



# **Police Department**

## **City of Warren**

141 South St., S.E. · Warren, Ohio 44483  
Phone: (330) 841-2536 · Fax: (330) 841-2532

**William Douglas Franklin**  
*Mayor*

**Eddie L. Colbert**  
Director of Service-Safety

**Eric J. Merkel**  
Chief of Police

January 22, 2020

To: Noah Linnen  
From: Chief Eric Merkel  
Ref: Disciplinary Action

On January 13, 2020 at approximately 5:30 p.m., utilizing your department issued, state-owned, Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) portable radio, you broadcasted a call of "shots fired" and indicated that you had been struck by gunfire. You provided Trumbull County 911 Dispatchers with a description of the suspect and fleeing vehicle. You claimed the assailant was a "black male" that fled in a "black SUV".

In accordance with Warren Police Department Policy and Procedure 18-001 Critical Incidents, an administrative investigation was initiated by Internal Affairs. Howland Police Department and Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation & Identification conducted parallel criminal investigations. During the course of those investigations, you provided multiple statements to investigators from Warren and Howland PD's. These statements were wrought with inconsistencies and did not corroborate physical findings. Ultimately, on Monday, January 20, 2020, you confessed to Howland PD that your original claim was fabricated and that the scene was staged to mimic an armed robbery attempt and shooting.

The gravity of your actions can not be understated. Believing at face value that you had been shot, over 50 police officers from at least 10 law enforcement agencies responded to your call for help. These officers traveled the streets of our communities at high rates of speed jeopardizing the lives of our citizens and themselves—for a *hoax*! In an effort to apprehend your assailant, these officers detained innocent persons. These officers neglected other calls for service as they searched for someone who didn't exist.

Worst of all, your concocted story pointed the finger at a "black male". Your description subjected every black male in the entire Trumbull County area, especially in the near vicinity, to the torment of being accused of shooting a police officer. Your description perpetuated a stereotype that black males make more credible suspects. You sparked an emotion throughout the black community that widens the gap of police-community relations.

Your criminal acts, dishonesty, lack of integrity and total disregard for the implications of your actions clearly prove that you do not subscribe to the morals, values and mission of the Warren Police Department. This agency has undergone years of transformation in order to rebuild public trust. I will not allow one officer's actions to tarnish the relationship we have built with our community.



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As law enforcement officers, we are stewards of the people's trust. Your Oath of Office was taken with the pledge that you would serve your community, "faithfully and honestly". Your betrayal of that Oath is a violation of policy, a violation against the community as a whole, and undermines the foundation of a policeman, which is integrity. It is my professional and moral responsibility as Chief of Police for this department to ensure that all officers are upholding their Oath and maintaining the highest standards of integrity. Your departure from this fundamental standard of conduct prescribed this outcome.

A pre-disciplinary hearing was scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. I spoke with you via telephone and you advised me, after consulting with your O.P.B.A. Representative Dominic Saturday, that you have elected to waive that hearing. Therefore, after considering all of the facts concerning the alleged violations of the Policies and/or Procedures of the Warren Police Department, I find that the charges set forth in the "Notice of Charges" letter dated January 22, 2020 are true, and you should be disciplined for just cause.

You are hereby **TERMINATED** from the Warren Police Department, effective immediately. Please be aware of your rights as they relate to the current O.P.B.A. Collective Bargaining Agreement with the City of Warren.

Respectfully,



Eric Merkel  
Chief of Police