

My name is John Packer and I have served under seven Chiefs during my 26 years as a police officer in this community and currently serve as a sergeant at the University Police Department (UPD). I am the senior police officer in the department and have served under Chief Donn Peterson for approximately five years. I am the only American of African descent serving at University Police Department under Chief Peterson.

I am compelled to share my experiences after reading Chief Peterson's statements in the October 11, 2019 online issue of the North Coast Journal and the October 14, 2019 online issue of the Times Standard.

Chief Peterson claimed that "Anyone who knows me knows I don't talk politics or religion in a professional setting or during work." Chief Peterson's claim is not true. Chief Peterson claimed that "The racist remarks never happened in the way the officers say." Chief Peterson's claim is not true.

I firmly believe that the color of one's skin, as with all immutable characteristics, is not a predictor of behavior or intelligence or ability, etc. While I have experienced incidents of racism and bigotry during my life, it has been my practice to disregard the ignorance expressed by the person and not carry an angry sentiment with me. I do however clearly remember the times when I have been targeted by racist and bigoted intolerance related to my race and beliefs.

I clearly remember being at a scheduled evaluation meeting with Chief Peterson and Lt Hansen. During that meeting in the Chief's office, Chief Peterson was extremely upset to the point of using profanity directed at me. The Chief's frustration and anger stemmed from his opinion that I did not respect Lt Hansen, that I created division at the Department and that I fail as a leader because I am not a "follower." At the end of the meeting, Lt Hansen stated to me, "We're not friends and we never will be, admit it." I agreed with her statement. **Chief Peterson followed with, "John you know you're obligated to work as a slave unto his master."**

At the beginning of my next shift Chief Peterson approached me in the hallway outside the dispatch center and stated, in reference to the slavery comment he made in our meeting, **"John I can say that because we both read the Bible."** I was speechless and walked away without responding to the Chief.

Over time Chief Peterson has made additional derogatory statements to me such as, **"John you're like dealing with the North verses the South,"** and he excuses himself with follow up statements such as, **"I'm just trying to find analogies that work with you."**

Chief Peterson has become more emboldened over the past four years, and moved from making private remarks in our meetings, to demonstrating obvious displays of racism and contempt towards me in whatever audience is available. What once only occurred behind closed doors, has now progressed to belittling statements in department meetings, and to outright derogatory statements at sergeant's meetings.

Any claim that Chief Peterson's analogies, historical quotes, nuances or his intent were misinterpreted by me or other officers is insulting and does excuse the impact or justify Chief Peterson's actions.

John Packer

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