



PRESS RELEASE

Tacoma Police Department
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Interim Chief Ake Announces Administrative Decisions for Two Officers Involved in the Manuel Ellis Case

Tacoma, Wash. – Interim Chief Mike Ake has notified Officers Armando Farinas and Masiyh Ford that they have been exonerated of any policy violations related to their involvement in the Manuel Ellis case. After a thorough review of the department’s Internal Affairs investigation, which included criminal investigations by the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department, Washington State Patrol and Attorney General’s office, the facts in the case led Interim Chief Ake to his decision.

Officer Farinas was investigated for policy violations related to his application of a spit hood on Mr. Ellis. At the time of the application, officers on scene, including Officer Farinas, were concerned about a possible biohazard exposure due to Mr. Ellis spitting near officers. Officer Farinas was familiar with how a spit hood worked and volunteered to retrieve one and apply it. Once the spit hood was applied, Officer Farinas had no other contact with Mr. Ellis. While the investigation did show that Officer Farinas placed the spit hood on Mr. Ellis, it was found the actions of Officer Farinas were reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances.

Officer Ford was investigated for possible use of force policy violations related to his contact with Mr. Ellis. The investigation found that during the detention of Mr. Ellis, Officer Ford took hold of Mr. Ellis’ legs to allow him to be detained in a restraint. Other witnesses confirmed that once Mr. Ellis was detained, Officer Ford continued to speak with Mr. Ellis trying to calm him down and let him know medical aid was on the way. When Mr. Ellis commented that he could not breathe, Officer Ford assisted in rolling him onto his side in a recovery position. He also was the first officer to alert arriving medical personnel that Mr. Ellis’s condition was deteriorating. The actions of Officer Ford were found to be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances and not in violation of department policy.

The department will immediately begin the process of returning the officers to work, which will include several weeks of training prior to any return to patrol duties.

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