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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2007

## Who is supervising the supervisor?

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What the hell is going in St. George, Missouri? We **already covered** how police Sgt. James Kuehnlein engaged in harassment of a young man for parking his car in a commuter lot. During that altercation the office is videotaped issuing threats to fabricate charges in order to arrest the

young man, Brett Darrow.

Other than the die hard authoritarians, who demand respect for authority whether it is deserved or not, most people are outraged when such incidents are proven. And the videotape proved that Kuehnlein is unfit to serve as a police officer anywhere. I wouldn't trust a man like that as a crossing guard.

When the case was first exposed St. George police chief Scott Uhrig said that he would only make a final decision about Kuehnlein when he had a chance to review the video footage from the camera within the officer's vehicle. For some reason that is still a mystery the footage seems to be missing. Either it was never taken or it was destroyed after the fact.

Anytime a police officer stops a civilian they are supposed to have that camera operating. If Kuehnlein did not turn it on intentionally then it would give support to the theory that he was gunning for bear the moment he stepped out of his vehicle. In other words, he wanted to find someone to harass and he didn't want evidence of said harassment to exist. If it was destroyed afterwards it would only be because it verifies the other tape and offers no defense to Kuehnlein for his actions. He could claim he just neglected to follow departmental regulations, which is the least troublesome claim, but that still indicates a laxness toward the rules that calls his fitness into question.

And the man who is supposed to make sure that Kuehnlein and the other

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revenue gatherers in St. George is Police Chief Uhrig. The town is infamous as a revenue raising scheme using the police to do the dirty work. Although it is only one-fifth of a mile big, with fewer than 1,300 residents the police issued around 3,000 traffic citations in 2005. One town resident told the press: “If the officers had a good reputation and were qualified, they wouldn’t work for this department.”

But is Uhrig himself fit to keep control of the inappropriate actions of his officers? That is a question that Uhrig is now facing himself. Alerted my one of the reader’s to this site I went and read a report of a hearing before the Administrative Hearing Commission for the State of Missouri. In this case the Department of Public Safety had filed charges against Scott Uhrig, the same Scott Uhrig who supervised Kuehnlein.

At this time Uhrig was a member of the city police department in Arnold, Missouri. Uhrig was working the midnight shift on July 4, 2000. Around 3:20 to 3:30 a.m. he pulled over a 17-year-old female, Chrystal Cole. According to the records at this hearing, “He instructed her to drive to an empty parking lot and followed her there. He parked his car far back from the street behind a truck trailer and instructed her to follow, which she did.”

Uhrig then approached the girl and implied he would arrest her. He started fondling her and telling her she was “hot” and “tempting” and said she should join him in his vehicle for sex. The girl declined the “invitation” and keep asking for permission to go home. When she was released she immediately drove to her boyfriend’s home and with him they went to the police station and filed a complaint. She picked Uhrig out of photos of service police officers as the man who approached her.

Uhrig said she made the story up. But then he would. The problem is that he can’t explain how Cole would have known he was working that very shift. In addition he can show his whereabouts before the allegedly incident and after the alleged incident. But he couldn’t verify where he was during the time in question. The commission rules that: “Uhrig’s theory requires Cole to have known or correctly guessed, not only that Uhrig was on duty at the time she chose for her story, but also that Uhrig would have no alibi for precisely that time.” The commission said that “evidence supports Cole’s account.”

The commission ruled: “We conclude that Uhrig’s unwelcomed sexual advances to a teenager, while on duty and under the guise of enforcing the laws, indicate an especially egregious mental state, show that he cannot enforce the law, and are cause for discipline.”

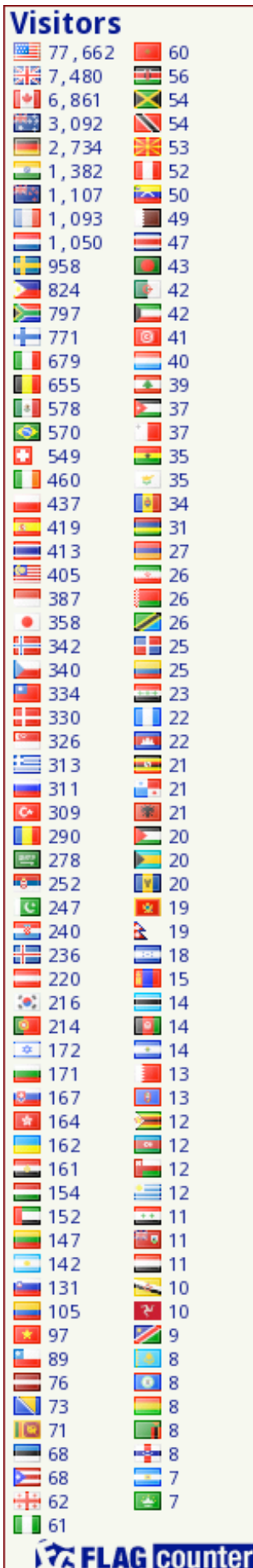
And this was the man who was responsible for making share his own officers didn’t overstep the lines of proper behavior. Uhrig’s response is: “This incident that I was accused of seven years ago doe not have



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anything to do with the current situation.” I beg to differ. Part of the current incident is about whether or not police officers are misusing their authority. Kuehnlein was caught on tape doing just that. And that raises the question of supervision of the officers. When the supervisor is himself guilty of similar offenses it is most certainly pertinent to the current situation.

In addition it appears there is more to Mr. Kuehlelein than has been previously know including criminal convictions. In two separate incidents he pleaded guilty to assault and stealing. There was one acquittal on drunk driving charges and there was another incident where he was arrested for assault but charges were not filed.

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