



DANBROOK
ADAMS
RAYMOND

JANIS L. ADAMS
ATTORNEY

231.714.0162

jadams@darlawyers.com

April 29, 2019

Sheriff Thomas Bensley
Undersheriff Mike Shea
GTSO Law Enforcement Center
851 Woodmere Ave.
Traverse City, MI 49684

Via Hand-Delivery

RE: *Investigation Report Pertaining to Captain Ritter*

**THIS COMMUNICATION IS PROTECTED BY ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE
AND WORK PRODUCT DOCTRINE**

Dear Sheriff Bensley and Undersheriff Shea:

You asked this Firm to investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct by Captain Todd Ritter. This report contains an evaluation of the facts following the investigation of the complaint.

I. Factual Background of Complaint

Mike Shea began his position with the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office ("GTSO") as Undersheriff on October 29, 2018. In early November 2018, Undersheriff Shea verbally advised Correction Officers ("CO") and Road Deputies that he had an open door policy and would be happy to meet with any employee(s) and discuss concerns or ideas they might have regarding the Sheriff's Office. Subsequently, he sent an email out to all Sheriff's Office employees advising the same, including the option to meet off-site at a neutral location if that would make the employees feel more comfortable. Thereafter, Undersheriff Shea met with a group of COs in late November and again in early December 2018. In the December 2018 meeting, the COs disclosed concerns about Capt. Ritter's leadership. As part of that discussion, they advised that Capt. Ritter had given favorable treatment to two female inmates at the Grand Traverse County jail ("GT Jail"). They also discussed their concerns regarding rumors going around the jail that Capt. Ritter had intimate

P 231.714.0157

F 231.714.0171

310 West Front Street, Suite 413
Traverse City, MI 49684

April 29, 2019

Page 2

relationships with former inmates of the GT Jail. The GTSO had not received any complaints from female inmates, current or former, with respect to Capt. Ritter.

Undersheriff Shea met with the COs again on December 27, 2018 and they further discussed their concerns regarding Capt. Ritter's lack of leadership in the jail.

In late December 2018/early January 2019, an employee of a home health care agency [REDACTED] asked the Undersheriff if he was a police officer. He advised her of his position. Thereafter, she voluntarily disclosed that she had been in a long-term relationship with Capt. Ritter which ended around October 2018. She did not disclose that she had been an inmate of the GT Jail, and Undersheriff Shea was not aware that she had been an inmate of the jail. Undersheriff Shea brought the infidelity issue he learned of to the attention of Sheriff Bensley.

During February 2019, the COs provided Undersheriff Shea with specific inmate information pertaining to Capt. Ritter's alleged favorable treatment of certain female inmates in the GT Jail, and his alleged relationships with former inmates. The Undersheriff noticed that the name of one of the former inmates that Capt. Ritter was alleged to have been in a relationship with was the home health care worker for his father that had previously disclosed to him her relationship with Capt. Ritter. Knowing that the home health care worker was a former inmate of the GT Jail, the Undersheriff investigated the allegations further.

On March 19, 2019, Undersheriff Shea spoke to a witness who confirmed that another former inmate of the GT Jail also had an intimate relationship with Capt. Ritter.

On March 24, 2019, Undersheriff Shea contacted the home health care worker who previously disclosed her relationship with Capt. Ritter to him, and she confirmed her past relationship with Capt. Ritter, advising that it went on for seven years, but was now over.

On March 28, 2019, this firm was retained to perform an independent investigation of the allegations pertaining to Capt. Ritter.

Capt. Ritter has been employed by the GTSO for over 20 years. He started out as a Marine Patrol deputy in 1997, and shortly thereafter became a Dep. Corrections Officer. In 2003, he was promoted to Sergeant, and in 2011 he was promoted to Administrative Sergeant. In February 2015, he was promoted to Lieutenant and shortly thereafter, in August 2015, he was promoted to Captain. As Captain, he holds the title of Jail Administrator and is in command of the Grand Traverse County Jail.



II. Investigation

a. Documents Reviewed

In performance of this investigation, I reviewed the following documents:

- Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures
- Grand Traverse County Code of Ethics (GO1.002) (signed by Captain Ritter on November 17, 1997)
- Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office Rules and Regulations (G.O. 4.000)
- Agreement Between The Board of Commissioners and the Sheriff of Grand Traverse County and Teamsters Local 214 Lieutenants and Captains Unit (January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020)
- Disciplinary Record of Captain Ritter
- Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office Job Description for Captain position
- Captain Ritter's Staff Directory Bio
- Booking Card for Witness 1
- Booking Card for Witness 2
- Booking Card for Witness 3
- Booking Card for Witness 4
- Benzie County Probation Records for Witness 3
- Grand Traverse County Case History Records for Witness 2
- Leelanau County Case History Records for Witness 2
- Booking Card for Inmate A
- Booking Card for Inmate B



April 29, 2019

Page 4

- "Ritter Timeline" prepared by Undersheriff Shea (at my request)
- Captain Ritter's Radisson Hotel Lansing reimbursement information
- April 11, 2019 Resignation Letter from Captain Ritter
- Review of Capt. Ritter's County-issued cell phone extraction data (on April 11, 2019 and April 22, 2019)

b. Witnesses Interviews

The investigation also included twelve witness interviews. The names of the witnesses and/or inmates of the GT Jail are identified by witness numbers ("Witness _"). Former GT Jail inmates who are referenced but did not submit to interviews are identified as Inmate A and Inmate B. The names of current and former GT Jail employees are referred to by their actual names. The following witnesses were interviewed:

- Witness 1 (March 29, 2019 in-person at Leelanau County Jail)
- Witness 2 (April 1, 2019 via telephone)
- Witness 3 (April 3, 2019 in-person at my office)
- Witness 4 (April 3, 2019 via telephone)
- Witness 5 (April 2, 2019 via telephone)
- Deputy Rick Beilewicz (retired) (April 8, 2019 and April 19, 2019 via telephone)
- Witness 6 (April 8, 2019 via telephone)
- Deputy Mary Schwettmann (April 9, 2019 in-person)
- Deputy Joshua Rhodes (April 9, 2019 in-person)
- Lieutenant Ed Lassa (April 11, 2019 in-person)
- Alanna Crouch (April 12, 2019 in-person)
- Brandon Veenstra (former deputy) (April 16, 2019 via telephone with his POAM attorney, Doug Gutcher)



The investigation began on March 28, 2019 and concluded on April 22, 2019.

c. Summary of Witness Interviews

Except as otherwise noted, at the beginning of each interview, it was explained to the witness that this firm was retained by Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office to conduct an internal investigation. It was further explained that the investigation was being conducted on a confidential/need-to-know basis, and that confidentiality would be respected as much as possible, but could not be guaranteed. At the beginning of each interview, all witnesses were advised to contact Undersheriff Shea immediately if they felt they were being negatively impacted in any way as a result of their participation in the investigation. Each witness interview statement is summarized below:

Witness 1 - (March 29, 2019 – In-person Interview at Leelanau County Jail)

I interviewed Witness 1 at the Leelanau County jail. I found her to be forthcoming and credible.

This witness met Witness 3 while they were both in the GT Jail around 2010, and they became friends. Witness 1 met Witness 3's ex-husband (Witness 6) and they dated for about 8 years, breaking up in 2018. In 2017, Witness 6 told Witness 1 that his ex-wife (Witness 3) was dating Capt. Ritter. Witness 1 said she was "very shocked" to hear that the jail Captain was dating a former inmate of the jail. Witness 6 also told her that Capt. Ritter asked him to not discuss the relationship with anyone. Witness 6 was Facebook friends with Capt. Ritter.

During August 2017, Witness 1 was in GT Jail and had been taken to Munson for a medical issue. Dep. Veenstra was on hospital duty with Witness 1. Witness 1 voluntarily told Dep. Veenstra that her friend (Witness 3), a former inmate of GT Jail, was dating Capt. Ritter. Upon hearing the information, Dep. Veenstra stated "Oh wow – really?" Witness 1 stated that within a short time after she told Dep. Veenstra this information, Capt. Ritter showed up at the hospital very early in the morning, telling her that he came to see how she "was doing and to make sure everything was okay." She thinks her former boyfriend (Witness 6) alerted Capt. Ritter that she was in the hospital.

Witness 1 knew from Witness 6 that Capt. Ritter and Witness 3 had taken a trip to Lansing together and spent the night in a hotel there, and that this was around the same time as her admission to Munson. She also knew that Capt. Ritter had told Witness 3 that he was going through a divorce.

Witness 2 - (April 1, 2019 - Telephonic Interview)

Witness 2 was one of the former GT Jail inmates that was alleged to be sleeping with Capt. Ritter. As stated above, on March 24, 2019, this witness had voluntarily disclosed to Undersheriff Shea that she had been in a seven year relationship with Capt. Ritter that ended around October 2018



(she is now engaged). It was also alleged that Witness 2 voluntarily disclosed her relationship to Dep. Rick Bielewicz and Dep. Reece upon a previous booking into the GT Jail.

On March 28 and 29, 2019, I contacted Witness 2 and her attorney to schedule an interview with Witness 2, but was unsuccessful. On March 30, 2019, Undersheriff Shea ran into Witness 2 again while she was performing home health care duties for his father at his father's home (as discussed above on pp. 1-2). Undersheriff Shea asked Witness 2 if she would contact me via phone and provided her with my contact information. She advised that she would call me.

During the March 30, 2019 encounter with Undersheriff Shea, Witness 2 volunteered additional information about Capt. Ritter. She stated that she smoked marijuana with Capt. Ritter when they were together, and that he told her that he orders his marijuana from out of state. Also, that Capt. Ritter advised her that he gets 30 days' notice of any GTSO drug tests. Witness 2 further stated that, when she was on probation during 2015/2016, Capt. Ritter called her and asked her to meet him at the Governmental Center, instructing her to take the elevator to the basement "by where the commissioners meet." Witness 2 met Capt. Ritter in the basement as requested and he took her to a closet where they kissed and touched intimately. Witness 2 stated that this occurred during business hours and that Capt. Ritter was in uniform.

Witness 2 contacted me on April 1, 2019. She was concerned about speaking to me and wanted her attorney to be present. I told her that her attorney was welcome to attend the interview. She asked if we could speak by phone instead of an in-person interview and I told her that I would prefer an in-person interview. She asked me "aren't there others that you can get the information from? There must have been more than me."

While still on the phone, Witness 2 began volunteering information about her relationship with Capt. Ritter. She told me that she had been in a seven year relationship with him that ended in October 2018 (she is now engaged), advising that she was his "side-thing," that he would make "booty" calls to her, and that they would get together and have sex. She described the relationship as consensual. She further stated that, while she was on probation in 2015/2016, Capt. Ritter called and asked her to meet him at the Governmental Center in the basement. I asked if they had sex and she said "no," it was just kissing and heavy touching. She also denied having oral sex. She said this occurred during business hours and that Capt. Ritter was in uniform. I told her that I would like to speak with her in-person with her attorney and we set an appointment to meet at my office the next day, April 2, 2019, at 9:30 a.m.

Witness 2 did not show-up for the scheduled interview on April 2, 2019. I called her and her attorney and left messages. Her attorney called me back, advising that his client had changed her mind about meeting with me because she did not want to "rat" on Capt. Ritter. He also advised that Witness 2 was concerned about a pending Suspended Denied/Revoked License misdemeanor charge that she recently received when stopped by a GTSO deputy in a traffic stop, and that she felt that disclosing information about Capt. Ritter might negatively affect resolution of the pending matter. Her attorney advised me that he did not believe this to be true and advised her to meet



April 29, 2019

Page 7

with me for an interview. Witness 2's attorney further advised that his client had confided in him about her relationship with Capt. Ritter, and he had encouraged her to cooperate in the investigation, but she would not agree. He stated that he would let me know if his client changed her mind, but I did not hear back from Witness 2 or her attorney.

Witness 2 advised that she was on probation when she met Capt. Ritter in the Governmental Center basement during 2015/2016. I reviewed 86th District Court Case History documentation for Witness 2 which confirmed that she was on probation from [REDACTED] 2015 through [REDACTED] 2017 for an OWI Second conviction through Leelanau County. A bench warrant was issued on [REDACTED] 2016 for a probation violation.

Witness 2 was arrested and later arraigned at the GT Jail on [REDACTED] 2016. It was during her booking at the jail that Witness 2 reported to Dep. Bielewicz and Dep. Reece that she was "regularly sleeping with Capt. Ritter."

Witness 2 was released on bond with the same terms and conditions as her Leelanau County probation. On [REDACTED] 2017, she appeared in Leelanau County on her probation violation charge and plead guilty; her probation was continued under the same terms and conditions, plus PBTs 2x per day for the remainder of her probation. She was discharged from probation successfully on [REDACTED] 2017. Witness 2 advised that she continued to see Capt. Ritter through October 2018.

Witness 2 was cautious about saying too much during our phone conversation, however, she appeared to be forthcoming and credible when discussing her relationship with Capt. Ritter. Also, the information she told me matched what she had previously disclosed to Undersheriff Shea.

Witness 3 – (April 3, 2019 – In-person Interview)

I interviewed Witness 3 in my office on April 3, 2019. I found Witness 3 to be credible, professional and appropriate. I did not discern any bias or motivation to lie on the part of Witness 3.

Witness 3 was booked into GT Jail multiple times during the time period of [REDACTED] 2008 through [REDACTED] 2017. She knew Capt. Ritter since 2008, advising that he would come in and joke around with her when she was in the jail. On [REDACTED] 2017, Witness 3 was booked into GT Jail on a probation violation (from an OWI conviction). She served a sentence and was released from GT Jail around [REDACTED] 2017.

Upon her release, Witness 3 was transferred to Benzie County on a probation violation out of Benzie County. The probationary sentence stemmed from a conviction of possession of cocaine less than 25 grams and sentencing to felony probation for the period of [REDACTED] 2015 to [REDACTED] 2018. Witness 3 served about a month at Benzie County jail on the probation violation, and was released from jail on [REDACTED] 2017, having been placed on supervised probation. The



supervised probation required Witness 3 to report to the court every two weeks for a meeting with the judge, probation officer and prosecutor, and to submit to mandatory drug testing. A report was issued after each meeting. She described this as "strict felony probation," stating that she was supposed to go to prison, but that Judge Thompson created a sobriety-type court for her in Benzie County. She was successfully discharged from Benzie County probation on [REDACTED] 2018, three months early.

Following her release from Benzie County jail on [REDACTED] 2017, Witness 3 was on the Tinder dating app in late July, early August 2017. Witness 3 was messaging with an individual who was using an alias. This individual wrote that he "knew her from the jail – saw her name on a roster at the jail and had approved her psych transport visits." Witness 3 stated that this made her feel like this person was "keeping track of her and had his eye on her." She responded, "Who is this – another inmate?" The individual responded "No, I'm from the other side of the bars." Witness 3 responded "is this Sgt. Ritter?" and "are you serious?" When he responded "yes," she told him that she didn't believe it and that if it was him he would have to prove it by coming to her house. Later that same night, around 1:00 a.m. in the morning, while Witness 3 was sleeping, Capt. Ritter showed up in the driveway of her mother's home (where Witness 3 was living). Witness 3 came out to the car, they talked, and Capt. Ritter asked her out.

Witness 3 stated that she and Capt. Ritter dated and had a sexual relationship for around six weeks, with the relationship ending around the first week of September 2017.

Around the middle of August 2017, Capt. Ritter asked Witness 3 to join him on a work trip to Lansing, advising her it was for a work-related meeting. They stayed the night in a hotel in Lansing. The next morning, Capt. Ritter left for a few hours, advising that he was attending his meeting, and came back to the hotel to pick-up Witness 3. They drove around East Lansing, went to the Dairy Store, and Witness 3 showed him the sorority house she lived at when she was a student at MSU.

After my interview with Witness 3, I asked Undersheriff Shea if there was any reimbursement documentation submitted by Capt. Ritter for this hotel expense. The GTSO provided documentation submitted by Capt. Ritter for reimbursement in the amount of \$192.55 for a hotel room at the Radisson Hotel Lansing for one night, check-in on August 15, 2017, and check-out on August 16, 2017. Capt. Ritter received reimbursement for the hotel room in the about of \$192.55. There was no documentation to support what, if any, work-related event Capt. Ritter attended in Lansing on August 15-16, 2017. The dates of Capt. Ritter's stay at the Radisson in Lansing matched with what Witness 3 stated.

Capt. Ritter told Witness 3 that he was in the process of getting a divorce. He also told her that he had purchased some land and planned to live in a trailer on the land while he built a house. Also, that he wanted Witness 3 to help him with the plans for the house, to build the house with her, and to "grow old with her." Witness 3 advised that, being on supervised probation at the time, which



was very difficult for her, what Capt. Ritter said sounded good to her as she craved stability in her life.

Witness 3 advised that she questioned Capt. Ritter's contention that he was getting a divorce, and that she kept permitting things to happen that she would not normally permit to happen because of her "situation" of being on supervised probation.

Capt. Ritter would smoke marijuana in front of Witness 3 when they were together, using a vape pen. Witness 3, who did not smoke marijuana with Capt. Ritter, stated that she thought he was "trying to be one of us," meaning, "from the inmate side."

An hour or more into the interview, Witness 3 got quiet, sat back in her chair, and stated: "I should have known that he (Capt. Ritter) was corrupt when he would bring drug test kits from the jail for me to use so I could test myself and know I was clean" prior to being drug tested while on supervised probation. When she questioned Capt. Ritter about bringing her drug test kits from the GT Jail, he told her that he thought it was okay (for him to do this) because she did not have an open case in Grand Traverse County.

When asked how many drug test kits he brought her, she stated 4-5 test kits, maybe more. She stated that, prior to him bringing her the drug test kits, she told Capt. Ritter that she had ADD and that her anxiety was very high while on supervised probation, knowing that she would go to prison if she violated, and because of this she occasionally took Adderall for her anxiety. When asked if she ever asked Capt. Ritter to bring her drug tests, she said "no" and stated that she was very surprised when he showed up with the test kits, knowing that he had taken them from the jail.

Capt. Ritter would frequently come to Witness 3's mother's house, where Witness 3 lived at the time, and bring Witness 3 a coffee latte in the morning and/or lunch in the afternoon. These visits took place when Capt. Ritter was at work, wearing his uniform and driving a department vehicle.

Capt. Ritter told Witness 3 that she should not "tell a bunch of people" about their relationship. Witness 3 was concerned about other people finding out about her relationship with Capt. Ritter. Witness 3's mother, father (who was divorced from her mother), and her ex-husband (Witness 6) were aware of her relationship with Capt. Ritter during the time it was going on. During his relationship with Witness 3, Capt. Ritter would come to Witness 3's mother's house to mow and edge her lawn, and fix things for her. Witness 3's father (Witness 5) found out about his daughter's relationship with Capt. Ritter at some point and asked Capt. Ritter directly about it, stating, "What are you doing dating my daughter?" Capt. Ritter confirmed the relationship to Witness 5, and further responded, "Well, she is such a great lady."

During the relationship, Capt. Ritter told Witness 3 about things that went on at the jail, including that he had sexual relationships with two employees at the jail. Specifically, he told Witness 3 that he "sport-fucked" a former Sergeant at the jail, and provided her name, and that he had sex with another former Deputy at the jail, and provided her name.



April 29, 2019

Page 10

On one occasion, Capt. Ritter asked Witness 3 to accompany him to McGee's bar. Witness 3 told him that she was on probation and could not be in a bar, and that she did not want to go anyways. At the time that Capt. Ritter asked Witness 3 to go to McGee's bar with him, he was aware that she was on supervised probation and that she was not allowed to be in bars, or drink alcohol.

Around the first week of September 2017, Capt. Ritter told Witness 3 that he was taking her to Grand Traverse Resort for the weekend. However, he ended up having to cancel, telling Witness 3 he had things going on with his kids. She felt he had just been leading her on, never intending to take her to the Resort. Capt. Ritter tried to get her to come back after that, but she told him it was over.

Witness 4 (April 3, 2019 – Telephonic Interview)

I left a message with Witness 4's mother, asking that she call me. She called me back within a short period of time. I found Witness 4 to be a cooperative and credible witness.

Witness 4 was a former inmate of the GT Jail. She had been in the jail during March 2018. Towards the end of 2018, while running heating wires at a job site, she recognized (retired) Dep. Rodriguez, who was doing concrete work at the same job site. She told Dep. Rodriguez that she heard that Capt. Ritter and Witness 3 were in a relationship. Also, that Capt. Ritter had relationships with other jail inmates. When I asked who she heard this from, she advised that when she was in the GT Jail, the female inmates all talked about Capt. Ritter and his reputation for having relationships with inmates.

When I asked why she told Dep. Rodriguez this information about Capt. Ritter when she ran into him at the job site, she stated, "because, I knew it was wrong."

Witness 5 (April 2, 2019 – Telephonic Interview)

I spoke with Witness 5 by telephone about the relationship between Witness 3 and Capt. Ritter. He was forthcoming and credible.

Witness 5 is the father of Witness 3. He advised that his daughter disclosed her relationship with Capt. Ritter to him. Thereafter, he confronted Capt. Ritter in-person and asked him, "What are you doing dating my daughter?" Capt. Ritter confirmed the relationship and stated "Well, she is such a great lady."

Witness 5 advised that his daughter is no longer involved with Capt. Ritter. He assisted me in getting in touch with his daughter for her interview.



Dep. Rick Bielewicz (retired) (April 8, 2019 - Telephonic Interview)

Rick Bielewicz is a former deputy with the GT Jail, having last held the position of Population Coordinator. He retired in August 2018. Currently, he works part-time at the local YMCA. I found Dep. Bielewicz to be a cooperative and credible witness.

I asked Dep. Bielewicz about the allegation that, during her booking, Witness 2 reported to him that she was sleeping with Capt. Ritter. He remembered that Witness 2 stated "I know your Captain - Todd Ritter" and provided other information inferring that she was in a relationship with Capt. Ritter (however, he could not remember the specifics). He thought she might be under the influence and/or attempting to get better privileges. Dep. Reece was also in the booking area at the time and Dep. Bielewicz and Dep. Reece talked about the Witness 2's disclosures about Capt. Ritter after she was gone.

Witness 6 (April 8, 2019 - Telephonic Interview)

Witness 6 is the ex-husband of Witness 3, and the former boyfriend of Witness 1. Witness 6 was cooperative, yet somewhat erratic in his responses. He made a statement that is contradicted by court records, however, I do not know whether he did so intentionally or did not know the truth.

Witness 6 offered a lot of unsolicited information about his personal history and previous stays with the GT Jail, and his relationship with some of the COs at the jail. He also confirmed that he was a Facebook Messenger friend of Capt. Ritter from the time that Capt. Ritter dated his ex-wife (Witness 3), but that he never saw Capt. Ritter personally outside of his time in GT Jail.

Regarding Capt. Ritter's relationship with Witness 3, Witness 6 stated "I was glad she was with Ritter - Ritter would not beat her or do drugs - I was happy" and that he knew "Ritter would be nice to her." He told Ritter "I'm glad you are with [Witness 3]." He advised that Ritter did not tell him to keep his relationship with Witness 3 a secret, but Witness 3 did tell him to keep it a secret. Near the end of the interview, he also stated that he did not like Ritter, but was just happy that Witness 3 was with a guy that was not a drug addict.

When asked if he knew Witness 3 to be on probation while she was in a relationship with Capt. Ritter, Witness 6 stated that Witness 3 was *not* on probation at the time. His response was in contradiction to court records which showed that Witness 3 was on probation through Benzie County during the time she was in the relationship with Capt. Ritter.

When I asked whether he notified Capt. Ritter of Witness 1 being in Munson during August 2017, he advised that he contacted Capt. Ritter as well as multiple deputies and chaplains so they could "keep an eye on her" (Witness 1) while she was in Munson.



Deputy Mary (Shelly) Schwettmann and Dep. Josh Rhoades (April 9, 2019 – In-person Interviews)

As an initial matter, I found Dep. Schwettmann to be a credible witness. Her demeanor was professional and appropriate. Dep. Josh Rhoades was present during the interview as Dep. Schwettmann's union representative. I also found Dep. Rhoades to be a credible witness, professional and appropriate. Dep. Schwettman has been a CO for 18 years. Dep. Rhoades has been a CO for 14 years. Although Dep. Rhoades was serving as Dep. Schwettmann's union representative at the interview, he provided some of the information set forth below. Unless otherwise noted, the below information was provided jointly by both witnesses.

The deputies discussed that there has been a deepening lack of communication between Capt. Ritter and the COs and a general mistrust of him by the deputies in particular. They indicated that they were afraid of Capt. Ritter and felt that they would be targeted by him if they reported alleged misconduct, stating that the majority of the deputies felt the same way. Over the course of the last few months, the deputies met with Undersheriff Shea in roundtable meetings to discuss their concerns.

Dep. Schwettmann advised that she confronted Capt. Ritter about rumors going around the jail that he was having a relationship with a former jail inmate (Witness 3). The rumors were based on communications that former Dep. Veenstra and retired Dep. Rodriguez heard from former female inmates of the jail.

Dep. Schwettmann stated what she had heard from Dep. Veenstra regarding Capt. Ritter being in a relationship with Witness 3. Around 2017/2018, Dep. Veenstra was at Munson on hospital duty with a female inmate (Witness 1) who voluntarily disclosed to him that Capt. Ritter was having a relationship with Witness 3. Following the disclosure by Witness 1, Capt. Ritter showed up at the hospital to "relieve" Dep. Veenstra from hospital duty, advising that he should "go take a break." Dep. Rhoades advised that Capt. Ritter showing up to relieve Dep. Veenstra was "very unusual," as he had performed 50 or more hospital duty assignments and neither Capt. Ritter nor any other member of the command staff had ever showed up to relieve him from hospital duty.

The second rumor related to another voluntary disclosure by a former female inmate of the jail, which was made to retired Dep. Rodriguez around September 2018. At the time, Dep. Rodriguez (retire) was working on a cement job. While doing so, a former female inmate, Witness 4, who was working for another contractor on the same job, recognized Dep. Rodriguez from the jail and voluntarily disclosed to him about Capt. Ritter being in a relationship with Witness 3.

Around the end of 2018/beginning of 2019, Dep. Schwettmann asked Capt. Ritter if she could talk to him about an issue. He called her back to his office, sat behind his desk with his feet up on the desk and his hands intertwined behind his head, and asked "what's wrong?" Dep. Schwettman told him that there were rumors going around the jail that he was in a relationship with former female inmate Witness 3. Capt. Ritter got angry, stated "I know where that rumor came from and



April 29, 2019

Page 13

it's an emphatic "No." Dep. Schwettman advised that he then hoisted himself out of his chair and marched out of the office. Dep. Schwettman stated that she was surprised that instead of defending himself that he got angry and stormed out.

Dep. Schwettman also advised she heard that, when Dep. Marc Reece was booking Witness 2 and trying to obtain her information, Witness 2 told Dep. Reece and Dep. Bielewicz "I'm sleeping with Captain Ritter," and provided certain dates. Dep. Schwettman stated that Dep. Bielewicz told her that "she seemed to be pretty adamant about it."

Dep. Schwettman advised that these rumors were raised with Undersheriff Shea during the first few months of 2019 during roundtable meetings held with the deputies.

The deputies advised that they also observed that Capt. Ritter gave favorable treatment to two female inmates, referred to as Inmate A and Inmate B.

Inmate A had a long stay at the jail of over 6 months, during which time she was in Segregation status for most of her stay. Inmate A did not get along with the other female inmates or with the COs. Inmate A also had many notes and complaints about her made by many of the COs.

When Capt. Ritter advised that Inmate A would be going to trustee status and would start cleaning the administrative offices, including his own office, the COs were shocked. Dep. Schwettman advised that there were many perfectly fine, deserving inmates available for trustee status, and questioned why an inmate who was not deserving and who did not fit the criteria for trustee status (because she was in Segregation status) would be chosen. The majority of the Sergeants also opposed Inmate A going to trustee status. Decisions regarding which inmates were placed on trustee status were made by the Population Coordinator, who was Dep. Rick Bielewicz. When questioned by other deputies about Inmate A going to trustee status, Dep. Bielewicz advised "it was not me."

Inmate A also received a preferred trustee assignment -- cleaning the administrative office outside of the jail. Many of the trustee jobs involved emptying trash and sweeping duties within the jail. The assignments outside the jail, either in the administrative area or the outdoors, were preferred assignments. As it turned out, Inmate A got in trouble during the first week as a trustee and she lost her trustee status.

The deputies advised that I should also speak with Alanna Crouch, the former administrative assistant in the administrative offices, who worked at the jail for 18 years until she recently left in March 2019 for a job with the City of Traverse City.

Regarding Inmate B, Capt. Ritter arranged and approved to have her serve her sentence in Grand Traverse County jail even though she was sentenced through Kalkaska County and she should have served her time at the Kalkaska County jail. At the time of his approval, the Grand Traverse County jail was overcrowded and Grand Traverse County inmates were being shipped to Leelanau



County jail, at a cost to Grand Traverse County. When it came time for Inmate B to be released, the deputy handling the discharge attempted to log-in to the face sheet for Inmate B only to find out that he could not log-in because Capt. Ritter was currently logged in to Inmate B's face sheet. The face sheet contains a photo of the inmate, booking data, and the inmate's contact information. The deputies indicated that there would have been no reason for Capt. Ritter to be logged-in to this inmate's face sheet at the time of her release.

The deputies strongly suspected that Capt. Ritter had an intimate relationship with former Sgt. Amy Johnson. Sgt. Johnson was terminated in 2017 after a fight in a bar that ultimately resulted in a misdemeanor assault conviction. They stated that Sgt. Johnson received favorable treatment from Capt. Ritter and that Johnson was very "comfortable" around Capt. Ritter. As an example, they said that she would frequently sit in Ritter's office with her feet up on his desk. She was also chosen by Capt. Ritter to work on the Seatbelt Safety Checks program when she was a deputy when only command personnel were previously allowed to work in this program. They suspect that she was also receiving officer pay when performing this work. In the context of this program, Dep. Johnson also worked with Capt. Ritter's wife.

The deputies also suspected, but admitted they did not know for sure, that Capt. Ritter may have interfered with the Sergeant's promotion and testing process that resulted in Dep. Johnson's promotion to Sergeant and Dep. McPeake's promotion to Sergeant. They contend that Dep. Dilloway and Dep. White scored higher than Dep. Johnson, but Capt. Ritter chose Dep. Johnson for the position. Also, that Dep. Rodriguez tested at number one for the Sergeant's exam and had the most seniority but Capt. Ritter promoted Dep. McPeake instead.

The GT Jail recently implemented a new program through a contract with Community Mental Health Services (CMH) to provide mental health treatments and assessments in the jail. Capt. Ritter approved Ms. Johnson for one of the positions. One of the criteria for the position was having a criminal conviction so the CMH worker could empathize with inmates. Ms. Johnson met the criteria because she had a misdemeanor conviction for assault. Prior to selecting Ms. Johnson for the position, Capt. Ritter asked the Sergeants if they would have a problem with her coming back into the jail as a CMH employee. Most of the Sergeants said that they would have a problem with Ms. Johnson coming back to work in the jail (given that she was terminated and convicted of a misdemeanor conviction). However, Capt. Ritter chose Ms. Johnson for the position. As a CMH employee, Ms. Johnson makes more money than the GT Jail deputies. The deputies at GT Jail felt like it was a "slap in the face," and joked that if they only had a misdemeanor conviction they could get a better paying job.

For the first month that Ms. Johnson was working at the jail, she was not physically present in the jail. The deputies questioned why she was not at the jail during that time and whether she was being paid for that time. They did not know if she was going through training got the CMH job.

The deputies advised that, several years ago, when Capt. Ritter was a Sergeant, Dep. Jeremiah Moleko, who is now a Sergeant, came back from a training, found the door unlocked to the



Sergeant's area and noticed the computer screen on a community computer was black (timed-out). Capt. Ritter, who was a Sergeant at that time, was the only Sergeant on duty when Dep. Molkeo returned. As soon as Dep. Moleko touched the computer's mouse, a dating site came up for "single mothers" or something similar to that, which Capt. Ritter had been using under the alias "Big Tex."

The deputies advised that, several years ago, Dep. Dave Edgecombe gave Capt. Ritter a personal gun to fix, but he never got it back. When Dep. Edgecombe asked Capt. Ritter about the gun on several occasions, he told him that if he wanted it back he would have to drive out to his home to pick it up. Dep. Edgecombe felt intimidated by Capt. Ritter and thought that Capt. Ritter no longer had his gun and may have sold it. He never drove out to Capt. Ritter's home to pick up his gun and never brought it up again with Capt. Ritter.

CO's are required to obtain CCW permits. The CCW classes run around \$115 and permits must be renewed every 4-5 years. The deputies advised that Capt. Ritter told a group of deputies at the jail that he would arrange for a group CCW permit class that would allow them to share the fee, and thereafter collected \$20 from about 10 deputies for the class. However, the class never happened, and Capt. Ritter never returned the \$200 or so given to him by the deputies for the class, one of who was Dep. Trevor Mattis. This incident created a general feeling of distrust of Capt. Ritter by the deputies.

Dep. Schwettmann called Capt. Ritter "the deceiver." Dep. Rhoades stated that Capt. Ritter "puts the 'crook' in crooked." They both said that he was smart and intentionally "puts people in places around him." They stated that this created an environment in which they did not feel they could make a complaint about Capt. Ritter because he would target them and have the power to get rid of them even if they committed no more than a minor policy violation.

Both deputies felt that Dep. Veenstra, who was terminated for passing notes in the jail between inmates, was targeted by Capt. Ritter. They said that Dep. Veenstra was young and naïve and made a mistake, but that he was not malicious, was a "nice kid" who everybody liked, a hard worker, and treated the inmates with respect. They felt that his case should not have gone to the criminal level, given that he was young, felt pressured by the inmates, and was just trying to be nice.

Lt. Ed Lassa (April 11, 2019 – In-person Interview at GT Jail)

I found Lt. Lassa to be professional, appropriate and not very forthcoming. However, this could have been that, at the time of his interview, he was leaving the next day to go to his sister's memorial service.

Lt. Lassa has been working with GTSO for over 14 years. He was promoted to Lieutenant in August 2015. Capt. Ritter has been Lt. Lassa's direct supervisor for his entire period of employment. Lt. Lassa stated he had a good relationship with Capt. Ritter.



April 29, 2019

Page 16

When I asked about Inmate A, Lt. Lassa knew her as an inmate with erratic behavior and a bad temper. When asked why she got trustee status cleaning the administrative offices, he said Capt. Ritter told him she was "a cleaning person on the outside and she would do a good job."

When asked about Inmate B, Lt. Lassa was not aware that Capt. Ritter allowed this inmate to serve her Kalkaska County sentence in GT Jail. However, when I posed the hypothetical of Inmate B being allowed to serve her sentence in GT Jail when her sentence was out of Kalkaska County at a time when the GT Jail was overcrowded and inmates were being transferred to Leelanau County jail at a cost to Grand Traverse County, Lt. Lassa stated that this "would not be a situation where we would allow an inmate from another county to serve her sentence in our jail." Lt. Lassa did advise that, after Inmate B was released, he received a call from Maxbauer's regarding a job reference for Inmate B, and that he gave her a good reference.

Lt. Lassa said he had no knowledge of Capt. Ritter having intimate relationships with female inmates. He stated that Capt. Ritter came to him one day and said "it is going around the jail that I'm dating an inmate or inmates and I want you to know that there is nothing to it." He told Lt. Lassa that Dep. Schwettmann had confronted him about it in his office. Lt. Lassa also stated that Sgt. Newcombe had come to him with the same contention, stating "I'm gonna go confront him (Ritter)." The inmate being discussed was Witness 3.

Lt. Lassa had no knowledge of any relationship between Capt. Ritter and Amy Johnson.

I asked Lt. Lassa about the drug test kits kept in the jail area. He advised that they are kept in the intake area by the Sergeant's desk in a drawer. The drug test kits were used to test inmates on work release, to test inmates subject to court orders requiring drug testing, and for testing inmates who were suspected of being on drugs at the jail.

The test kits were comprised of a cup with a self-contained test strip that was sealed in plastic. The test results for these kits was within 30 seconds to one minute. If the inmate tested positive, s/he would be sent for a full test. The test kits were not for employee use or employee family/friend use. The jail did not account for the number of test kits in the drawer, and the drawer was not locked. Sgt. White has been in charge of the drug test kits since Dep. Bielewicz retired. Sgt. White keeps track of the drug test kits and orders more as necessary. Dep. Kohler is also involved in the ordering of drug test kits.

Lt. Lassa volunteered at the end of the interview that he was not sticking up for Capt. Ritter, and that Capt. Ritter was "a bull-shitter."

Alanna Crouch (April 12, 2019 – In-person Interview at Governmental Center)

I found Ms. Crouch to be a professional, appropriate and credible witness. She worked at the GT jail for 18 years, from January 2004 to March 22, 2019, when she voluntarily resigned for a new job with the City of Traverse City. Her history at the GT jail was first in Central Records, followed



darlawyers.com

April 29, 2019

Page 17

by a promotion to Training and Equipment Coordinator, and then to Office Specialist, where she stayed until her separation date. In this role she performed administrative and financial duties, and worked directly with command staff, including Capt. Ritter, Lt. Lassa, and Administrative Sgt. Newcombe, who was her direct supervisor.

When I asked if she had witnessed any concerning conduct by Capt. Ritter, she immediately volunteered that Capt. Ritter gave preferential treatment to two female inmates, and named Inmate A and Inmate B.

Regarding Inmate A, Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter gave this inmate a trustee status position cleaning the jail administrative offices (including his own office) that Inmate A did not deserve. She further advised that Capt. Ritter's decision regarding trustee status for Inmate A was against the wishes of Administrative Sgt. Newcombe. It was also against the three administrative employees, including herself, who worked in the administrative offices. Ms. Crouch described Inmate A as very disrespectful, rude, obnoxious, unkempt, and someone who intentionally acted in a disgusting manner. With respect to her contention that Inmate A acted in a disgusting manner, Ms. Crouch cited as an example a time when Dep. Schwetmann was patting Inmate A down before she could go back into the jail, and Inmate A deliberately farted in her face during the pat-down process.

Ms. Crouch stated that Inmate A seemed "very comfortable" with Capt. Ritter. Also, that Inmate A was very chatty and pushy with Ms. Crouch and the other two administrative employees. If they told Inmate A what needed to be done, she would respond, "Well, I need to speak with Capt. Ritter."

After Inmate A's first day in the administrative offices, Administrative Sgt. Newcombe confronted Capt. Ritter about Inmate A, telling him that she shouldn't be there. Capt. Ritter responded that he had "a soft spot for her because she got in trouble in the jail and needed a second chance."

On one of the days that Inmate A was cleaning the administrative offices, Capt. Ritter instructed administrative staff to purchase Inmate A a pizza of her choice (she was allowed to pick what toppings she wanted) for lunch. The pizza was paid for out of the "inmate profit account." Ms. Crouch advised that this account was for used for groups of trustees on special detail assignments, such as community service work, e.g. Vasa Trail, never for an individual trustee working at the jail.

After less than a week in the position, Inmate A got in trouble again at the jail and lost her trustee status.

Ms. Crouch was not aware of a time when Capt. Ritter was alone with Inmate A in his office.

Regarding Inmate B, Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter wrote a letter of recommendation for her for a job. At the time he wrote the letter, Inmate B was still incarcerated at the jail. Ms. Crouch



April 29, 2019

Page 18

further advised that, as a trustee, Inmate B performed car work in the garage, which was a preferred trustee assignment.

Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter was "always gone" from the office. She stated that people would show up for appointments that had been scheduled with Capt. Ritter and he would not be there. When Ms. Crouch called or texted Capt. Ritter about people showing up for appointments, Capt. Ritter would rarely answer her calls or respond to texts. For example, a contractor group that Capt. Ritter had scheduled an appointment with showed up to see him and he was not there. Ms. Crouch called and texted Capt. Ritter to advise him that the group was there for the scheduled meeting, but Capt. Ritter never responded. Ms. Crouch thought this was odd because, as she described it, Capt. Ritter was "married" to his cellphone, meaning that he was on it all the time, either texting or talking.

She further advised that Capt. Ritter kept his calendar private and she was only allowed to see what was marked in blue, noting that he was "busy." She could not see the names or appointments listed on his calendar.

Ms. Crouch stated that when Capt. Ritter was in the office, he frequently closed his door and told her that she should not interrupt him as he needed to get work done.

Ms. Crouch advised that former Sgt. Amy Johnson was "very familiar" with Capt. Ritter. Sgt. Johnson would frequently be behind closed doors with Capt. Ritter in his office, they would go to lunch together, Sgt. Johnson would be seen with her feet up on Capt. Ritter's desk in his office, and she once used Capt. Ritter's office to sleep off a hangover. Ms. Crouch described Capt. Ritter as being "enthralled" with Sgt. Johnson such that everything she said was "funny and cute." She further advised that Sgt. Johnson was dismissive with office staff. Ms. Crouch stated that Capt. Ritter's behavior with Sgt. Johnson was "very inappropriate." She stated that Sgt. Johnson was also close to Capt. Ritter's wife. She did not know for sure, but speculated that it was a way to cover up their affair.

Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter would use his County vehicle for personal uses, such as attending his son's game in Harbor Springs.

I asked Ms. Crouch about the location, storage and protocol around the jail drug test kits. She advised that they were stocked in the intake area in a drawer/desk unit attached to the wall that faced the control room. The drug test kits were stocked from the administrative area where boxes of kits were kept. There was no accounting of the kits. The drug test kits in the intake area were used to test inmates who were suspected of being on drugs, on probation or parole, subject to court-imposed bond conditions, or classified for work release. When I asked Ms. Crouch if there would be any reason to remove any drug test kits out of the intake or office area, she stated, "No."

I asked Ms. Crouch about the required recordkeeping for command staff attending out of town trainings, conferences, etc. She advised that for trainings/conferences, the training/conference



flyer or other materials and the hotel receipt would be required when the County credit card was used. Also, that such expenses were expected to be pre-approved, not approved after the fact. Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter had "quite a few" overnights in Lansing, and that he always stayed at the Radisson. She thought but did not know for sure that he generally was there to attend jail administration meetings or Michigan Sheriff's Association meetings.

Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter had "terrible accountability" with respect to his time. She also found him to be disrespectful, selfish, arrogant, and "an absolute, compulsive liar." She stated that Capt. Ritter was allowed to do whatever he wanted and he felt that no one was watching.

Ms. Crouch advised that Capt. Ritter was one of the reasons that she left her County job, which she had held for 18 years.

Ms. Crouch also stated that she respected Undersheriff Shea for "taking this on."

Brandon Veenstra (former deputy) (April 16, 2019 – Telephonic Interview)

Brandon Veenstra is a former deputy of the GTSO. He appeared for a telephonic interview with his attorney from POAM, Doug Cutcher, on our conference call. I found Mr. Veenstra to be a cooperative and credible witness.

Mr. Veenstra was employed by the GTSO as a deputy working in the jail from April 2015 until recently, when he was terminated for assisting inmates in passing notes between them.

In August 2018, Dep. Veenstra was on hospital duty at Munson with a female inmate (Witness 1) on the midnight shift. This was one of the first times that Dep. Veenstra performed hospital duty. While Dep. Veenstra was on hospital duty, Witness 1 volunteered information to him, stating that Capt. Ritter was having a relationship with Witness 3. Dep. Veenstra was not sure what to think about this as "inmates are known to tell stories."

Shortly after Witness 1 made this disclosure, Capt. Ritter showed up at Munson between 3:00 a.m. and 3:30 a.m., in the middle of the night. He did not tell Dep. Veenstra why he was there, but asked him "Have you had a break yet?" and "Do you need a break?" Dep. Veenstra responded "No" to both questions. Capt. Ritter then ordered him to "Go take 10 minutes – get coffee or use the restroom." Dep. Veenstra obeyed. When he returned, Capt. Ritter left Witness 1's hospital room. During the remainder of his shift, Witness 1 did not make further statements regarding Capt. Ritter having a relationship with Witness 3.

Dep. Veenstra told the other deputies what happened when he got off duty and they advised him that they thought Capt. Ritter's behavior was "very unusual."

Dep. Rick Bielewicz (retired) – (Follow-up on April 19, 2019 – Telephonic Interview)



When I first spoke with Dep. Bielewicz on April 8, 2019, I was not aware that he was responsible for determining which inmates were placed on trustee status. I followed-up with him on this issue after hearing from other witnesses that this was his responsibility.

Dep. Bielewicz advised that, as Population Coordinator, he made the determinations regarding what inmates received trustee status. When asked whether he was involved in placing Inmate A on trustee status in a position cleaning the jail administrative offices, he stated "that one was thrust upon me by Capt. Ritter" and "that was not an inmate that I would have selected." He further advised that when Capt. Ritter asked him to place Inmate A on trustee status in the administrative office position, he told Capt. Ritter "it will not go over well" with the COs. However, Capt. Ritter told him that he would like to "give her a chance." Dep. Bielewicz further stated that Inmate A should not even have been considered for trustee status as she was currently in Segregation.

When I asked about Inmate B, Dep. Bielewicz advised that she was placed on trustee status in the jail garage position, which allowed for lots of freedom and being outside. He stated that it was his suggestion that Inmate B be placed in that position, and that it worked out very well – she worked hard and did a good job. He did not remember Capt. Ritter being involved in the decision-making regarding Inmate B.

d. Review of Capt. Ritter's County-Issued Phone

Capt. Ritter's County-issued cell phone was confiscated as of April 4, 2019 when he was placed on administrative leave. The data from the phone was extracted and prepared for viewing by Det. Nate Ritter. On April 11, 2019 and April 22, 2019, I reviewed communications and pictures found on Capt. Ritter's phone.

On April 11, 2019, I viewed a messaging "conversation" between Capt. Ritter and an unknown female, who identified herself only by her first name. Their communications took place between March 2, 2019 and March 8, 2018. The female provided pictures of herself, that were encouraged by Capt. Ritter, which included several very explicit and close-up pictures of her face, breasts, vagina, butt, and crotch. The communications between Capt. Ritter and the female were quite explicit, including discussions of what Capt. Ritter planned to do with the female, references to "licking" her and oral sex, and other sexual fantasy-type discussions.

On April 22, 2019, I reviewed additional communications, pictures and videos found on Capt. Ritter's County-issued phone that were also extracted by Det. Nate Ritter. The additional data was quite extensive, containing many sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate pictures, messages and videos saved by Capt. Ritter on his County-issued phone. The pictures included a man and woman having sexual intercourse taken by the man (no faces shown), a man and a woman having oral sex taken by the man (no faces shown), several selfies taken by a man of his erect penis, a selfie of Capt. Ritter with his tongue protruding out of his mouth making a sexual gesture, and a



selfie video of a man masturbating while saying a woman's name. The pictures also included females in their underwear and various other sexually suggestive and/or otherwise inappropriate photos and images. The written and pictorial information found on Capt. Ritter's cell phone was quite voluminous.

e. Capt. Ritter's Disciplinary Record

I reviewed Capt. Ritter's disciplinary record contained within his personnel file. The file contained twelve written matters, with the first occurring on January 12, 1998 and the last occurring on March 21, 2019. However, six of the written matters did not result in a finding of a policy violation(s) and a disciplinary action. Those that resulted in a policy violation(s) and a discipline action are set forth below:

- April 9, 2001 – Suspension (5-day unpaid) – Violation of General Order 4.001 (Unbecoming Conduct) and Administrative Directive 1.023 (Personally Assigned Vehicle);
- July 21, 2009 – Level 1 Reprimand – Violation of General Order 4.011 (Insubordination);
- January 20, 2011 – Level 3 Reprimand – Violation of General Order 4.003 (Reporting for Duty), General Order 4.008 (Unsatisfactory Performance), and Policy and Procedure 3.023 (Physical Maintenance Program);
- February 7, 2012 – Level 1 Reprimand – Violation of General Order 4.026 (Operating Vehicles);
- October 20, 2017 – Level 1 Reprimand – Violation of General Order 4.002 (Conformance to Laws) and Administrative Directive 1.023 (Personally Assigned Vehicle); and
- July 17, 2018 – Level 2 Reprimand – Violation of General Order 4.002 (Conformance to Laws) and General Order 4.026 (Operating Vehicles).

f. Events Occurring During the Investigation Pertaining to Capt. Ritter's Employment Status

Following the interview of Witness 3 on April 3, 2019, it was determined that Capt. Ritter had engaged in conduct that would support termination of his employment. On April 4, 2019, Sheriff Bensley placed Capt. Ritter on paid administrative leave pending completion of the ongoing internal investigation. Capt. Ritter was represented by the Teamsters Local 214 Command Unit. On April 10, 2019, the Teamsters Command Business Representative, Robert Donick, contacted Sheriff Bensley, advising that he wanted to meet with the Sheriff. On April 11, 2019, Sheriff



Bensley met with Mr. Donick and he provided the Sheriff with a resignation letter from Capt. Ritter to Sheriff Bensley, stating "I want to thank you for the opportunities I have been provided. I am very sorry for letting you down. At this point I believe it's in everyone's best interest if I resign effective immediately. I will make myself available and make every effort to make this as smooth as transition as possible."

On April 12, 2019, Sheriff Bensley hand-delivered a letter to Mr. Donick for Capt. Ritter, which stated, in pertinent part: "This is in response to the letter of resignation you submitted yesterday, April 11, 2019, through your Teamsters' business representative. Your resignation has not been accepted by the Grand Traverse County's Sheriff Office (GTSO), as we have determined through our ongoing investigation that you have violated several GTSO policies and procedures that compel termination of your employment. As a result, your paid Administrative Leave status is converted to unpaid Administrative Leave as of today. The GTSO will agree to accept your resignation in lieu of termination as per the terms set forth in the attached Settlement Agreement and Release. If you are agreeable to such terms and submit the Settlement Agreement and Release with your original signature, the GTSO will provide you with a formal, written acceptance of your resignation in lieu of termination eight (8) days after you submit the Settlement Agreement and Release."

Capt. Ritter signed the Settlement Agreement and Release on April 17, 2019. The Settlement Agreement and Release became effective on April 25, 2019, and Capt. Ritter's employment with the GTSO was terminated pursuant to a resignation in lieu of termination, effective April 25, 2019. In so doing, Capt. Ritter waived his rights to file a grievance and to participate in an arbitration, as set forth in Articles VI and VII of his Teamsters Command Unit contract. He also fully released the GTSO, Grand Traverse County, and the Teamsters from any and all claims.

Sheriff Bensley thereafter provided Capt. Ritter with a letter, advising him of the GTSO's formal, written acceptance of his resignation in lieu of termination, the factual findings of the investigation, and determinations made in the investigation pertaining to policy and procedure violations.

As a result of his resignation in lieu of termination, Capt. Ritter did not participate in an interview during this investigation, nor did he participate in a Loudermill hearing with the GTSO, as he was entitled to, which would have provided him with notice of the charges against him and an opportunity to respond to those charges. Accordingly, as no statement or other evidence was offered by Capt. Ritter, the findings and recommendations made in this investigation report were based on the witness interviews, documentary evidence, and review of Capt. Ritter's County-issued cell phone.



III. The Relevant Sheriff's Office Policies and Procedures

The Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office policies and procedures pertinent to this investigation are set forth below:

The "Maintenance of Professional Standards," Policy 3.031, states:

It is the policy of this department to investigate all complaints of alleged officer misconduct, and to equitably determine whether the allegations are valid or invalid and to take appropriate action.

The "Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office Code of Ethics," G.O. 2.001 (formerly referenced as "G.O. 1.002" when signed by Capt. Ritter on November 17, 1997) states, in pertinent part:

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental obligation is to protect the constitutional rights and freedoms of the people whom I have been sworn to uphold.

While I consider the way I choose to conduct my private affairs a personal freedom, I accept the responsibilities for my actions, as well as inactions, while on duty or off duty, when those actions bring disrepute on the public image of my employer, my fellow officers and the law enforcement profession.

I vow to perform all my duties in a professional and competent manner. I consider the abilities to be courageous in the face of danger and to exercise restraint in the use of my powers and authorities to be the ultimate public trust. I accept that I must consistently strive to achieve excellence in learning the necessary knowledge and skills associated with my duties. I will keep myself physically fit and mentally alert so that I am capable of performing my duties according to the standards of quality expected of my position.

I vow to be fully truthful and honest in my dealing with others. I deplore lies and half-truths that mislead or do not fully inform those who must depend on my honesty. I will obey the very laws that I am sworn to uphold. I will seek affirmative ways to comply with the standards of my department and the lawful directions of my supervisors.

I vow to treat others with courtesy at all times. I consider it to be a professional weakness to allow another's behavior to dictate my response. I will not allow others' actions or failings to be my excuse for not performing my duties in a responsible and professional and expected manner.

I vow to empathize with the problems of people with whom I come in daily contact. However, I cannot allow my personal feelings, prejudices, animosities, or



friendships to influence the discretionary authorities entrusted to my job. I will affirmative seek ways to avoid conflicts and potential conflicts of interest that could compromise my official authority of public image.

I hold the authority inherent in my position to be an affirmation of the public's trust in me as a law enforcement officer. I do not take this trust lightly. As long as I remain in this position, I will dedicate myself to maintaining this trust and upholding all the ideals of the law enforcement profession.

GTSO Code of Ethics, G.O. 2.001 (emphasis added).

The "Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office Rules and Regulations," G.O. 4.000 states, in pertinent part:

GENERAL ORDER GO4.001 - UNBECOMING CONDUCT:

Officers and Correction Officers shall conduct themselves at all times so as to conform to the department's code of ethics.

GENERAL ORDER GO4.002 - CONFORMANCE TO LAWS:

All employees shall obey all laws of the United States and of the State of Michigan and local jurisdiction in which the employees are present.

* * *

GENERAL ORDER GO4.004 - NEGLECT OF DUTY:

Members of the department shall limit personal business during working hours to the point of not interfering with their duties and responsibilities.

* * *

GENERAL ORDER GO4.008 - UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE:

Officers, Correction Officers and employees shall maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibility of their positions. Officers and Correction Officers shall perform their duties in a manner which will maintain the highest standard of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the department. Unsatisfactory performance may be demonstrated by a lack of knowledge of the application of laws required to be enforced; an unwillingness or inability to perform an assigned task; a failure to take appropriate



action on the occasion of crime, disorder or other conditions deserving of police attention; or absence without leave. In addition, other evidence of unsatisfactory performance: repeated poor evaluation or written record of repeated infraction of rules, regulations, directives or orders of the department.

* * *

GENERAL ORDER GO4.013 - GIFTS, GRATUITIES, BRIBES OR REWARDS:

Officers and Correction Officers shall not solicit or accept from any person, business or organization any gift (including money, tangible or intangible personal property, food, beverage, loan, promise, service or entertainment) for the benefit of the officers, correction officers or the department if it may reasonably be inferred that the person, business or organization:

1. Seeks to influence action of an official nature or seeks to affect performance or non-performance of an official duty or;
2. Has an interest which may be substantially affected directly or indirectly by the performance or non-performance of an official duty.

GENERAL ORDER GO4.014 - ABUSE OF POSITION:

A. Use of official position or identification.

Officers, Correction Officers and employees shall not use their official position, official identification cards or badges:

1. For personal or financial gain.
2. For obtaining privileges not otherwise available to them except in the performance of their duty.
3. For avoiding consequences of illegal acts.

* * *

GENERAL ORDER GO4.027 - TREATMENT OF PRISONER IN CUSTODY:

Employees shall not mistreat persons who are in their custody. Employees shall handle such persons in accordance with law and departmental policies and procedures.

* * *

GENERAL ORDER GO4.045 - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

All employees will maintain current familiarity with all department policies and procedures, as directed by general order of the Sheriff and insure compliance at all times.

GTSO Rules and Regulations, G.O. 4.001, 4.002, 4.004, 4.008, 4.013, 4.014, 4.027, and 4.045

The "Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office Corrections Division Directive-Correctional Office/Inmate Conduct," Policy 7.017 states, in pertinent part:

POLICY STATEMENT:

Correctional Officers *shall conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and remain cognizant of his/her responsibilities to the Corrections Division and the inmates in his/her charge.*

* * *

PROCEDURE:

- A. Each CO shall adopt a professional attitude toward his/her particular job. Officers shall be *impartial and courteous* at all times.
- B. No CO shall *accept any gratuity, loan, reward, gift or bribe (directly or indirectly) from any inmate* or other person liable to arrest or file a complaint, or from any friend or family of such persons.
- C. No CO shall buy from, or *barter with, any inmate for anything.*

* * *

- I. Showing *partiality or favoritism* toward an inmate or a group of inmates shall not be tolerated.

* * *

- N. *CO's shall not engage in, nor develop any personal relationships with inmates or ex-inmates without the approval of the Corrections Captain. It shall be the responsibility of the CO to notify the Corrections Captain, in writing, if a family member, relative, close friend or someone he/she may have a relationship with becomes an incarcerated person.*

* * *

GTSO Corrections Division Directive - Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct, Policy 7.017
(emphasis added).

The "Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office - Expectation of Privacy - Electronic Communications," Administrative Directives 1.047 states, in pertinent part:

PURPOSE

With the current availability of various electronic communications devices, it is necessary to clarify an employee's status as to "expectation of privacy" when utilizing such devices. In addition, employees are issued or assigned the use of other County-owned property, this directive addresses "expectation of privacy" for these items as well.

POLICY STATEMENT

I. Electronic Communications Equipment

- A. The County may make available to employees a variety of electronic communications systems, including, but not limited:

* * *

2. Telephones

* * *

- B. *Such systems are intended for official use only, for business related purposes.*
- C. Such systems may be capable of making a permanent record of your use and your message may be accessible by others.

D. Inappropriate use of such systems include:

1. Threats, intimidations, or other potentially criminal activities.
2. Send jokes or similar personal messages
3. Classified or highly sensitive materials.

E. Expectation of Privacy

Employees do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy when utilizing the aforementioned electronic communications systems as may be provided by Grand Traverse County. *All communications by these systems may be monitored by the employer.* The County (Sheriff or his designee) reserves the right to maintain records of such communications, including the entire message and the identity of the sending/receiving person.

* * *

GTSO Administrative Directives 1.047 - Expectation of Privacy - Electronic Communications (emphasis added).

IV. Evaluation of Fact Finding

Based upon the witness interviews, review of relevant documentation, and examination of cell phone extraction records, I made the following findings of fact and conclusions. In so doing, when faced with a disparity in the facts, I relied on my assessment of each witness's credibility, demeanor during the interview, cooperation or evasiveness when answering questions, and any expressed or inferred bias or motivation to lie:

- In July/August 2017, Capt. Ritter sought out Witness 3 on the Tinder dating app using an alias, telling her that he "knew her from the jail" and that he was from "the other side of the bars." At the time, Capt. Ritter knew that Witness 3 had recently been had an inmate of the GT jail (during June 2017) where he was the Jail Administrator. Capt. Ritter thereafter began an intimate relationship with Witness 3 that lasted approximately six weeks. During the time that Capt. Ritter and Witness 3 were in an intimate relationship, Capt. Ritter knew that Witness 3 was on supervised felony probation out of Benzie County. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:

- Code of Ethics, 2.001;
- General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;


darlawyers.com

- General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- During Capt. Ritter's relationship with Witness 3, he smoked marijuana in Witness 3's presence using a vape pen, offering her the marijuana (which she declined) when he knew that Witness 3 was on supervised felony probation out of Benzie County. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
 - Capt. Ritter asked Witness 3 if she would accompany him to McGee's bar (which she declined), when he knew that Witness 3 was on supervised felony probation out of Benzie County, and that her presence in a bar would constitute a violation of her probation. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;



- General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- Capt. Ritter brought 4-5 drug test kits to Witness 3 (which she did not ask for) for her to use, telling her that he took them from the GT Jail. Capt. Ritter engaged in this conduct when he knew that Witness 3 was on supervised felony probation out of Benzie County, and that she was subject to mandatory drug testing as a condition of her probation. Capt. Ritter advised Witness 3 that it was “okay” for him to bring her the drug test kits because she “did not have an open case in Grand Traverse County.” This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
 - Capt. Ritter frequently drove to Witness 3’s home to bring her coffee in the morning and lunch in the afternoon while he was on duty, wearing his uniform, and in a marked GTSO vehicle. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;



- General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- On August 15 – 16, 2017, Capt. Ritter took Witness 3 on a trip to Lansing with him, telling her it was work-related, and spent the night with Witness 3 at the Radisson Hotel. Capt. Ritter submitted the hotel expense of \$192.55 to the GTSO for reimbursement and was reimbursed by GTSO in the amount of \$192.55 for the stay at the Radisson. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
 - Around the middle of August 2017, Capt. Ritter unexpectedly showed up in the middle of the night – between 3:00 a.m. and 3:30 a.m. – in the hospital room of Witness 1, who had been transferred from the jail to Munson due to a medical issue. Former Dep. Brandon Veenstra was on hospital duty with Witness 1. Shortly before Capt. Ritter appeared in Witness 1's hospital room, Witness 1 had confided in Dep. Veenstra that Capt. Ritter was having a relationship with Witness 3. Witness 1's boyfriend, Witness 6, who was

Facebook friends with Capt. Ritter, contacted Capt. Ritter and told him that Witness 1 was in Munson. When Capt. Ritter showed up in the middle of the night, he did not tell Dep. Veenstra why he was there but ordered him to go take a break. After Capt. Ritter left, Witness 1 did not say anything more to Dep. Veenstra about Capt. Ritter having a relationship with Witness 3. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:

- Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.027, Treatment of Prisoner in Custody;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- Capt. Ritter had an intimate relationship with Witness 2 for a period of approximately seven years, during which time he made “booty” calls to her and treated her as his “side-thing.” Capt. Ritter engaged in this relationship with Witness 2 when he knew that she had been an inmate of the GT jail while he was employed at the jail. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;



- General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- During Capt. Ritter's relationship with Witness 2, when he knew that Witness 2 was on probation through Grand Traverse County, Capt. Ritter asked her to meet him in the basement of the Governmental Center and took her into a closet where he kissed her and engaged in intimate touching. When Capt. Ritter engaged in this conduct, he was on duty and in uniform. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
 - Capt. Ritter brought marijuana with him when he visited Witness 2, advising her that he ordered his marijuana from out of state, and smoked marijuana with her. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;



- General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- Capt. Ritter engaged in favoritism and bias towards Inmate A when he approved her for trustee status in a preferred trustee position cleaning the administrative offices when he knew that: she was in Segregation (which was against jail policy); she had an extensive disciplinary record while in the jail with many CO write-ups; she did not get along with other female inmates; Population Coordinator Dep. Bielewicz, who was in charge of placement of inmates in trustee status positions, did not agree that Inmate A should be a trustee; the majority of the deputies at the GT jail disagreed with Capt. Ritter's decision to place Inmate A on trustee status; and Administrative Dep. Newcombe specifically challenged Capt. Ritter on his decision to place Inmate A on trustee status after her first day in the position cleaning the administrative offices. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.027, Treatment of Prisoner in Custody;



- General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
- Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- Capt. Ritter further engaged in favoritism and bias towards Inmate A when he told the administrative assistants to use funds from the inmate profit account to purchase a pizza for Inmate A for lunch, with the toppings of her choosing, when the inmate profit account was never previously used for an individual trustee working at the jail, but rather for groups of trustees on special detail assignments, such as community service projects. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.027, Treatment of Prisoner in Custody;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- Capt. Ritter engaged in favoritism and bias towards Inmate B when he allowed her to serve her Kaskaska County sentence at the GT Jail rather than the Kaskaska County Jail when the GT Jail was overcrowded at the time to the point that overflow inmates were being transported to the Leelanau County jail, at a cost to the County, due to the overcrowding. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;



- General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.027, Treatment of Prisoner in Custody;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.
- Capt. Ritter further engaged in favoritism and bias when, during the time Inmate B was being released from the GT Jail, the deputy handling the discharge attempted to log-in to the face sheet for Inmate B only to find out that he could not log-in because Capt. Ritter was currently logged-in to Inmate B's face sheet, which contained her photo and contact information. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:
 - Code of Ethics, 2.001;
 - General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
 - General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
 - General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
 - General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
 - General Order 4.013, Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards;
 - General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
 - General Order 4.027, Treatment of Prisoner in Custody;
 - General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
 - Division Directive-Correctional Officer/Inmate Conduct Policy 7.017.



- On his County-issued cell phone, Capt. Ritter kept sexually explicit photos showing female breasts, vaginas, crotches and butts; females engaging in sexually explicit acts including sexual intercourse and oral sex; females posing in their underwear; several selfies of a man's erect penis; a video of a man masturbating with a man's voice in the background saying a woman's name; a picture of Capt. Ritter with his tongue protruding out of his mouth making a sexual gesture; and various other sexually suggestive and/or otherwise inappropriate photos and images. Capt. Ritter also had messaging conversations with females, including one such "conversation" over the time period of March 2 to March 8, 2019, during which several sexually suggestive photos of the female were attached to messages, which were encouraged by Capt. Ritter, containing texts discussing what Capt. Ritter planned to do with the female when they met, referencing "licking" her, oral sex and other sexual fantasies. The written and pictorial information found on Capt. Ritter's cell phone was quite voluminous. This conduct was in violation of the following GTSO policies and procedures:

- Code of Ethics, 2.001;
- General Order 4.001, Unbecoming Conduct;
- General Order 4.002, Conformance to Laws;
- General Order 4.004, Neglect of Duty;
- General Order 4.008, Unsatisfactory Performance;
- General Order 4.014, Abuse of Position;
- General Order 4.045, Policies and Procedures; and
- Administrative Directives 1.047, Expectation of Privacy - Electronic Communications

I further find that Captain's Ritter's violation of the above GTSO policies and procedures would have constituted just cause for termination, pursuant to Article VII, Section 8.1 Just Cause, of the Agreement Between the Board of Commissions and the Sheriff of Grand Traverse County and Teamsters Local 214 Lieutenants and Captains Unit.



V. Recommended Course of Action

It is important to note that any recommendations pertaining to a course of action to be taken against Capt. Ritter as a result of this Investigation Report pertain only to findings related to GTSO policy and procedure violations. Thus, based on the confines of this investigation, and given Capt. Ritter's resignation in lieu of termination, there are no further recommended actions.

That being said, it bears noting that I found Capt. Ritter's conduct to be extremely egregious. He used his position as the Captain and Jail Administrator to intimidate and exploit the vulnerable female inmate population at the Grand Traverse Jail, the very individuals he was charged to protect.

The GTSO Code of Ethics contains seven paragraphs. The egregious nature of Capt. Ritter's conduct is exemplified by the fact that he violated every paragraph of the Code of Ethics, as set forth below:

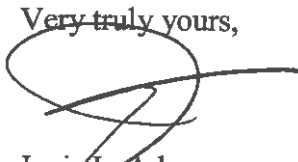
- (1) Capt. Ritter was charged with protecting the rights and freedoms of the people with whom he was sworn to uphold, but he did not protect them;
- (2) Capt. Ritter accepted responsibility for not bringing disrepute on the public image of the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office, but his conduct brought disrepute on the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office;
- (3) Capt. Ritter vowed to exercise restraint in the use of his powers, but rather than exercising restraint, he used his powers to intimidate and exploit a vulnerable population;
- (4) Capt. Ritter vowed to be truthful and honest and to obey the very laws he was sworn to uphold, but he was not truthful and honest and did not obey the laws he was sworn to uphold;
- (5) Capt. Ritter vowed to treat others with courtesy at all times, but he did not treat the female inmates with courtesy;
- (6) Capt. Ritter vowed to avoid conflicts of interest that could compromise his official authority of public image, but instead created conflicts of interest that compromised his official authority of public image; and
- (7) Capt. Ritter promised to hold the authority inherent in his position as an affirmation of the public's trust in him as a law enforcement officer, but failed to hold the authority inherent in his position as an affirmation of the public's trust in him as a law enforcement officer.



April 29, 2019
Page 39

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Very truly yours,



Janis L. Adams
JLA/sk



darlawyers.com