



STATEMENT FORM

OPA-IS FILE NUMBER 2015OPA-0117

Date: 5-13-2015	Time: 12:05 p.m.	Place OPA Offices
Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles		
Statement Taken By: Sergeant Krista Bair		
Transcribed by (Taped/Translated Statements) J. Wicklund		

BAIR: I'm Sergeant Bair of the Seattle Police Department. The date is May 13th, 2015, and the time is 12:05. The OPA case number is 2015OPA-0117. I am interviewing Officer Chris Coles, who is a witness employee. Also present is Sergeant Deb Nicholson, who is his Guild representative. This interview is taking place at Suite 1800 Pacific Building. Please state your name and spell your last name.

COLES: Christopher Coles, that's, C-O-L-E-S.

NICHOLSON: Deborah Nicholson, N-I-C-H-O-L-S-O-N.

BAIR: This interview is being documented by a recording. Do you understand this interview is being recorded and agree to be recorded?

COLES: Yes, I do.

NICHOLSON: Yes.

BAIR: Have you received copies of the Garrity Advisement and the Seattle Police Officer's Bill of Rights outlined in your Collective Bargaining Agreement and do you understand them?

COLES: Yes, I have and yes, I do.

BAIR: And have you received notification of the allegation made in the complaint?

COLES: Yes.

BAIR: Under the authority of the Chief of the Seattle Police Department you are hereby ordered to answer all questions asked of you truthfully and completely. Failure to do so may result in discipline up to and including termination. Do you understand?

COLES: Yes.

BAIR: Okay. Officer Coles, we're gonna talk about the incident that occurred on July 9th 2014 and that is with a Mr. William Wingate, who was arrested by Officer Cynthia Whitlatch. You wrote the report for this. Do you have independent memory of this incident?

COLES: I do.



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

-
- BAIR: Okay. First of all, let's do a little bit of background. How long have you had on the Department?
- COLES: I am a little over nine years.
- BAIR: And where are you currently working?
- COLES: East Precinct.
- BAIR: And is that where you were working during this incident?
- COLES: Yes, it was.
- BAIR: All right. So tell me how you came upon knowing that there was a need for your assistance on this call?
- COLES: Well, I'm typically on a bicycle, but on that given day I was put in a car and I was on regular patrol. I was actually at the East Precinct on a report. I was in the write-up room typing away when this incident came, came about on the radio. I remember Cynthia asking for assistance at one point. There didn't seem to be any officers available that were out and about in a patrol car, so I ended up answering-up from the write-up room because it was only a block south of the East Precinct. So I literally got up from my chair, walked out of the back door and mozied down the sidewalk to assist Officer Whitlatch.
- BAIR: Okay, and were you alone or did you have anybody with you?
- COLES: Officer Archer, who was also, I believe in the write-up room doing the same thing as I was, accompanied me.
- BAIR: Okay. So you all walked to where Officer Whitlatch and Mr. Wingate were on the corner of the, I believe it's 12th and Pike?
- COLES: Twelfth Avenue, yes.
- BAIR: Okay.
- COLES: Correct.
- BAIR: And what did you see when you approached?
- COLES: Well, upon approaching, I, I saw Mr. Wingate there standing on the northwest corner, golf club clenched in hand, and he appeared to be having some kind of verbal disagreement with Officer Whitlatch. They were communicating to each other back and forth.



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

-
- BAIR: Could you actually hear what was being said?
- COLES: I remember hearing Officer Whitlatch telling him to, you know, put the golf club down, and he was verbally refusing to do so. He was disagreeing with that option.
- BAIR: Can you tell me what the demeanor of Mr. Wingate was?
- COLES: He, he definitely appeared upset. He, his voice was elevated. He was verbally confrontational with Officer Whitlatch, so.
- BAIR: When you say verbally confrontational, how does that look?
- COLES: Well, he was just, he was strongly disagreeing with her requests.
- BAIR: Okay.
- COLES: His voice was elevated. It wasn't a calm voice. It was excited.
- BAIR: And what was the demeanor of Officer Whitlatch?
- COLES: She was very direct, clear and concise in what she wanted him to do...nothing out of the ordinary.
- BAIR: So you actually hear her tell him to put the golf club down?
- COLES: Yes.
- BAIR: Did you hear her explain *why* she wanted him to do so?
- COLES: I don't recall a lot of explaining. It was, it was, seemed to be real short, you know, put it down, and then he would respond, you know, with a few words that he wasn't *going* to, and it was just kind of a ping-pong...
- BAIR: Do you ever recall Officer Whitlatch, you said she very direct, was her voice elevated?
- COLES: No, it was just, it was at a volume so as he could hear her 'cause they were on a city street and there's bustling and hustling going on around the area.
- BAIR: So I guess my question would be how do you differentiate between an elevated voice and one that is loud because of taking into account the busy street or the distance between...
- COLES: There's, there's no difference. What I was trying to say is she was speaking loud enough so that he could hear her on a city street that's louder than say, how we're talking right now in a room.



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

- BAIR: Sure. And I understand that. I'm asking then how did you come to...you stated that Mr. Wingate was upset...
- COLES: Yes.
- BAIR: ...because he had an elevated voice.
- COLES: He was...
- BAIR: Is there a chance that he was trying to be *heard* or he—?
- COLES: Yeah, his voice was cracking. He was, he was going to higher, higher pitches and his voice, you know, when people often do when they get upset. His, he was tense, he was clenching the golf club. He was sort of physically animated when he was speaking or yelling, if that makes sense.
- BAIR: It does, thank you. And so when you approached we see you on video. Eventually you end up taking...well, let's just say *this*, all of a sudden we see—and you had a chance to review the video beforehand, correct?
- COLES: Yes.
- BAIR: And you see it looks like Mr. Wingate, his attention is caught by somebody off to the side. Was that you approaching?
- COLES: Yes.
- BAIR: And how did he interact with *you*?
- COLES: Very differently. His frustration, it became apparent quickly that his frustration was with Officer Whitlatch and it wasn't going to be towards me. I was telling him, you know, upon approach, you know, he had the golf club clenched, and that's something that, you know, can be used as a weapon, so my first responsibility was to see if I couldn't, you know, either have him put it on the ground or at least hand it over to me. So I asked him if he could hand me the golf club, and he did, so.
- BAIR: You just asked him and he handed it over?
- COLES: I did, yeah.
- BAIR: Do you recall how you asked him?
- COLES: As politely as I could. It was clear and concise and, you know, he handed it over.



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

BAIR: And so then what occurred?

COLES: And then at that point it was really just, now that the threat, the golf club was in our hands, you know, I didn't, I didn't feel like there was any imminent harm that could be done, so it was just really trying to defuse, let him vent, try to take it down, de-escalate, calm the situation down a little bit, and it was really just doing that and hearing him vent his frustrations, which he, he had a lot of frustrations, so.

BAIR: And we couldn't hear everything between you and Mr. Wingate. Can you try to recall or if, if you do, what kind of conversation was had?

COLES: It was really just him trying to explain why he was upset and that he had been mistreated by this officer, that she, she wasn't, you know, treating him fairly, essentially. So he really, he did probably 98% of the, the talking and that seemed to be de-escalating, so.

BAIR: Did he seem to understand what Officer Whitlatch was requesting or ordering?

COLES: He did, but he didn't, he didn't think that it was necessary for her to be requesting those things.

BAIR: But he didn't have a problem with *you* requesting it?

COLES: No.

BAIR: Okay. Did he make any allegation to you or indicate in any manner that Officer Whitlatch treated him with bias?

COLES: No. It was just, you know, I wasn't there beforehand. I didn't, I didn't see everything that took place prior to my arrival. I only know what Radio told me...

BAIR: Um-hmm.

COLES: ...and, and so it was just, it just seemed like it was something that had been ongoing for a minute or so, or some time and then I arrive and time to, okay, let's make it safe and let's defuse.

BAIR: Okay. And then it was decided...who decided to arrest Mr. Wingate?

COLES: Officer Whitlatch.

BAIR: Okay. Did she instruct you to arrest him?

COLES: Yes.



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

BAIR: So was it you and Archer that placed him into handcuffs?

COLES: I, I don't remember whose handcuffs it was, but, you know, I, I do remember assisting in the process. I don't, I don't know if it was my handcuffs though, or not.

BAIR: Okay. And how was Mr. Wingate's reaction to this? Did he get back amped-up or did he seem cooperative now, at this point?

COLES: No. I mean he, he didn't. He just continued to vent his frustrations...more verbal. There was no physical, you know, issues there as far as him trying to avoid arrest.

BAIR: Okay. And once you got him handcuffed, and now you've taken away his golf club, did he say he needed his golf club in order to walk?

COLES: I don't recall that. It was something that, you know, obviously we, we took care of and we, we brought it with us and we, you know, ensured him that he would get his property back at some point, so.

BAIR: Did he ever voice to you that he was, when you were escorting him back to the precinct—my understanding is you walked him back...

COLES: Um-hmm.

BAIR: ...did he ever exclaim that he could not walk unassisted?

COLES: No, no, not at all. I, I, I know when I was speaking with him, he was sweaty, he was perspiring. It was, it was a warm day. He told me that he had been walking miles and miles, and so we immediately, we tried to get him in the shade as quickly as possible, which we did to, you know, assist with cooling him down. And then I don't recall him making any statements that he couldn't walk. I mean he, he, I think he alleged he had walked about ten miles that day, so.

BAIR: Did he say that, did he ever say to you when he was venting his frustrations with Officer Whitlatch, that he told her he needed the cane—or excuse me, the golf club as a cane to assist him?

COLES: No, I don't recall any specific about his, you know, I didn't know if it was a walking stick, I didn't know if it was a cane. I figured it was probably just a walking stick, 'cause it was a golf club...

BAIR: Um-hmm.

COLES: ...so it was something that he preferred to—



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

BAIR: But you don't recall him actually making the, the request that he needed some assistance with walking?

COLES: No.

BAIR: And then when you and Officer Archer walked him back to the precinct, how, how were you in position with him?

COLES: Yeah, no, so got him into the holding cell area—

BAIR: I'm sorry, when you're actually walking him back.

COLES: Oh, I'm sorry.

BAIR: Were, were one of you on each arm? Were you walking behind him?

COLES: Yeah, no, we were one on each arm and just, you know, just guiding him to the precinct.

BAIR: Did he appear to have any trouble walking?

COLES: No.

BAIR: Okay, so then you got him to the precinct...

COLES: Um-hmm.

BAIR: ...and put him in a holding cell?

COLES: Yes.

BAIR: Okay. And then do you recall if you had a conversation with Officer Whitlatch regarding the whole incident?

COLES: I did eventually, once Mr. Wingate was secured and taken care of, I spoke with Officer Whitlatch in the write-up room so she would recount what happened.

BAIR: Okay.

COLES: Yeah.

BAIR: And then do you know why you were called to write the report?



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

-
- COLES: Yes, because she, at this point, I believe, was a victim of the incident, so the sergeant needed somebody to write the report, so I was, I was selected by default, I guess.
- BAIR: Okay. And did you actually screen the incident with Sergeant Lam? Your report says it was screen with Sergeant Lam. Did you screen it or do you know if Officer Whitlatch did or was it a pow-wow amongst all three?
- COLES: Yeah, I think it was more pow-wow style. I was present but I believe she was the one who articulated the, the incident to the sergeant, so.
- BAIR: Any problems arise in that discussion? Anybody seem to have any issue with this arrest?
- COLES: Nothing notable or that I can recall. It was...
- BAIR: Discussion about what we were going to arrest him for?
- COLES: There may have been discussion between Officer Whitlatch and the sergeant, but it was my understanding from her and the sergeant, that this was what was gonna happen, this is what he was being arrested for and you're gonna write the report.
- BAIR: Okay. Was there any discussion about possible disposition, whether it be an interview and release or booking?
- COLES: I don't, no, I was, I wasn't present for any conversation about that that I recall.
- BAIR: Okay, but as far as you knew, he was being booked into King County Jail?
- COLES: Yes.
- BAIR: Okay. All right. Did you have any more interaction with Mr. Wingate after you placed him in a holding cell?
- COLES: No, because I was typing. I think it would, it would be an assisting officer that may have had more interaction there, so.
- BAIR: And then the entire time you were with Mr. Wingate, did he make *any* allegations of being—other than Officer Whitlatch treating him unfairly—any allegations of bias?
- COLES: No.
- BAIR: Okay. I think that's all I have for this particular situation. Do you have anything else?
- COLES: I don't.



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

BAIR: Do you have anything else?

COLES: No.

BAIR: All right. To maintain confidentiality of this investigation, you are advised not to disclose the information discussed during your interview except with your representative or attorney. Do you understand?

COLES: Yes.

BAIR: And I apologize. I do have one question. Did you ever get called to go testify or be part of any case regarding Mr. Wingate?

COLES: No.

BAIR: Okay. Still have nothing? Keep it confidential. It's 12:20 and this concludes this statement.

BAIR: This is Sergeant Bair. I have present with me, Officer Coles and Sergeant Nicholson, who is Officer Coles' Guild representation. It is about 1:37. I asked for Officer Coles to come back. I had one question I failed to ask. This is relation to 2015OPA-0117. Officer Coles, you wrote in your report, "I asked Wingate if he had done something with his golf club that may have struck fear in the eyes of the public or the officer. He told me *maybe*, but that he didn't think he did anything that warranted the police to get involved." Can you tell me about that conversation?

COLES: I can't really elaborate more than pretty much what I wrote in my report. I just remember, you know, asking him if he had done anything that may have, you know, resulted in the situation that took place, and he just plainly stated *maybe*. And, you know, I didn't, I didn't ask anything further from there, so didn't, didn't press the issue with him. He was already upset, and I didn't want to escalate things and, you know, so.

BAIR: Okay. And then did you explain what he was being arrested for?

COLES: I believe most of the explanation came from Officer Whitlatch out...when we were taking him into custody she was explaining everything to him, so.

BAIR: Okay.

COLES: We didn't, we didn't touch on that with him outside of that.

BAIR: Okay. And do you recall Mr. Wingate ever stating that he *didn't* swing his golf club at anybody or cause any issues or just, other than what you stated in your report?



Statement of: Officer Christopher Coles
Transcribed by: J. Wicklund
Taken by: Sergeant Krista Bair

COLES: Yeah, no. I don't, I don't recall any other comments that may have been made by him regarding that issue, so.

BAIR: Okay. All right. Any questions?

NICHOLSON: No.

BAIR: Anything else?

COLES: No.

BAIR: That concludes our statement. Please keep it confidential. It is 1:40 and we are done.