

Sergeant Steve Sutto #4482

Date of Hire: 6/24/85

Duty Assignment: Professional Standards Bureau

Shift: I

Squad: N/A

Supervisor: Lieutenant Deb Smoot

Primary PSB Investigator: Lieutenant Dan Olson

N.O.I. Given - Requires Follow-up Action

Allegation #1: That Sergeant Sutto maintained an inappropriate relationship with a pawn shop owner.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #2: That Sergeant Sutto inappropriately obtained items from pawn shops while employed by the Phoenix Police Department during the time period of 1989-1996.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #3: That Sergeant Sutto had knowledge of other police employee's inappropriate relationships with pawn shop owners.

Findings: Unresolved

Allegation #4: That Sergeant Sutto had knowledge of other police employees inappropriately obtaining items from pawn shops during the time period of 1989-1996.

Findings: Unresolved

Allegation #5: That on or around April of 1994, Sergeant Sutto conspired with Mark Brooks of Pawns Plus, to obtain and later purchase a Rolls Royce vehicle belonging to Valerie and Mary Newsome prior to the vehicle legally being eligible for release or sale.

Findings: Unfounded

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Allegation # 6: That Sergeant Sutto failed to accurately and honestly report all facts pertaining to an investigation or other matter of concern to the department in his interviews on 3-18-96 through 7-15-96, with the Professional Standards Bureau.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #7: That Sergeant Sutto was involved in inappropriate activity at Officer Flickinger's bachelor party.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #8: That Sergeant Sutto was aware of inappropriate activity that took place at Todd Flickinger's bachelor party involving Phoenix Police Officers.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #9: That Sergeant Sutto neglected his duty, and failed to supervise subordinates between 1-1-93 and 3-18-96.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #10: That Sergeant Sutto utilized the department computer system to obtain ACJIS information for non police personnel.

Findings: Unresolved

Allegation #11: That between 1992 and 1996 Sergeant Sutto utilized the MDT and ACJIS system for other than police related inquiries.

Findings: Unresolved

Allegation #12: That on 7-3-96, Sergeant Sutto left his assigned duty location, during duty hours, without notifying his supervisor, in direct violation of a directive given him by Lieutenant Schmidt on 3-18-96.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #13: That Sergeant Sutto discussed this investigation with his ex-wife Rhea Sutto in violation of a directive

given him by Lieutenant Schmidt not to discuss the investigation.

Findings: Sustained

Sergeant Sutto Summary:

On June 29, 1992, Officer John S. Sutto was promoted to the rank of Police Sergeant and assigned to the Desert Horizon Precinct, 62G squad. Around this time Sergeant Sutto became reacquainted with Mark Brooks either on duty at Pawns Plus which was in Sergeant Sutto's squad area, or off duty while at an auto auction. Sergeant Sutto told investigators he previously knew Brooks when they were both teenagers. Sergeant Sutto and Mark Brooks developed a friendship, and Sutto purchased thousands of dollars worth of property from or through Pawns Plus and Mark Brooks.

On September 29, 1995, Steve Beatty identified Sergeant Sutto from a photograph as a Phoenix Police Sergeant who frequented Pawns Plus and received discounts and interest free credit on items. According to Mr. Beatty, Sergeant Sutto was a friend of Mark Brooks and purchased numerous items at Pawns Plus including a television, guns, jewelry and a Rolls Royce automobile, at reduced prices. Beatty also alleged that Sergeant Sutto received interest free financing on items at Pawns Plus, which was not afforded the general public. According to Beatty, Sergeant Sutto spent a large amount of time at Pawns Plus and would shop for items and/or purchase items both on and off duty. Sergeant Sutto also looked at merchandise on the store's ten day hold shelf and purchased items from this shelf. He further indicated that Sergeant Sutto watched pornographic movies at Pawns Plus as well as borrowed items including pornographic movies from the business.

According to Beatty, Sergeant Sutto purchased a Rolls Royce automobile from Brooks which was still in pawn. Brooks allegedly financed the Rolls and Sergeant Sutto paid for it after he (Sutto) sold it.

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Beatty stated that Sergeant Sutto may have provided criminal history information to Brooks. Beatty alleged that Sergeant Sutto was aware Mark Brooks possessed a two-way radio capable of transmitting on police frequencies, and on one occasion heard Brooks unlawfully using the radio to transmit on a police frequency, but took no enforcement action. According to Beatty, Sergeant Sutto used Mark Brook's dealer plates on his personal vehicles and utilized Brook's dealers license to attend dealer only auto auctions.

Beatty also alleged that Sergeant Sutto along with Mark Brooks planned and attended a bachelor party for Officer Todd Flickinger. Sergeant Sutto was aware that an officer was involved in acts of prostitution at the party, and according to Beatty, Sergeant Sutto participated in an act of prostitution with dancers. Sergeant Sutto was also present during a bus trip as a part of the party while officers were riding on the roof of the bus. The bus was stopped by on duty Phoenix police officers. Sergeant Sutto spoke with the on duty officers who made the stop. No citations were issued and the bus was allowed to continue. The bus was stopped on two occasions.

As a result of this investigation, Sergeant Sutto was assigned to his home on March 18, 1996. At that time he was given a written directive not to discuss the investigation with unauthorized personnel. On July 3, 1996, while on duty, Sergeant Sutto violated this directive by leaving his assigned duty location, his home, and calling his ex-wife, Rhea Sutto, in Indiana. He discussed the investigation with her and told her she did not have to talk to anyone regarding the Rolls Royce if contacted.

Investigation also revealed that Sergeant Sutto was off duty at Pawns Plus on February 13, 1994 when store employee R.J. Deplazas was involved in an incident with a customer. The customer called Police

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and alleged that R.J. pointed a gun at him. Officers Potter, Livingston, and Cummins responded to the call. The victim had an outstanding warrant and was arrested. Officer Potter investigated the allegation of an aggravated assault made against Mr. Deplazas. In the course of his investigation he interviewed Sergeant Sutto who advised him no crime occurred. Based largely upon Sergeant Sutto's statements no departmental report was written and the victim was told a Phoenix Police Sergeant was in the store and advised that no assault occurred. The victim claims he was told to stop lying about the assault or the officers would charge him with false information.

During this investigation Sergeant Sutto was interviewed several times and was inaccurate or untruthful with PSB investigators during interviews. This investigation has determined the following with regard to Sergeant Sutto:

Investigative Results:

Allegation #1: That Sergeant Sutto maintained an inappropriate relationship with a pawn shop owner.

Findings: Sustained

Allegation #2: That Sergeant Sutto inappropriately obtained items from pawn shops while employed by the Phoenix Police Department during the time period of 1989-1996.

Findings: Sustained

Investigative Results Allegations #1 and 2:

Mr. Steve Beatty indicated that Phoenix Police Officers, including Sergeant Sutto, maintained a relationship with Mark Brooks in which they were allowed to purchase items from Pawns Plus at discounted prices as well as receive interest free credit on their purchases. Beatty alleges Brooks maintained this relationship with these officers to obtain criminal justice computer information and to avoid police

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