



# Sheridan Police Department

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Jeffrey A. Martinez Chief of Police

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## Chief's Conclusion Letter

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**To:** Steven Garcia - Sergeant  
**From:** Jeffrey A. Martinez - Chief of Police  
**Date:** February 27, 2026  
**Subject:** Chief's Conclusion Letter IA Case 25-12

I have reviewed this case in its entirety, and the following synopsis encompasses my conclusion of the investigation.

The Department commenced an internal affairs investigation upon receiving an internal complaint from Jennifer Houston of Sheridan's Human Resource department on November 7, 2025. The complaint was lodged on behalf of Officer [REDACTED] who reported that Sergeant Garcia was trying to "push him out". Mrs. Houston provided screenshots of texts that she had received via email from Officer [REDACTED]. The messages were a text conversation between Officer [REDACTED] and Officer [REDACTED] regarding an upcoming shift bid that had Sergeant Garcia and Officer [REDACTED] bidding the same shift. The officers were aware of previous conflict between Sergeant Garcia and Officer [REDACTED] and that is why the text conversation occurred.

Prior to this incident, there have been complaints between Sergeant Garcia and Officer [REDACTED]. Below is a synopsis of two Internal Affairs complaints between these two SPD officers.

In March of 2024, Officer [REDACTED] alleged inappropriate behavior by Sergeant Garcia which was investigated by The Sheridan Police Department under IA 24-03. This case resulted in two "Not Sustained" findings against Sergeant Garcia. Although the complaint did not result in a sustained finding, it was apparent conflict was occurring, so the department acted with the intent of continual improvement and Chief Martinez required Sergeant Garcia to complete the following: Emotional Intelligence and Leading with Intent trainings that were 1 hour each, as well as a quick read titled, "Servant Leadership". Sergeant Garcia reported that he completed these assignments and then conducted the required oral presentation to SPD Command demonstrating the knowledge he acquired from these assignments.

In January 2025, Sergeant Garcia filed a complaint on Officer [REDACTED] regarding an incident where trash was left in a patrol vehicle. Due to the history between Sergeant Garcia and Officer [REDACTED] the investigation of the incident was turned over to the Englewood Police Department at the request of Officer [REDACTED] and the direction on Sheridan Human Resources and the City Attorney. The findings resulted in a "Sustained" policy violation on Officer [REDACTED] for leaving items in his patrol vehicle after his assigned shift.

Regarding the November 7, 2025, incident, I have reviewed the Internal Affairs Investigation conducted by Lieutenant Bryce Jackson that was then reviewed by Commander Edward Leger. I have considered the disciplinary recommendations, and I have reviewed the disciplinary history of Sergeant Garcia. I have also considered the positions set forth by Sgt. Garcia during his pre-disciplinary hearing on February 5, 2026, and submitted by his Attorney on February 6, 2026.

Upon completion of my review and consideration of the Department's applicable policies, I am providing Sgt. Garcia with the following findings and discipline as set forth below.

### **SHERIDAN POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

#### **319.1 Purpose and Scope**

#### **319.2 Policy**

#### **319.3.2 (d) Supervisory Responsibilities**

#### **319.5.8 (c) (d) (e) (i) Performance**

#### **319.5.9 (f) (h) (m) Conduct**

### **CITY OF SHERIDAN, COLORADO EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

## **B. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND HARRASMENT**

### **Section IV – Employee Conduct**

#### **I. Conflict of Interest**

#### **Regarding the Following:**

### **SHERIDAN POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

#### **319.1 Purpose and Scope**

*This policy establishes standards of conduct that are consistent with the values and mission of the Sheridan Police Department and are expected of all department members. The standards contained in this policy are not intended to be an exhaustive list of requirements and prohibitions, but they do identify many of the important matters concerning member conduct. In addition to the provisions of this policy, members are subject to all other provisions contained in this manual as well as any additional guidance on conduct that may be disseminated by this department or a member's supervisor.*

#### **319.2 Policy**

*The continued employment or appointment of every member of the Sheridan Police Department shall be based on conduct that reasonably conforms to the guidelines set forth herein. Failure to meet the guidelines set forth in this policy, whether on or off duty, may be cause for disciplinary action.*

#### **319.3.2 Supervisor Responsibilities**

*Supervisors and managers are required to follow all policies and procedures and may be subject to discipline for:*

*(d) The unequal or disparate exercise of authority on the part of a supervisor toward any member for malicious or other improper purposes.*

**FINDING:** Sergeant Garcia is a supervisor of the Sheridan Police Department, and the investigation revealed that he violated Policies 319.1, 319.2 and 319.3.2 when he spoke disparagingly about Officer [REDACTED] as reported by several members of the Sheridan Police Department.

Due to the finding above, I concur that Sergeant Garcia violated Policy 319.1(d), 319.2 and 319.3.2.

**FINDING for the above specifications (Policy Violations): SUSTAINED**

**319.5.8 Performance**

*(c) Failure to participate in, or giving false or misleading statements, or misrepresenting or omitting material information to a supervisor or other person in a position of authority, in connection with any investigation or in the reporting of any department related business.*

*(d) Being untruthful or knowingly making false, misleading or malicious statements that are reasonably calculated to harm the reputation, authority or official standing of this department or its members.*

*(e) Disparaging remarks or conduct concerning duly constituted authority to the extent that such conduct disrupts the efficiency of this department or subverts the good order, efficiency and discipline of this department or that would tend to discredit any of its members.*

*(i) Any act on or off duty that brings discredit to this department.*

**FINDING:** Sergeant Garcia gave false or misleading statements, and/or omitted material information while participating in an official department investigation. He also made untruthful, false, or misleading statements that can be reasonably calculated to harm the official standing of this department and/or its members. Sergeant Garcia made disparaging remarks of an officer which disrupted the efficiency of this department and discredited a member of this department. Sergeant Garcia's actions while on duty brought discredit to this department. These findings are outlined below; however, these points are not meant to be all inclusive:

Sergeant Garcia was interviewed about an issue Officer [REDACTED] brought forward that included a history of problems between these two officers. It is understandable that Sergeant Garcia would be frustrated with the on-going conflict, as was Officer [REDACTED] however all the involved officers had an obligation to be truthful, and forthcoming, about the issues discussed. Unfortunately, after reviewing the entire investigation, it is apparent that Sergeant Garcia was not forthcoming and failed to address what others in the investigation brought forth. The result is the investigation revealed that Sergeant Garcia was untruthful as he never spoke directly to the allegations that were being investigated. There is one point in the investigation where Sergeant Garcia "arguably" may have admitted that he spoke negatively about Officer [REDACTED] however his statement was not conclusive. Instead, he closed his statement by referring to a certain point in time instead of the specific question that was

presented. At a minimum, this was a misleading response to the question posed by the investigator.

*The information related below are responses from each officer interviewed under Garrity. It is important to point out that a Garrity advisement compels officers to be truthful.*

Three officers provided instances where Sergeant Garcia spoke inappropriately about Officer [REDACTED] yet Sergeant Garcia failed to be forthcoming with information. Below is my synopsis of some of the most pertinent points I gathered from the interviews that were recorded on video.

Officer [REDACTED] indicated that Sergeant Garcia spoke poorly of Officer [REDACTED] on several occasions and vividly recalled him calling Officer [REDACTED] a “piece of shit”. Officer [REDACTED] related that Sergeant Garcia told him that Officer [REDACTED] was “lazy” and that he didn’t want to take calls for service. Officer [REDACTED] also admitted that Sergeant Garcia may have called Officer [REDACTED] a piece of shit.

To come to a conclusion, I had to determine if the officers’ statements were materially truthful or if Sergeant Garcia’s responses to the investigation were accurate. Officer [REDACTED] was extremely adamant about his recollections, and he stated that he clearly recalled Sergeant Garcia calling Officer [REDACTED] a “piece of shit”. Officer [REDACTED] related there might have been a time Sergeant Garcia said, “[REDACTED] is a piece of shit”. Officer [REDACTED] without Lieutenant Jackson mentioning anyone specific, related a separate incident where Sergeant Garcia warned him about Officer [REDACTED] being lazy. Sergeant Garcia denied most of these statements and failed to provide forthcoming answers that demonstrated he was being truthful in his responses. There were times in Sergeant Garcia’s interview where he outright denied the allegations about these statements.

The following instances related to Sergeant Garcia’s interview were some of the most compelling and pertinent to my finding(s):

When Sergeant Garcia returned from an approximate five-minute break with his attorney, he wanted to clarify a question regarding whether he had talked about Officer [REDACTED] since the last IA. Lieutenant Jackson responded, “yes”. Sergeant Garcia then responded, “No I have not”. Sergeant Garcia then asked if there was a question about him talking about Officer [REDACTED] in a lifetime, Lieutenant Jackson said he did not ask that but then asked if he had. Sergeant Garcia responded, “I’ve said it in a lifetime, uh, uh”, and then he stumbled incoherently for approximately 53 seconds as he contemplated an answer. (It is very important to watch from the 1:13 minute mark to 2:06 of the video to understand the magnitude of this response.) Sergeant Garcia eventually replied, “Yeah since my last IA, I haven’t said anything about [REDACTED]. Being that it was Sergeant Garcia’s idea to ask if he ever spoke about Officer [REDACTED] in a “lifetime”, there is no defense that he was confused with what was being asked. Instead, Sergeant Garcia chose to change his response to a question about the last internal investigation which was misleading and untruthful.

Lieutenant Jackson then asked which IA as there were more than one. Sergeant Garcia briefly discussed the IA's and then eventually agreed the IA that led to the present investigation was the third IA.

Lieutenant Jackson then asked if Sergeant Garcia had made derogatory remarks prior to the other cases. Sergeant Garcia responded "no" two times. Sergeant Garcia's attorney then asked for clarification of the question. Lieutenant Jackson then very clearly stated, "Have you made derogatory remarks about Officer [REDACTED]?" Sergeant Garcia responded, "No, not derogatory remarks about [REDACTED]. No. As a supervisor I can't." This questioning presented an opportunity for Sergeant Garcia to clarify any time(s) that he spoke negatively about Officer [REDACTED]. He did not make any clarifying statements or provide any specific instances pertinent to the question(s) posed. This is another example of Sergeant Garcia refusing to discuss when he had spoken negatively about Officer [REDACTED]. Instead, he elected not to be forthcoming and truthful.

I must rely on the responses that Sergeant Garcia made several times that he had not spoken negatively about Officer [REDACTED] in prior cases to come to a finding on this investigation. Except for the one moment followed by an incoherent rambling that ended with an answer to an altered question, Sergeant Garcia failed to be clear, honest and forthcoming in an investigation that was centered around his treatment, and specifically the remarks used towards Officer [REDACTED].

Sergeant Garcia never provided accurate information on when or what he may have said about Officer [REDACTED] and instead said on several occasions throughout the interview that he did not speak negatively of Officer [REDACTED]. This included when it was clear that Lieutenant Jackson posed the question about negative statements made in a "lifetime".

In a peculiar twist to the investigation, Sergeant Garcia stated that during his briefings that officers spoke negatively of Officer [REDACTED]. When he was asked if he joined in on the negative talk of Officer [REDACTED], Sergeant Garcia related that he simply continued his briefings. This recollection is very concerning because this type of negative action in a briefing should have been addressed immediately, especially with the negative history between Sergeant Garcia and Officer [REDACTED]. Neglecting to address this behavior would have reinforced negative attitudes towards Officer [REDACTED], which is extremely disconcerting. If this indeed occurred as Sergeant Garcia related, it was a clear example of dereliction of duty as a supervisor and lends to the complaint that Officer [REDACTED] was being placed in an unfavorable environment which was at the heart of this investigation and a prior internal investigation between Sergeant Garcia and Officer [REDACTED]. This one admission in itself was enough for severe discipline against Sergeant Garcia. The reason I chose to use the word "peculiar twist" is the fact that Sergeant Garcia had a reputation for addressing shortcomings, so it would have been out of character for Sergeant Garcia not to address inappropriate behavior. Therefore, Sergeant Garcia allowed the unfair treatment of Officer [REDACTED] in his briefings per his own statement which verifies that Sergeant Garcia was allowing Officer [REDACTED] to be unfairly targeted. An alternative possibility is this statement was untruthful and the report of Officers talking negatively about Officer [REDACTED] in Sergeant Garcia's presence is fabricated. Either way, this is extremely damaging to Sergeant Garcia's performance.

When weighing the totality of probabilities, I conclude the preponderance of evidence threshold is well surpassed, and Sergeant Garcia's denial of speaking negatively about Officer [REDACTED] is in direct contradiction to what three officers declared following a Garrity advisement. The internal investigation provided Sergeant Garcia with ample opportunities to discuss the details of any instances where he had spoken negatively about Officer [REDACTED]. Unfortunately, Sergeant Garcia never made clear admissions that may have provided context of when and why he spoke negatively of an officer. However, three officers provided instances when Sergeant Garcia spoke negatively about Officer [REDACTED] in their presence. This is in direct contrast to any admissions Sergeant Garcia made.

It is understandable that exact dates and times are not known by the witnesses or the subject officer given the lapse of time between the events and the IA interviews. However, there are clear differences between forgetting exact dates and times of statements and outright omitting information or failing to provide truthful responses to pertinent questions aimed at discovering the truth in an internal affairs investigation.

- *Both Officer [REDACTED] and Sergeant Garcia indicated that a [REDACTED] was present during negative talks about Officer [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was reluctant to participate in the internal affairs interview process, and only after her supervisor was contacted did she participate in an interview. Unfortunately, her answers were extremely vague and appeared to be less than forthcoming. It is important to point out that the co-responder is not compelled to give truthful and forthright information in an interview as are officers under Garrity. Therefore, the co-responder's testimony did not assist either Officer Contreras' or Sergeant Garcia's points of contention. It was peculiar that in her closing remarks she related that just because she didn't hear something didn't mean it didn't occur.*

Due to the details listed above, I concur that Sergeant Garcia violated sections c, d, e, and i of Policy 319.5.8.

**FINDING for the above specifications (Policy Violations): SUSTAINED**

**319.5.9 Conduct**

- (f) Discourteous, disrespectful or discriminatory treatment of any member of the public or any member of this department or the city.
- (h) Criminal, dishonest, or disgraceful conduct, whether on or off duty, that adversely affects the members relationship with this department.
- (m) Any other on- or off-duty conduct which any member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of this department, is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or tends to reflect unfavorably upon this department or its members.

**FINDING: With the finding that Sergeant Garcia spoke disparagingly about Office [REDACTED] as documented above, it is evident that he violated 319.5.9 f, h, and m. Sergeant Garcia's**

actions towards Officer [REDACTED] were discourteous and disrespectful. Sergeant Garcia's acts resulted in disgraceful conduct that adversely affected relationships in SPD, and his actions were contrary to the good order, efficiency and morale of the department.

Although Officer [REDACTED] and Officer [REDACTED] were only witnesses to this internal investigation, it must be noted that both officers related that Sergeant Garcia also treated them in an unprofessional manner on several occasions. Officer [REDACTED] related that Sergeant Garcia's actions were that of a bully and that his tone was demeaning and belittling. Officer [REDACTED] stated that he hated coming to work the last seven months because of Sergeant Garcia. Officer [REDACTED] went on to say, "The level of his emotional hostility that he comes to at the workplace is unprofessional and it just makes it hostile".

Although SPD must consider these additional accounts of Sergeant Garcia's unprofessional behavior towards Officer [REDACTED] and Officer [REDACTED] the findings of this case will result in termination, therefore no additional discipline or corrective action will be taken regarding the statements relayed in the paragraph above.

Due to the details listed above, I concur that Sergeant Garcia violated sections f, h, and m of Policy 319.5.9.

**FINDING for the above specifications (Policy Violations): SUSTAINED**

**City of Sheridan, Colorado Employee Handbook  
B. Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment  
Section IV - Employee Conduct  
I. Conflict of Interest**

*The city strives to maintain a work environment free of harassment. In doing so, the city prohibits harassment. Harassment includes verbal or physical conduct that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.*

**FINDING:** The investigation did not present evidence that Sergeant Garcia's statements about Officer [REDACTED] as documented above, were based on a legally protected class.

**FINDING for the above specifications (Policy Violations): NOT SUSTAINED**

**CONCLUSION:**

The goal of an internal affairs investigation is to determine a finding on the alleged violation(s). When a finding results in a sustained violation(s), the discipline must be designed to correct unacceptable performance, when appropriate and possible.

This case unfortunately had a history of issues between a Sergeant and an Officer. Prior complaints from both parties were taken seriously, and the investigations resulted in actions designed to

correct and improve this relationship. Unfortunately, it is now apparent the issues were not resolved.

This case documented that three officers witnessed Sergeant Garcia speak unfavorably of Officer [REDACTED]. It has now been established that Officer [REDACTED] was subjected to an intimidating and offensive work environment due to the actions of Sergeant Garcia.

In law enforcement there are very few tenets more sacred than honesty. Unfortunately, Sergeant Garcia violated this principle when he failed to be forthcoming about his actions during this IA and when he failed to provide a clear answer regarding, if or when, he had spoken negatively about Officer [REDACTED]. Because this investigation revealed that Sergeant Garcia had spoken disparagingly of Officer [REDACTED] to his subordinates, it is evident that Sergeant Garcia was not truthful during this investigation.

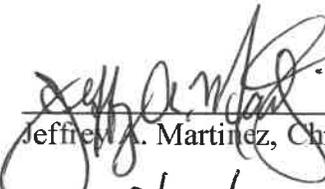
It is imperative for law enforcement to hold accountable anyone who violates the trust that is necessary in this profession. When an officer chooses to be untruthful, that officer's actions deteriorate the trust granted to every officer who swears an oath to uphold the laws of our City, State and Country.

While reviewing the totality of this case, I conclude this investigation has developed a clear and convincing finding that Sergeant Garcia breached the sustained violations listed above. Sergeant Garcia had previously demonstrated numerous positive qualities that helped him achieve the rank of Sergeant, however his repeated policy violations cannot be minimized or atoned.

The Sheridan Police Department must not overlook Sergeant Garcia's untruthfulness and unfair treatment of a member of this department. To protect the integrity of this department and law enforcement across our nation, Sergeant Garcia's employment with the Sheridan Police Department must immediately cease.

**RECOMMENDATION for the sustained specifications:**

**I concur with Commander Leger's recommendation of TERMINATION.**

  
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Jeffrey A. Martinez, Chief of Police

Date: 2/27/26