Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training
Peace Officer Standards Accountability Division
860 Stillwater Road, Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95605
www.post.ca.gov

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

CASE NO.: POST2402479

POST ID: C83-V10

OFFICER: Zachary Hanna

EMPLOYING AGENCY: Siskiyou County Sheriff's Department

ALLEGED MISCONDUCT: PC 13510.8(b)(1)/11 CCR 1205. (a)(1) – Dishonesty

POST INVESTIGATOR: LEC Richard Collins

NOD DATE OF ISSUANCE: December 12, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In February 2024, Siskiyou County Sheriff LaRue was searching through the jail camera system when he came across Deputy Zachary Hanna ("Respondent") and inmate Timothy Chase McDonald talking to one another. McDonald was in custody, pending murder charges for a 2019 homicide. Respondent and McDonald were friends since before Respondent was hired by the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office ("SCSO") in 2021. During a pre-employment interview, Respondent was asked if he had any knowledge about the homicide or if he was involved in aiding McDonald after the fact. Respondent denied any knowledge of the homicide and denied that he had conversations with McDonald about the homicide. Based on the conversation Sheriff LaRue heard between the two on the jail camera recording, he suspected Respondent had been dishonest about his knowledge of the homicide.

It was later discovered that the video, which was dated March 4, 2023 had been automatically deleted in accordance with SCSO's 365-day retention policy, despite an attempt to extend the extension period to two years. The following description of what could be seen and heard on the video was taken directly from the administrative investigation report:

> "***Not long after Hanna and McDonald were alone in the kitchen (the other kitchen workers had returned to their housing unit), McDonald was attending to bread he was baking and Hanna initiated a conversation with McDonald by stating, 'Undersheriff Randall questioned me.' McDonald made a comment similar to 'before or after the shoot?' Hanna said Undersheriff Randall asked him, 'if I knew anything about your case and asked if he (McDonald) likes revolvers.' McDonald then said something similar to, 'I hate revolvers', and Hanna responded with, 'no revolvers. I don't remember no revolvers', then laughed.***

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> ***It then sounded as if Hanna stated, 'It's all worth the shoot, you've always said it.' Hanna then talks to McDonald about two other friends of theirs,*** Wit. 1 ***and*** Wit. 2***, who had also been interviewed in relation to McDonald's case, and both had provided critical information against McDonald. It sounded as if Hanna made the statement that he wanted to hurt*** Wit. 2 ***'real bad.' Immediately following the discussion about*** Wit. 1 ***and*** Wit. 2***, Hanna makes the statement, 'I'm pretty sure I'm the only one that wouldn't say shit. I'll always be solid with you Chase.'"***

On March 6, 2024, Undersheriff Randall who also reviewed the video, contacted Siskiyou County Chief District Attorney Investigator, Yves Pikes. He informed Mr. Pikes that Respondent could have information that could impact the homicide trial but also may be subject to criminal charges. On March 13, 2024, Chief Investigator Pike and District Attorney John Quinn interviewed Respondent. When questioned about his conversation with McDonald in the jail kitchen, Respondent stated that he did not remember the context of that conversation.

On March 20, 2024, Undersheriff Randall administratively interviewed Respondent, who elected to participate without legal representation. During the interview, which was recorded, Respondent again denied having any conversation about the homicide with McDonald either before or after his arrest and also denied that he was withholding information about the homicide. Respondent admitted that he was not truthful when the DA investigators questioned him about the statement he made to McDonald about having his back and being the only friend who would not say anything. Respondent had told the DA investigators that he did not remember the context of that conversation, but that "it had something to do with something that happened at the jail."

Respondent told Undersheriff Randall that despite what he said to the DA investigators, that he did remember the context of the conversation and why he made the comment. Initially, Respondent claimed that the statement was regarding an alleged inappropriate relationship that McDonald was having with another Sheriff's Deputy:

> "***Hanna explained to me that McDonald had confided in him that there was another Sheriff's Deputy working in the jail who was having an inappropriate relationship with McDonald, stating she was going to run away with McDonald when he got out. Hanna explained to me that he told McDonald he had his back because he wanted to deflect McDonald away from his (Hanna's) true intention of taking the knowledge of the other deputy elsewhere. Hanna explained the comment about being the only one to not say anything was in the context of the other deputy..."***

Respondent claimed that he was dishonest with the DA investigators because he did not want to get the other deputy into trouble, but planned to talk with her directly to correct her behavior. In response to several follow-up questions, Respondent continued to reinforce that this was the context for his statements to McDonald. However, when confronted with other statements he

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had made to McDonald that were captured by the jail video, Respondent admitted that his statement had nothing to do with a female deputy but, instead, was about the homicide. Respondent also admitted that he had lied when previously asked about having any knowledge of the homicide:

> ***"…Hanna admitted to me that he did have information regarding the McDonald case. I asked him what information he had. Hanna said*** Wit. 2 ***had called him sometime around the homicide date and told him that McDonald had just killed a guy and was asking him (*** Wit. 2 ***) to help get rid of evidence, and that*** Wit. 2 ***had told him that he helped McDonald destroy evidence. Hanna claimed this was all the information he had been holding on to for a long time and lying about. Hanna initially claimed he did not have any detailed conversations with McDonald about the homicide. Hanna stated he was at a party with*** Wit. 2 ***and McDonald, a few days after the homicide, where McDonald told Hanna he had killed a guy down river for sleeping with his (McDonald's) girlfriend. Hanna said he didn't want to know the details and left it at that. He denied helping McDonald or*** Wit. 2 ***with concealing or destroying any evidence."***

On March 22, 2024, District Attorney Investigators interviewed Respondent a second time related to the homicide investigation. During the interview, Respondent admitted he lied to them during the interview that was held on March 13, 2024. In addition, Respondent further disclosed that he (Respondent) brought cocaine to a house party he attended when he challenged McDonald about the homicide. According to Respondent, he, Wit. 2, and McDonald all used the cocaine as they sat in Wit. 2's truck while McDonald told Respondent about the homicide. This party occurred sometime between April 7, 2019 (the date of the murder) and January 7, 2020 (the date McDonald was arrested).

On page 21 of Respondent's Personal History Statement, completed on November 23, 2020 as part of his pre-employment background investigation, he indicated that he had never used any drug recreationally. In the instruction box for the illegal drug use section, it specifically lists cocaine as one of the drugs in question.

ANALYSIS/FINDINGS:

1. **The alleged misconduct violated Penal Code Section 13510.8 (b)(1) and Title 11, California Code of Regulations Section 1205 (a)(1) – Dishonesty**

Penal Code Section 13510.8 (b)(1) and Commission Regulation 1205 (a)(1) defines as serious misconduct "Dishonesty relating to the reporting, investigation, or prosecution of a crime or relating to the reporting of, or investigation of misconduct by, a peace officer or custodial officer, including, but not limited to, false statements, intentionally filing false reports, tampering with, falsifying, destroying, or concealing evidence, perjury, and

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tampering with data recorded by a body-worn camera or other recording device for purposes of concealing misconduct. For purposes of this subsection, in considering whether a suspension or revocation of certification is proper, the Commission will consider the extent of the statement or omission alleged to be dishonest and will also consider whether the dishonesty appears to have been done willfully or intentionally, with the intent to deceive.

Respondent engaged in serious misconduct, specifically dishonesty, on March 13, 2024 when he lied to DA investigators and again on March 20, 2024 when he lied to Undersheriff Randall during an administrative interview.

During the interview conducted by the DA investigators on March 13, 2024, Respondent stated that he and McDonald had never talked about the murder "even to this day." This statement was dishonest as Respondent admitted during subsequent interviews on March 20 and 22, 2024 that he had discussed the murder with McDonald and a mutual friend at a house party they attended. Additionally, when asked if there was ever a time in which it was just him and McDonald talking alone in a location within the jail, Respondent denied that they had ever done so. However, jail surveillance video not only recorded Respondent and McDonald speaking alone in the kitchen, but also captured statements that Respondent made pertaining to the murder. It was not until the DA investigators asked Respondent if he had ever told McDonald he "had his back 100%" and that Respondent was McDonald's "only friend who didn't say anything" that Respondent admitted to making those statements alone in the jail kitchen. However, he was again dishonest when he told the investigators "The whole context of that conversation I can't remember, you know, what we were even talking about or why I would say that." Respondent later admitted to both Undersheriff Randall and the DA investigators that this statement was a lie.

On March 20, 2024, Respondent was repeatedly, intentionally dishonest during his administrative interview with Undersheriff Randall. Respondent initially told the Undersheriff that he never had conversations with McDonald about the homicide investigation either before or after his arrest. Respondent also told Undersheriff Randall that he was not withholding information he may have had about the homicide that McDonald was accused of committing. As described above, this statement was false as Respondent later admitted to talking with McDonald about the murder at a house party. Further, Respondent admitted to withholding information about the homicide, later revealing that McDonald had asked a mutual friend to help destroy evidence.

Additionally, Respondent was intentionally dishonest when he initially told Undersheriff Randall that the context of the conversation he had with McDonald was about an inappropriate

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relationship McDonald was having with a female Siskiyou County Deputy Sheriff. Undersheriff Randall asked Respondent several questions about this alleged context and Respondent repeatedly claimed that his conversation with McDonald was about this inappropriate relationship. When asked if he was "positive about that ? 100% ?" Respondent replied "yes." Respondent also stated that he had lied to the DA investigators about the conversation because he did not want to get the female deputy into trouble.

Undersheriff Randall then confronted Respondent by quoting the exact words he said to McDonald regarding their mutual friends Wit. 2 and Wit. 1, a truck, and Respondent's statement "I'm pretty sure I'm the only one that didn't say shit." Respondent finally admitted that he had been dishonest about his conversation with McDonald, in his interview with the DA investigators, and about not having information about the homicide. Respondent then told Undersheriff Randall that he received a call from Wit. 2 sometime around the date of the homicide. Wit. 2 told Respondent that McDonald had killed a guy down river and was asking Wit. 2 for help to destroy some of the evidence. Respondent also confirmed that McDonald had told him about the murder when he attended a house party with McDonald and Wit. 2. Respondent was intentionally and repeatedly deceitful during the course of interviews pertaining to both a criminal investigation and an administrative investigation into his own misconduct. Respondent not only denied having a conversation alone with McDonald, he also lied about having information pertaining to an ongoing murder investigation, and when confronted with evidence of statements that he made to McDonald, Respondent intentionally created a false narrative regarding the context of his conversation, continually retelling this lie until confronted with his own statements.

FINDINGS:

The Peace Officer Standards Accountability Division determined that reasonable grounds exist to seek suspension or revocation of the Respondent's certifications in this case.