



Confidential Personnel Document
Disciplinary Determination

TO: Alex Zwinck, WCDTF Investigator

FROM: Undersheriff Matt King

DATE: July 25, 2025

CASE: MCSO Internal Affairs EVT-00001149 (Standards of Conduct)

On June 13th, 2025, Sheriff Rowell requested an investigation into an incident to determine if Mesa County Sheriff's Office deputies were involved in a traffic stop, occurring on June 5th, 2025, in which Caroline Goncalves was detained by federal immigration officers. The initial investigation provided information which ultimately resulted in an Administrative Review being implemented on June 16th 2025, to determine if the traffic stop was conducted within Policy and Procedure and Standard Practices.

On July 23rd, 2025 I met with Deputy Zwinck to conduct a Pre-Disciplinary hearing. During the hearing, you did not provide any mitigating factors that would dissuade me from considering major discipline based upon the policy violations provided during the Internal Affairs Investigation concerning your conduct.

Deputy Zwinck advised during his 11 years of being employed with the Mesa County Sheriff's Office, he has had no major discipline, and has during his career held the positions of Field Training Officer, Special Weapons and Tactics Team member, been assigned to the Crime Reduction Unit, and is currently a K-9 Deputy primarily tasked with highway drug interdiction.

Deputy Zwinck also provided clarifying information about his questioning of Goncalves accent during the time he was completing the warning ticket before releasing Goncalves during the traffic stop. Deputy Zwinck said words to the effect he was surprised when Goncalves told him she was from Brazil, Deputy Zwinck believed she would have answered she was possibly from Georgia or another southern area because that is what he believed the accent sounded like to him.

Based on the investigation, I find that there is a preponderance of evidence showing Deputy Zwinck violated the following policies.

- ***Standards of Conduct 320.5.1 – Law Rules and Orders***

- (b) Disobedience of any legal directive or order issued by any office member of a higher rank.

On 02/28/2024 and 01/30/2025 information and direction about the law enforcement authority related to immigration issues were sent, which if the direction in those emails had been followed, there is a high probability this incident would never have occurred.

- ***Standards of Conduct 320.5.1 – Law, Rules and Orders***

- (c) Violation of federal, state, local or administrative laws, rules or regulations.

- Note: I find a preponderance of evidence that actions taken by Deputy Zwinck without regard to the passage of Colorado SB25-276, were in violation of C.R.S. 24-76.6-102(2).

- I do consider your testimony and understand you were assisting an agency who you had worked closely with, and may have not known if the person was being detained for a criminal violation or civil violation of federal law. I also consider the complexities and issues of working along a busy highway and considerations you may have had about the time it would have taken for additional backup to arrive may have influenced your decision, combined with your belief of keeping the scene safe for everyone involved, including providing for officer safety.

- ***Standards of Conduct 320.5.2 - Ethics***

- (b) The wrongful or unlawful exercise of authority on the part of any member for malicious purpose, personal gain, willful deceit, or any other improper purpose.

Based upon the directions provided from the two previously referenced emails your actions were improper and not within the Mesa County Sheriff's Office standard practices.

- ***Standards of Conduct 320.5.7 – Efficiency***

- Unsatisfactory work performance including but not limited to failure, incompetence, inefficiency, or delay in performing and/or carrying out proper orders, work assignments, or the instructions of supervisors with a reasonable and bona fide excuse.

Your performance in this incident was unsatisfactory in that you failed to carry out the instructions of a Division Chief.

- ***Standards of Conduct 320.5.8 - Performance***

- (i) Any act on- or off-duty that brings discredit to this office.

Your actions have discredited the Mesa County Sheriff's Office by acting outside of our standard operating practices, and culture.

- ***Standards of Conduct 320.5.0 – Conduct***

- (m) Any other on- or off-duty conduct which any member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of this office, is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or tends to reflect unfavorably upon this office or its members.

Your lack of awareness to direction provided associated to interaction with immigration issues have had a direct impact on the morale, good order, and reflects unfavorably on the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

- ***Immigration Violations 413.4 Detentions (as published and effective prior to the current revised edition, which was released on 06/26/2025).***

- A deputy should not detain any individual, for any length of time, for a civil violation of federal immigration laws or a related civil warrant.
 - Again, as stated above, I do consider your testimony and understand you were assisting an agency who you had worked closely with, and may have not known if the person was being detained for a criminal violation, or civil violation of federal law. I also consider the complexities and issues of working along a busy highway and considerations you may have had about the time it would have taken for additional backup to arrive may have influenced your decision, combined with your belief of keeping the scene safe for everyone involved including providing for officer safety.

Based upon the information and review of the internal investigation the following disciplinary actions are being taken.

- Three weeks without pay (120 hours).
- You are removed from your current assignment with the Western Colorado Task Force and will be reassigned to a patrol team.
- You will be allowed to remain as a K-9 officer with your primary duties in the Operations/Patrol Division.

Per Mesa County Sheriff's Office Policy 1011, Employee Discipline (1011.8 Appeals) you have the right to appeal to the Sheriff within 72 hours of the imposition of the discipline. The Sheriff shall make a finding on the appeal within 7 days of receiving the appeal.

I would like to express this decision was not made lightly and I am considering your past performance and history with the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. King', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Undersheriff Matt King