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KAREN G. ST. GERMAIN
COMMISSIONER

State of Louisiana
Department of Public Safety and Corrections
Public Safety Services

JANUARY 20, 2021
OLA/MMG/21-23382
OMV-21-01-04

MS. DARRLYN PORTER
OFFICE OF MOTOR VEHICLES
IMPAIRED DRIVER UNIT

IA#20-021; OLA#070812

RE: TERMINATION

Dear Ms. Porter:

In accordance with Civil Service Rules 12.1 and 12.2, and the authority delegated to me by Colonel Lamar Davis, Deputy Secretary, you are hereby notified that effective at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 22, 2021, you are terminated from your position as a Motor Vehicle Compliance Analyst 3 with the Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV) for the following reasons:

On October 11, 2020, Department of Public Safety (DPS) Police Officer Brandon Travis observed Steven Tweedle, a convicted felon in the custody of DPS, in possession of a cell phone at the Louisiana State Police (LSP) barracks. The cell phone, which is considered contraband for inmates, was confiscated. Offender Tweedle provided the passcodes to the phone and DPS Lt. Trevor McDonald reviewed the contents of the phone. One folder found on the phone was labeled "Pnut" and contained 25 photographs. Twenty of the photographs were confirmed to contain your image. Two of those twenty photos were of you posing with Offender Tweedle in what appeared to be in your work area at OMV. The remaining five photos were of female genitalia and breasts, but did not contain a face. The matter was referred to Louisiana State Police Internal Affairs (IA) for investigation of your actions. LSP Trooper Randy Hidalgo performed an extraction of the 25 photos from Offender Tweedle's cell phone and provided a report to IA.

On November 9, 2020, you participated in an interview with Louisiana State Police Internal Affairs (IA) investigators Troopers Michael Talley and Kevin Ducote. Prior to being asked any questions, you were advised of your administrative rights and acknowledged that you understood them by your signature. You were then placed under oath and were asked questions¹.

You admitted to investigators that you knew Offender Tweedle who cleaned on your office floor. You denied having a relationship with him or ever seeing him with a cell phone. You were asked if you had ever taken any photographs with him, you advised none that you were aware of.

¹ The interview was recorded and is maintained at Internal Affairs.

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When you were also asked by investigators if you had ever spoken to Offender Tweedle via cell phone and you advised not that you could recall. You advised that you were not sure when Offender Tweedle started working on your floor, possibly 2011 or 2012, that he worked there for a few years, and recalled that he transferred to the cafeteria before you left the agency in 2017².

After answering these questions, you were shown two photographs of a female posing with Offender Tweedle in each photo and you acknowledged that you were the female. You were shown a photograph of a female posing sideways in a white t-shirt and pants and acknowledged that the female was you. You claimed you had no idea how Offender Tweedle got the photos.

You acknowledged to investigators that you were aware of the policy pertaining to fraternizing with inmates and that your interactions should not be of a personal nature, including talking on the phone. You further admitted to investigators that you knew offenders were not supposed to have cell phones.

You then admitted to investigators that Offender Tweedle took the photos of you posing with him with his cell phone. You advised that he did not take the photo of you in the t-shirt, but you did not recall sending it to his phone. You then admitted that you spoke to Offender Tweedle on his cell phone, with him mostly initiating the calls, but you also called him. When you were asked if you ever sent Offender Tweedle sexually explicit photos of yourself, you could not definitively deny that you had. You admitted that you received photos from Offender Tweedle, and specifically recalled him sending photos of him from the "Toastmasters" program, and when he got a haircut. You could not recall if he sent you any inappropriate photos.

You advised investigators that the relationship ended because Offender Tweedle wanted children and he was not getting out of incarceration for five years so you told him it was over. You admitted that your relationship was not proper and you even avoided going to the cafeteria when he was assigned there to avoid "tensions" and you "didn't want to jeopardize anything." You explained that you entertained the relationship because it was "something to do. Somebody showed interest and, you know what, he's not a bad guy and that was that."

You knew that Offender Tweedle had a cell phone and that he was not supposed to possess a cell phone. Instead of reporting this to DPS Police, you posed for photos with him that he took on his cell phone, allowed him to contact you via cell phone, contacted him via the cell phone, received photos from him via cell phone, and sent photos to his cell phone. You maintained a personal relationship with an offender assigned to the DPS facility. You knew that your actions were inappropriate. All of these above described actions were in violation of DPS Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter 5- Interaction with and Supervision of Offender Labor, Section 05-01.01 – Interaction with Offenders, which states in pertinent part:

² DPS Police offender records show Offender Tweedle was assigned to OMV headquarters from October 2011 to February 2014 and to the Headquarters Cafeteria from September 2014 to February 2019.

...
B. OFFENDER ACTIVITIES

...
4. Listed below are examples of unauthorized Offender activities. Any PSS employee who observes/witnesses an Offender committing any of the following unauthorized activities/behaviors or other questionable activities/behaviors, shall immediately contact Communications at (225) 925-6536 and ask to speak with the on duty DPS officer to report an Offender infraction.

a. Unauthorized Activities

i. Offender shall not possess any of the following:

...
* Cellular phones;
...

C. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1. Employees shall not fraternize or socialize with Offenders in any way. Interaction between employees and Offenders is limited to the exchange of information or services relating to the specific job duties of the Offender. Personal conversations or any other activity (such as exchange of telephone numbers) between employees and Offenders, unrelated to specific job duties of the Offender is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, at no time will an employee establish a relationship with an Offender which goes beyond professional job duties.

...
4. Employees shall refrain from personal conversations or showing affection (casual touching, any outside communication, telephone, mail etc.) when working with Offenders.

5. Unless permitted elsewhere in this policy, employees shall refrain from accepting/giving any of the following from/to Offenders:

...
e. Pictures
...

7. Employees shall not allow an Offender to use any telephones/cell phones.

...
16. Employees shall report any violations of this policy and any unusual circumstances concerning Offender activities to Communications at (225) 925-6536 immediately and ask to speak with the on duty DPS Officer to an Offender infraction.

Ms. Porter
January 20, 2021
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You have the right to appeal this action to the State Civil Service Commission within 30 calendar days following the date you receive this notice. The appeal procedure is contained in Chapter 13 of the Civil Service Rules, which is available from the Department of State Civil Service or your Human Resource office.

Any questions you may have regarding accrued leave or benefits may be addressed to the Department of Public Safety Human Resources Office. Their telephone number is (225) 925-6067 and their address is 7979 Independence Blvd., Suite 201, Baton Rouge, LA 70806.

Sincerely,



Karen G. St. Germain
Commissioner, Office of Motor Vehicles

C: Colonel Lamar A. Davis
Staci Hoyt
Ashleigh Starnes
Joyce Wilson
Internal Affairs
Office of Legal Affairs
Human Resources Management