



Reference: Internal Affairs Investigation

Case Number: AI2025-002

Investigator: Sergeant Damon Pifer
Internal Affairs

Involved Employees: Deputy Gregory Schank

Basis for Investigation:

On January 06, 2025, Director Jason Caban authored a Request for Administrative Inquiry Memorandum into an alleged policy violation involving Deputy Gregory Schank. On December 24, 2024, Corporal [REDACTED] emailed Lieutenant Damian Threet concerning an incident with Deputy Schank where he may have made an inappropriate comment to her. [REDACTED] stated in the email Deputy Schank walked into Main Control and said, "do you want to feel my grapes?" When she questioned Deputy Schank about the statement, he responded saying, "I was just saying you want to feel my grapes in the bag." Director Caban stated in the memo, due to Deputy Schank currently being under an internal investigation alleging the same type of sexual innuendos, he would like for this incident to be investigated as well.

On January 06, 2025, Director Howard Cole authorized the Administrative Inquiry into this allegation.

Items reviewed for this investigation:

Alpha Shift Daily Roster 12/23/2024

Complaint Email

Persons interviewed for this administrative inquiry:

CCO Ramona Hercules	Witness
Deputy Edgar Rodriguez	Witness
	Witness
Deputy Gregory Schank	Subject

Interview with Corrections Control Operator Ramona Hercules

The following is a synopsis of the sworn recorded interview with CCO Ramona Hercules which occurred on January 11, 2025. For complete details, refer to the recording in its entirety.

CCO Hercules described the incident as Deputy Schank entering Main Control and stating “who touched my grapes” while [redacted] and Deputy Rodriguez were present. CCO Hercules stated no one in Main Control answered Deputy Schank. She said Deputy Schank took the grapes and left out of Main Control. CCO Hercules said that’s all that happened in Main Control and she didn’t hear anything else. CCO Hercules was asked to tell me what she heard Deputy Schank say again, she replied “who touched my grapes.” CCO Hercules said she didn’t hear [redacted] or anyone else say anything after Deputy Schank made the comment about the grapes.

CCO Hercules described her relationship with Deputy Schank as one of unfamiliarity. She stated she has never worked with him nor has she held a conversation with Deputy Schank before. CCO Hercules stated she was out of work on leave and when she returned, Deputy Schank was assigned to the shift. CCO Hercules stated she has heard other coworkers say Deputy Schank talks too much. She said the coworkers would say, Deputy Schank would just “talk about anything” but she doesn’t know any details about those conversations.

This concludes the interview with CCO Hercules.

Interview with Deputy Edgar Rodriguez

The following is a synopsis of the sworn recorded interview with Deputy Edgar Rodriguez which occurred on January 11, 2025. For complete details, refer to the recording in its entirety.

Deputy Rodriguez stated he was assigned as the Main Control Certified Deputy on December 23, 2024. Deputy Rodriguez said [redacted] entered Main Control and Medical Deputy Schank entered soon after. Deputy Rodriguez stated there were words being said behind him but he really didn’t hear it because he was listening to the radio and watching the cameras. He said he was trying to pay attention to what was going on in front of him. Deputy Rodriguez said he did notice [redacted] seem to be upset and heard her say “what the fuck.” Deputy Rodriguez said [redacted] was visibly upset as if something was said she didn’t approve or was inappropriate. Deputy Rodriguez stated [redacted] and Deputy Schank both left Main

Control after the incident. Deputy Rodriguez stated he later found out it was an inappropriate statement made that was sexual in nature which caused the entire situation. Deputy Rodriguez was asked if he heard what was said by Deputy Schank. Deputy Rodriguez stated he didn't hear the exact words because he was listening to the radio and looking at the computer screens in front of him.

Deputy Rodriguez described his relationship with Deputy Schank as a professional working relationship. Deputy Rodriguez said Deputy Schank has only been on the shift maybe two months. Deputy Rodriguez said he has worked alongside Deputy Schank once or twice in the past. He stated Deputy Schank did his job with no issues to note. Deputy Rodriguez was asked if Deputy Schank normally tells jokes or makes inappropriate comments at work. Deputy Rodriguez stated he heard Deputy Schank in the past mumble off things, but he passively ignores it. Deputy Rodriguez said he couldn't really remember any specifics of what Deputy Schank would mumble because he goes off on banters sometimes, but it's all ignored. Deputy Rodriguez said he is not aware of any other prior incidents on their shift involving Deputy Schank that would be relevant to this case. Deputy Rodriguez was asked if he found any of Deputy Schank's jokes or comments personally offensive. Deputy Rodriguez stated none that he could remember. Deputy Rodriguez stated normally, if he doesn't "feel a person's vibe", he would stick to his area and the other person would stick to their area. Deputy Rodriguez said if someone needs his help he will help them but he really doesn't like to engage in politics.

This concludes the interview with Deputy Rodriguez.

1st Interview with

The following is a synopsis of the sworn recorded interview with _____ which occurred on January 11, 2025. For complete details, refer to the recording in its entirety.

_____ described the incident as her being present in Main Control speaking to Deputy Rodriguez when Deputy Schank entered. _____ said Deputy Schank came directly behind her and said "you want to feel my grapes?" _____ said she turned around in disbelief cursing at him saying "what the fuck!" _____ said Deputy Schank responded by saying "I was just saying you want to feel my grapes in a bag." _____ stated she exited Main Control with Deputy Schank exiting right behind her. _____ was asked how Deputy Schank responded to her after he made the statement. _____ said Deputy Schank told her, "do you want to feel my grapes in the bag." _____ said Deputy Schank didn't have any grapes in his hand at that time. _____ said Deputy Schank left Main Control right behind her and she took it as him keeping her from going to tell the Supervisors about the incident. _____ said Deputy Schank stated, "no no no my grapes are in the bag" as he followed her out of Main Control.

_____ described her relationship with Deputy Schank as being fair and consistent with him just like everyone else. _____ was asked why she thought Deputy Schank made this statement to her. _____ said she didn't know and she was surprised.

believed this comment was inappropriate and sexual in nature. [redacted] was asked to described how Deputy Schank's comment could be sexual in nature. [redacted] stated her being a female, if a male comes behind her and states do you want to feel my grapes in a sexual nature, she takes that as him referring to his testicles. [redacted] said there is no other way to take that statement with Deputy Schank standing right behind her. [redacted] was asked how this incident compares with Deputy Schank's normal behavior. [redacted] said there are times Deputy Schank says things that are inappropriate and weird or doesn't make sense. [redacted] said she doesn't remember exactly what those comments have been because normally she just walks away. [redacted] said she [redacted] with Deputy Schank on a different shift and his behavior has always been consistent with this same kind of incident.

[redacted] stated she spoke to Sergeant Gerald Howell and Lieutenant Damian Threest concerning this incident. [redacted] said everything we have discussed she spoke to them about. [redacted] was asked if Deputy Schank's behavior has affected her ability to

[redacted] stated no, but she wishes for this kind of behavior and comments by Deputy Schank to stop.

This concludes the interview with [redacted]

2nd Interview with [redacted]

The following is a synopsis of the sworn recorded interview with [redacted] which occurred on January 11, 2025. For complete details, refer to the recording in its entirety.

The second interview was conducted due to [redacted] adding to her statements after the first interview concluded. [redacted] was asked if Deputy Schank had any grapes present in Main Control when he made the comment "do you want to feel my grapes." [redacted] said she didn't see any grapes in Main Control or on his person. [redacted] said he did have a lunch box in Main Control. [redacted] was asked if she believed Deputy Schank was being inappropriate making a sexual comment to her or offering grapes to her. [redacted] stated she believes Deputy Schank was being inappropriate making a sexual comment to her.

This concludes the interview with [redacted]

Interview with Deputy Gregory Schank

The following is a synopsis of the sworn recorded interview with Deputy Gregory Schank which occurred on January 30, 2025. FDSA Attorney John Whitaker was present for the interview. For complete details, refer to the recording in its entirety.

Deputy Schank stated he was the Medical Deputy on this particular day. He described approaching Main Control because his backpack/lunch bag was located in there. Deputy Schank said there were two plastic bags in front of his lunch bag on the counter, one containing grapes and the other containing half an apple. Deputy Schank said he knocked on Main Control's door and

the Corrections Control Operator opened it. He said other people were present inside of Main Control but he didn't know exactly where [redacted] was standing at the time and he didn't have a clear view of his bag. Deputy Schank stated "hey I want to grab my grapes." Deputy Schank said [redacted] responded by saying "what the fuck." Deputy Schank said he told

"I want to grab my fruit." Deputy Schank said to the best of his knowledge he reached out, grabbed the two bags and exited Main Control. Deputy Schank was asked if anything else occurred. Deputy Schank said he doesn't remember saying anything else. Deputy Schank said he retrieved his belongings and left. Deputy Schank said the main purpose for going inside of Main Control was to get his fruit. Deputy Schank said the grapes were more visible than the apple. Deputy Schank was asked if [redacted] could have seen the grapes out on the counter. Deputy Schank said she should have seen them but he doesn't know. Deputy Schank stated, "Ms. Hercules saw them because she mentioned me taking my grapes in her interview so [redacted] should have seen them."

Deputy Schank described his relationship with [redacted] as being one of selective listening. Deputy Schank said he has only [redacted] a short amount of time and he has had an incident before where [redacted] "hears what she wants to hear." Deputy Schank said the incident was in Isolation Control and he reported an incident from the PREA phone in which, [redacted] misunderstood what Deputy Schank told her. Deputy Schank stated it was incidents like that which, made it unpleasant

Deputy Schank was asked how he felt about [redacted] perceiving his comment as being sexual in nature. Deputy Schank admitted, during the last investigation on him, he told a joke that was sexual in nature but said this one has nothing to do with anything but "fruit." Deputy Schank said he doesn't know where [redacted] got that idea from. Deputy Schank stated if the two other people in Main Control heard [redacted] say "what the fuck," they should have heard him make the inappropriate comment as well. Deputy Schank said the two other people didn't hear anything like that coming from him. Deputy Schank said this is something he believes [redacted] wants to hear because she is adding things to what was actually said.

Deputy Schank said he believes his behavior was absolutely appropriate. Deputy Schank stated, "My behavior was, I wanted to get my fruit, so however you want to label that." Deputy Schank said the only other contact he's had with [redacted] since the incident has been normal interactions while on shift. He said she gets offended sometimes when he asks her questions and she doesn't know the answers to them. Deputy Schank said [redacted] demeanor comes across as her thinking he is questioning her ability [redacted] but he stated that's not the case. Deputy Schank said his main job at the jail is to do what he's supposed to do and to make his job easier. Deputy Schank was asked how work has been since the incident. Deputy Schank said [redacted] is [redacted] and he described [redacted] as him being really careful around her.

Deputy Schank was asked if he thinks he violated any code of conduct or agency policies. Deputy Schank said, "nothing, unless someone has a problem with me eating an apple."

This concludes the interview with Deputy Schank.

Investigative Summary: brought it to attention that Deputy Schank made an inappropriate comment to her while Deputy Rodriguez and CCO Hercules were present in Main Control. Based on their sworn testimony, believed Deputy Schank's comment was sexual in nature while Deputy Schank stated he was attempting to retrieve his fruit. Deputy Schank admitted his last investigation involved sexual innuendos, but he insisted this investigation has nothing to do with anything sexual.

Main Control inside the Detention Center is an approximate 12ft x 6ft space. The space is condensed down to approximately an 9ft x 5ft space with equipment, counters and chairs added. With four individuals present in Main Control at the time of this particular incident, in such a small condensed space, it is reasonably believed at least two people would have heard the same account of what actually occurred between Deputy Schank and . In this case, there are four versions of what occurred in Main Control. Deputy Rodriguez said he didn't hear anything. CCO Hercules stated Deputy Schank said, "who touched my grapes." stated Deputy Schank said, "you want to feel my grapes." Deputy Schank said he told "I want to grab my grapes."

The findings of an administrative investigation must determine whether there is a factual basis to the allegations. Deputy Schank did enter Main Control inquiring about his fruit. Deputy Schank argued one witness (CCO Hercules) heard him speak about his grapes and it wasn't sexual in nature. After interviewing everyone involved in this matter, there are three versions of what was said. Based on these inconsistent statements, there is not enough preponderance of evidence to sustain Deputy Schank for making an inappropriate comment to

Findings:

Deputy Schank did enter Main Control and make a comment to . Whether Deputy Schank's comment was harassment or sexual in nature cannot be determined. Even given Deputy Schank's past history of inappropriate behavior, this incident hasn't provided the necessary preponderance of evidence needed to sustain him on any policy violations.

Therefore, in regards to Deputy Gregory Schank:

As it pertains to **Policy 26.3 Harassment on the Basis of Sex-** Consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment. The finding is **"NOT SUSTAINED"**.

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Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing Administrative Inquiry and that the facts stated in it are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Furthermore, I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the subject of the investigation of any of the rights contained in ss.112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes.

Sgt. UF P. 10472

Sergeant Damon Pifer

Internal Affairs

St. Johns County Sheriff's Office

State of Florida

County of St. Johns

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me
this 25 day of February, 2025

by Damon Pifer

who is personally known to me.

Signature of Notary Public

