INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY AND FINDINGS
(Supplemental)

PEACE OFFICER NAME: Luke Baxter Walden

POST ID NUMBER: A95 – T18

EMPLOYING AGENCY: Los Angeles Police Department

POST CASE NUMBER: POST2306324

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DATE: 9/30/2025

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I. Executive Summary and Findings

Between January 2021, and March 2021, Respondent Officer, Detective Luke Baxter Walden, while on-duty, accessed the internet using computers owned by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to research threaded barrels for firearms, and firearm silencers and noise suppressors commonly sold as "fuel filters" by Chinese companies. On or about March 17, 2021, Respondent, while off-duty purchased a purported automotive fuel filter online from a company in China, listing his home address as the mailing address.

In April 2021, the package was intercepted by Custom and Border Protection (CBP) and an investigation was conducted into the purchaser by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), when it was discovered that the package contained a silencer. In November 2022, Respondent was arrested for attempted possession of a silencer under Penal Code section 33410, a felony, and held to answer at a preliminary hearing in Los Angeles County. In September 2023, Respondent pled no contest to the misdemeanor crime of attempting to possess an assault weapon under Penal Code section 30605(a), a Misdemeanor, and was sentenced to one day in county jail and fines.

During the course of the administrative investigation conducted by LAPD, Respondent denied he was trying to purchase a firearm silencer and stated he was trying to purchase a fuel filter for a 1980's Toyota Celica he was restoring.

In April 2023, LAPD sustained the allegation of attempting to obtain a firearm silencer. The respondent was served with a notice of intent to terminate his employment with the LAPD and directed to a Board of Rights (BOR) hearing. In February 2024, the Board of Rights unanimously found Respondent "Guilty" of the charge of trying to obtain a firearm silencer, however they reduced the recommended discipline from termination to 30 days of unpaid leave, citing his tenure and service as reasons for leniency.

The investigation conducted by LAPD clearly establishes that Respondent was purposefully seeking out firearm silencers and suppressors that could be purchased overseas and masked as fuel filters, for specific types of weapons to include ones the respondent owned. After reviewing the investigation, the Peace Officer Standards and Accountability Division (POSAD) determined that in addition to an allegation of *Acts that Violate the Law* in violation of Penal Code section 13510.8(b)(6), an allegation of *Dishonesty* in violation of Penal Code section 13510.8(b)(1) - Serious Misconduct, be included herein.

On July 16, 2025, this investigation was presented to the Peace Officer Standards Accountability Advisory Board (Board). Respondent attended remotely with a representative and spoke during the public comment session. After the presentation by POSAD, the Board asked several questions of Respondent, then retired to closed session. At the conclusion of the closed session meeting, the Board unanimously recommended the case to the Commission for revocation of Respondent's Peace Officer certification.

On September 10, 2025, POSAD presented this investigation to the Commission. Respondent was not present but was represented by Counsel. At the conclusion of the presentation, Respondent's Counsel made remarks and then the Commission asked several questions of POSAD and Respondent's Counsel. The Commission then retired to closed session. At the conclusion of closed session, the Commission returned the case to POSAD for further investigation stating that they would like to see additional documents; directed POSAD to determine, if not apparent in the additional documents, why dishonesty was not an allegation made by LAPD; and referred the matter back to the Board.

II. Investigative Methodology

This supplemental report summarizes the findings related to a follow-up investigation into allegations of serious misconduct. This investigation was conducted in accordance with the regulations and policies of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). The follow-up investigation included a review of the LAPD administrative investigation, the Letter of Transmittal, the Board of Rights Rationale, the transcript of the Board of Rights hearing, and contact with the LAPD Professional Standards Bureau.

The Division analyzed the information obtained in this follow-up investigation and in the initial investigation using the clear and convincing evidence standard. For purposes of this report, clear and convincing evidence means "evidence of a charge is clear and convincing so long as there is a 'high probability' that the charge is true. The evidence need not establish a fact beyond a reasonable doubt."

This report is necessarily summary in nature and does not include every fact or issue that might be found in the underlying investigation and attachments. It does, however, contain reference to that evidence that the Division believes establishes the requisite facts and proves the serious misconduct charged by clear and convincing evidence.

III. Respondent's Background

A. Respondent's Peace Officer Certificates and Employment

Respondent began his employment with LAPD as a full-time peace officer on July 6, 1998. He has no additional law enforcement appointments in California.

Respondent is assigned POST ID A95 – T18. He received the following peace officer certificates from POST:

Certificate Type	***Date Issued***
Basic	1/20/2000
Intermediate	6/03/2008
Advanced	2/10/2011
Supervisory	10/24/2016

B. Respondent's Service Record

When evaluating whether suspension or revocation is appropriate, Penal Code section 13510.8(c)(5) and California Regulation section 1213(a)(5) provide that the Commission must consider Respondent's prior conduct, discipline and service record. The relevance and weight the Commission may choose to assign to a peace officer's prior conduct and service record will depend on the facts in each case.

California Penal Code section 13510.8(c)(5) provides that the Commission "*shall* consider the peace officer's prior conduct and service record, and any instances of misconduct, including any incidents occurring beyond the time limitation for investigation in evaluating whether to revoke certification for the incident under investigation".

On October 07, 2012, Respondent was promoted to the rank of Detective 1 and on June 15, 2014, was promoted to the supervisory rank of Detective 2. On June 5, 2022, Respondent was reassigned back to the lower paygrade of Detective 1, with no supervisory authority. These classification changes were administrative and therefore, there are no disciplinary records documenting this reassignment.

In addition to attending the Basic Intensive Police Academy in 1999, prior to his arrest in November 2022, the respondent attended the following in-service training applicable to this investigation:

- 2/17/2000 .45 Pistol Transition Course
- 2/19/2001 Firearms Bean Bag Course
- 7/11/2001 Firearms/Tactical Handgun Course
- 3/2/2004 Firearms/Semi-Auto Pistol Course
- 6/21/2005 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Course
- 2/14/2006 Pedestrian Stops/Weapons Course
- 5/4/2006 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Course
- 9/14/2006 Firearms/Tactical Handgun Course
- 11/8/2006 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Course
- 5/23/2007 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Course
- 7/31/2007 Pedestrian Stops/Weapons Course
- 9/6/2007 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Course
- 12/04/2007 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Course
- 11/02/2009 Firearms/Tactical – Advanced Course
- 5/25/2010 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 7/3/2012 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 3/05/2013 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 10/17/2013 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 3/25/2014 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 9/18/2014 Firearms/Tactical Shotgun
- 10/20/2014 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 4/13/2015 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 4/06/2016 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 11/02/2016 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update

- 11/10/2016 Undercover Operations/Tactical Response
- 4/25/2017 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 11/09/2017 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 4/12/2018 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 12/05/2018 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 10/01/2019 Firearms/Tactical Rifle Update
- 7/23/2020 Undercover Operations/Tactical Response
- 4/18/2021 Firearms – Sighting Systems

In addition to the above firearms related courses, Respondent attended Tactical Rapid Entry Courses for Narcotics Officers.

During Respondent's 24-year career he has received 155 Citizen and Department commendations. His service records do not show any prior discipline or complaints for similar allegations.

IV. Procedural Background

On September 10, 2025, during their regularly scheduled meeting, the POST Commission was presented the POSAD investigation related to POST2306324. At the conclusion of the presentation and discussion, the Commission directed POSAD to conduct a further investigation and return to the Board with the following additional documents for consideration:

- The entire LAPD Internal Affairs investigation report (CF# 21-001144)
- The LAPD administrative adjudication (Letter of Transmittal)
- The BOR decision rationales
- The BOR hearing transcripts

Additionally, the Commission wanted an explanation from LAPD why an allegation of "Dishonesty" had not been included in their findings at the conclusion of the IA investigation, and an understanding of whether Respondent was demoted from a supervisory Detective position to a non-supervisory position and whether that action was disciplinary in nature.

V. Factual Background and Summary of Further Investigation

On April 26, 2021, LAPD began a criminal investigation into the allegation that Respondent purchased a firearm silencer online from a company in China. They also began an administrative investigation which was conducted simultaneously by a separate investigator. Both investigations were compiled under the same report number, CF21-001144.

On June 30, 2021, the criminal investigation was presented to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office for consideration of charges. On February 23, 2022, the completed administrative investigation was approved and submitted to the Commander of the Special Operations Division to begin the adjudication process. (Attachment A).

On March 14, 2022, Captain Lillian Carranza, Commanding Officer of the Gang and Narcotics Division (Respondent's Commanding Officer), issued a request for a supplemental investigation to answer several specific questions she had. On January 12, 2023, Captain Carranza was provided with an eleven-page supplemental report with the answers. (Attachment B)

On February 21, 2023, Captain Carranza authored the adjudication Letter of Transmittal directing Respondent to a Board of Rights with a recommendation of termination from employment. (Attachment C)

Beginning on February 13, 2024, and concluding on February 15, 2024, the LAPD BOR conducted a hearing regarding the recommendation to terminate Respondent's employment. On February 14, 2024, at the conclusion of the evidentiary hearing the BOR Panel (Panel) unanimously concurred that Respondent had purchased and attempted to possess a firearm silencer and found him "Guilty" of the one-count allegation. Their four-page rationale for this decision described their basis for coming to this conclusion, including the relevant testimony and evidence presented, credibility determinations, the burden of proof for the agency, and reasonable inferences that may be drawn from the record. (Attachment D)

The Rationale addressed the testimony of the LAPD's witnesses and experts as well as Respondent's assertion that he was a car enthusiast rebuilding an older vehicle. The Rationale also addressed the fact that Respondent stated he had been qualified as a gun expert for the purpose of testifying in State court proceedings.

On February 15, 2024, the Panel heard testimony from character witnesses, LAPD witnesses, reviewed evidence, and then deliberated on the discipline to impose. At the conclusion of their deliberation, the Panel issued a four-page Rationale of their decision, which reduced the recommended discipline from termination of employment to a 30-day suspension. (Attachment

D) The Panel's rationale for reducing the imposed discipline acknowledged that Respondent was found guilty of committing a felony, and that continued employment could create complications for the agency with respect to Respondent being placed on a "Brady List"[1]. However, they decided Respondent's otherwise clean record, his years of service, and his commendations, "….outweighs the potential harm of your mistake."

During their investigation into Walden's misconduct, POSAD requested the transcripts for the BOR hearing on March 11, 2025. At that time the transcripts had not been produced. The transcripts were completed in three sections totaling 436 pages and released on June 25, 2025. LAPD provided them to POSAD on June 26, 2025. (Attachments E - G).

On September 11, 2025, POSAD submitted an inquiry to the LAPD Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) to determine why after sustaining the allegation of purchasing a firearm silencer, an allegation of dishonesty had not been included in the administrative investigation when it was submitted for final disposition, asserting that the Respondent's explanation during his IA interview was dishonest.

On September 24, 2025, PSB Captain David Hwang responded via email that LAPD decided not to "stack" the allegations against Respondent and just address the underlying allegation of purchasing a firearm silencer. Captain Hwang further stated, "….the absence of an allegation for providing false statements should not, in any way, indicate the Department believed his [Respondent] testimony to Internal Affairs was truthful." (Attachment V).

However, LAPD did address their concerns with Respondent's deceit and lack of accountability during the BOR hearing on February 15, 2024. LAPD asserted during their closing argument before the BOR that Respondent failed to take accountability for his actions every time the opportunity was presented, he was deceitful in providing false evidence, and lacked personal integrity, stating, "he displayed a series of evidence trying to either deceive or convince us that his actions were not what he was taking accountability for." *BOR Transcript 3*, page 65, line 23-25. Respondent's supervisor also refuted Respondent's claim that he would not have known the seized item was a silencer because it was his job to know what it was. *BOR Transcript 2*, page 116, line 25- page 117, line 4. The agency made it clear during the BOR hearing that they were concerned with Respondent's lack of honesty even if it wasn't framed in the form of an allegation.

[1] The California Brady Law refers to the obligation, stemming from the federal Supreme Court case Brady v. Maryland and codified in California Penal Code section 1054.1(e), for prosecutors to disclose "Brady material"—evidence that is exculpatory or undermines the credibility of a prosecution witness. The defense can file a "Brady motion" to request this information, which includes any evidence that could favor the defendant on the issue of guilt or punishment, or help impeach a witness.

With respect to Respondent's reclassification from supervising Detective to non-supervising Detective, according to PSU Sergeant Graham Dawson, the move was made as part of a management decision, not tied to discipline, as allowed for within LAPD policy section 3-763.55. No specific reason was given.

VI. Analysis and Findings

At the serious misconduct hearing before the Board on July 16, 2025, and the serious misconduct Commission hearing on September 10, 2025, the Division presentation included documents in support of their investigation to include:

ATF bulletins regarding solvent traps and fuel filters, the LAPD Criminalist report, criminal court documents, the BOR Rationale following the guilt phase of their proceeding, and numerous pictures of the seized item, the packaging, and a fuel filter Respondent purchased through Amazon.

At the direction of the POST Commission, the Division is including additional documents for the Board to review and consider, including the entire Internal Affairs (IA) Report and IA Supplement. As part of the direction by the Commission to present the entire IA report, the Division has included the following requested documents as attachments to this supplemental Investigative Summary and, includes documents that were listed as Addenda in the IA report and the IA Supplemental report:

IA Report CF21-001144
IA Supplement CF21-001144
Letter of Transmittal CF21-001144
Board of Rights decision
Board of Rights Rationale on Findings and Rationale on Penalty
Board of Rights Transcript (three files)
DMV Vehicle Registration Records
DOJ Email of Respondent's Firearms
LAPD Daily Worksheet
LAPD Printout of Respondent's firearms
LAPD Property Report
Pictures of Respondent's Vehicles

With the exception of the Board of Rights transcripts that were not yet available at the time that the Notice of Intent to Revoke was served on Respondent and the Board of Rights Rationale on Penalty, the Division possessed these items at the time of its initial investigation and information from them was incorporated into the Investigative Summary and Findings where relevant. The Investigative Summary and Findings was presented to the Board on July 16, 2025, and the Commission on September 10, 2025.

However, the Division makes the following corrections to its initial Investigative Summary and Findings:

- The Division learned via written and verbal public comment at the Board hearing on July 16, 2025, that Respondent was not aware of the LAPD investigation being conducted into his purchase of an illegal firearm silencer until he was presented with an order to appear for an interview, which occurred on January 11, 2022. Therefore, the Division's assertion in the Investigative Summary and Findings that he purchased the second fuel filter in August of 2021 as an attempt to bolster an alibi cannot be proven as factual.

- Additionally, the Division stated in the initial Investigative Summary and Findings that Respondent had been a member of the LAPD "Gun Unit" for three years. This assertion was based on the LAPD Administrative Investigation written report, Page 8, beginning at line 29 where it was reported Respondent was assigned to the Gang and Narcotics Division since April 2009 where he worked, ".... in an abatement unit, the Buy Team, the Gun Unit, and the…. (FBI) Gang Task Force for "approximately the last three years." Respondent stated at the Board hearing that he was only assigned to the Gun Unit, which is a unit within the Gang and Narcotics Division, for one year during that 3-year period.

However, neither these corrections nor the additional records acquired (the BOR transcripts) revealed any information that materially altered POSAD's analysis and findings, that Respondent engaged in serious misconduct, both *Acts That Violate the Law* and *Dishonesty.* The additional documentation included herein strengthens the Division's allegations by providing clarity on why LAPD did not put forth an allegation of Dishonesty in their IA report while at the same time showing that they did recognize the deceit and lack of accountability demonstrated by Respondent.

Further, in the Board of Rights transcripts, labeled *BOR Transcript 1*, page 95 beginning at line 21, Respondent is asked what training he has received related to firearm silencers. Respondent states, "Zero". However, upon further questioning, Respondent admits under oath that he trained with firearms with silencers during range training with LAPD, while assigned to the Gang and Narcotics Division. This contradicts Respondents statements made during the July 16, 2025, serious misconduct Board hearing, while answering questions from the Board, when Respondent stated "I've never dealt with a suppressor. I've never seen one in real life." *POSAAB Transcript*, dated July 16, 2025; page 140, line 21-22.

On page 97 of *BOR Transcript 1* Respondent explained his research on silencers as the unit's firearms expert and stated he researched them so that he could identify them if his unit got one from a gang member. This research and knowledge coupled with his already acquired knowledge and expertise in the area of firearms would make him a subject matter expert for the purposes of courtroom testimony.

Additionally, Respondent made the argument at his July 16, 2025 serious misconduct Board hearing, that he did not know the item he purchased using his PayPal account was a firearm silencer, however on page 99 of *BOR Transcript 1*, beginning at line 1, Respondent offers that he did Google picture searches of suppressors or silencers and that, as part of those searches, he did look at items marketed as fuel filters that were used as firearm silencers. Beginning at line 8, Respondent was asked if he looked at items marketed as fuel filters that were used as firearm silencer. He responds with, "Yes." He is then asked if he saw pictures of items marketed as solvent traps used as firearm silencers. He answers, "At some point I think that popped up." Having seen those pictures prior to purchasing the purported fuel filter from China, he would have recognized the item he purchased as being an illegal silencer being marketed as a fuel filter. This is further supported by the testimony of Lieutenant Bixler who supervised Respondent when he worked in the Gun Unit. Lieutenant Bixler testified that an individual who belongs to the LAPD Gun Unit would be able to discern a silencer if they saw it. *BOR Transcript 2*, page 121. Additionally, in response to the question "would the feature of monolithic core be something that Luke Walden was familiar with from his time in the Gun Unit?", Lieutenant Bixler responded "yes." *BOR Transcript 2*, page 116, line 25- page 117, line 4.

In *BOR Transcript 1*, page 115 beginning at line 1, when being questioned about the ATF Bulletins related to fuel filters used as silencers, Respondent contradicts himself when he states that he did not work with the ATF. When questioned about prior statements that he did work with the ATF, "… I worked with the ATF, DEA, FBI, HIS, …", Respondent stated he never personally worked with the ATF, he worked with people who worked with the ATF.

In *BOR Transcript 1* Page 119, beginning at line 8, Respondent is asked, “So is there any reason you ordered a “Napa 4003” after repeatedly looking into “Napa 4003” as part of your duties into suppressors in your job?”

Respondent answered, “Well, I ordered a fuel filter for my car, whatever the code delineation for that part, I don't remember what it was.”

Continuing through page 122, line 15, Respondent avoided answering direct questions by offering partial answers:

> Q. Okay. And where did you buy this fuel filter from?
>
> A. I do not recall.
>
> Q. One second. What kind of fuel filter were you trying to buy?
>
> A. A high flow fuel filter.
>
> Q. So the thread on purchase, if I’m correct, is 1/2 by 28, correct?
>
> A. I never got it, so I don't know.
>
> Q. So you don't know specifically what you bought, you just bought an item without knowing what it was?
>
> A. I bought an item I never received, so I couldn't verify what you're asking.
>
> Q. So on the item you were trying to buy, what would the thread barrel or the thread TPI have been?
>
> A. Well, I was hoping the thread would be half-inch by 28.
>
> Q. Why were you hoping half-inch by 28?
>
> A. Because it's a common standard size.
>
> Q. Common standard size for what?
>
> A. For threading.
>
> Q. For threading for what?
>
> A. For fuel filters, for fuel connectors.
>
> Q. Okay. I'm going to refer you to Department's 3, page 6.
>
> A. Is that the ATF?
>
> Q. Yes.
>
> A. Page 6.

Q. Yes. Under "common fuel filter threads," can you point out to me where it says 1/2 by 28?

A. No.

Q. Okay. What number do you see under "common filter threads for Napa 4003"?

A. It's three-quarters.

Q. Okay. So where did you hear that 1/2 by 28 was common for a fuel filter?

A. Because there's a reducer for the inlet, so on a fuel filter, you have the filter, and then There's reducers, just like the one that I purchased and I told the department about, for different size fuel lines. You buy the fuel filter, you get half-inch, basically there's -- it's a -- I forgot what it's called, it's, I call it a nipple, but it's basically a bolt with a hole through the middle of it, one size is the half-inch by 28, and that screws into the side of the fuel filter, then the fuel goes through that hole, and there's a nipple that basically, it's a male end that comes out, it's in the picture of the thing I bought. And then you have another female nut and basically you slide that onto the fuel line, you cut the fuel line and you use a fuel line expansion thing that basically allows the fuel line to be opened up, and when you pull the nut over it and you put the fuel filter on there, you can tighten it and it basically -- it's like a gas line on a house. There's a nipple, it has a nut and it pressurizes the system so it won't leak out, because you can't just put two nuts together, it will leak constantly, like on your dryer or on your gas line for your stove.

After reviewing the attached documents and the information gathered from LAPD for this supplemental investigation, coupled with the Investigative Summary and Findings dated March 13, 2025, the Division believes the evidence is clear and convincing Respondent committed the serious misconduct of *Dishonesty* when he denied purchasing a firearm silencer, and attempted to mislead investigators with the excuse of trying to buy a high-performance fuel filter. Respondent continued his dishonest statements throughout the Board of Rights hearing, denying he intentionally purchased a firearm silencer marketed as a fuel filter despite stating he had researched that very item for work related purposes, including seeing pictures of fuel filters and solvent traps marketed as firearm silencers prior to making his purchase. As indicated above, Respondent continued to be dishonest during the Board's July 16, 2025, serious misconduct hearing.

Additionally clear and convincing evidence exists to show Respondent committed the serious misconduct of *Acts that Violate the Law* when he committed a felony buy purchasing an illegal firearm silencer over the internet from a company in China, and had it shipped to his home address.

Refer to the ISF dated March 13, 2025, for additional detail and analysis.

VII. Supporting Evidence

- Attachment A – LAPD Administrative Investigation CF21-001144

  Attachment B – CF21-001144 Supplement
- Attachment C – LOT CF21-001144
- Attachment D – BOR Rationale
- Attachment E – BOR Transcript 1
- Attachment F – BOR Transcript 2
- Attachment G – BOR Transcript 3
- Attachment H – BOR Decision
- Attachment I – ATF Bulletin – Solvent Traps
- Attachment J – ATF Bulletin – Fuel Filters
- Attachment K – LAPD Criminalist Report
- Attachment L – Criminal Court Documents
- Attachment M – Pictures – seized item
- Attachment N – Pictures – packaging
- Attachment O – Pictures – Amazon purchase
- Attachment P – DMV Vehicle Registration Records
- Attachment Q – DOJ Email of Respondent's Firearms

- Attachment R – LAPD Daily worksheet
- Attachment S – LAPD Printout of Respondent's Firearms
- Attachment T – LAPD Property Report
- Attachment U – Pictures of Respondent's Vehicles
- Attachment V – LAPD Email RE: Honesty Allegation
- Attachment W – POSAD ISF Dated March 13, 2025
- Attachment X – Transcript - July 16, 2025 POSAAB Board hearing