



PRESS RELEASE

DC Police Union Statement on Announcement of Investigation at 7D

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On Friday, September 30, 2022, Chief Robert Contee held a bizarre press conference in which he announced that several members of the 7th District Crime Suppression Team (CST) were under investigation; however, the only allegations that he announced were that members had not arrested suspects found to be in possession of guns in a small number of cases.

What is confusing is that the Chief stated that these guns were seized from suspects and then immediately and properly placed in evidence, which is consistent with current policies and directives.

It is not unusual, and completely within the law and policy, for officers to identify a subject who is in possession or constructive possession of a firearm, then submit the weapon for processing to make a stronger case against the suspect. In every single one of these cases, this is the situation.

Chairman Pemberton stated, "What is unusual is that that just over a year ago, a member of this same unit made a gun arrest that resulted in a physical altercation. When that arrest became public, the Chief stated to the media, *'This is not how we train our officers to get guns!'* He went on to say, *'I'm embarrassed and ashamed of these officers.'* Now, members of the very same unit, who have tried to adjust their strategies and tactics to the Chief's 'shame', have found themselves under investigation. In Friday's press conference, the Chief remarkably stated, *'This is not how we train our officers to get guns.'*"

After the incident last year, the Chief arranged training for all CST Units in the city. In this training, the Chief himself advised members that he wanted to move to more "intelligence-led" strategies, including being more diligent in making gun cases. This Chief was concerned that prosecutors at the USAO were setting a high bar for the prosecution of gun possession cases. He advised members to send the weapons to DFS for testing (fingerprint/DNA) to try to "shore up the evidence," then apply for a warrant later, in hopes to make more successful prosecutions.

The Chief's administration has been providing inconsistent guidance and training at a time when policies are constantly fluctuating. Members are confused at which Chief is going to show up on any given day, the Chief who wants us to go after guns aggressively, or the one who wants more due diligence for prosecutions. Our members have done everything they can to follow these inconsistent and conflicting sets of rules. Hopefully, the Chief will come to the correct conclusion that these officers were doing exactly what he asked, getting guns off the street with proper investigations while minimizing controversial interactions with citizens and suspects.