down.

IIU Investigator:
So he's saying he told you that there's policies regarding remaining politically neutral and he told you to take it down.

Marshal Thalhofer:
No, he did not.

IIU Investigator:
Okay. So just want to clarify, you're saying that that never occurred?

Marshal Thalhofer:
That never occurred.

IIU Investigator:
Okay. Um, during your conversation with Sergeant White on June 30th, 2025, did he direct you or tell you to take the photo down?

Marshal Thalhofer:
He did not.

During his second interview, Marshal Thalhofer was then asked to provide additional context for why Sergeant White had sent him a copy of the King County Code of Ethics following their phone call on June 30, 2025. However, Marshal Thalhofer could not recall what “conversation” the email had been referencing and continued to emphasize that he had been given permission by Sergeant White to continue displaying the photograph.

Marshal Bratcher reported that in speaking to Sergeant White about the photograph, he was informed that Sergeant White had ordered that the photograph be taken down, but he could not recall a timeframe for when that happened. Marshal Bratcher opined that the conversation between

Marshal Thalhofer and Sergeant White likely happened some time shortly after he had sent out his email on June 25, 2025, but could not say for sure. Marshal Bratcher reported it was also his understanding that Sergeant White had consulted with Captain Watkins about the photograph and that Captain Watkins had issued the directive to have it removed—which matches both Sergeant White and Captain Watkins' statements. However, the issue with that timeline is that Captain Watkins reported he was unaware of the issue surrounding the photograph until Sergeant White sought his guidance. He placed this conversation in November 2025, while he was working remotely. Captain Watkins reported that Sergeant White seemed hesitant over the phone about his authority to order the photograph removed and "hadn't decided what to do." Captain Watkins stated that since displaying political figures was against policy and since he believed an order had not yet been issued by Sergeant White to have the photograph removed, he issued the order himself.

While the balance of evidence favors the narrative that Marshal Thalhofer was ordered to take the picture down in June 2025, refused, and then lied about having permission, there is not enough evidence to meet required "clear and convincing evidence" standard of proof. The statements from Marshal Bratcher and Captain Watkins cast some doubt about when the definitive order was given.

For the reasons detailed above, OLEO finds the allegation of Dishonesty is **Non-Sustained.**

-R.McPhail	07/07/2026
Ryan McPhail *Investigations Monitor*	Date