

Interpreter Refusal Case (PSS 2024-0084) — Case Summary

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Status: Handoff – Case Closed for Further Action by TLE

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1. Incident Overview

On January 18, 2024, Lan Nguyen-Santiago, a Deaf motorist, was involved in a traffic incident in Rochester, NY. Responding RPD Officer Ryan Fantigrossi failed to secure a qualified interpreter during the stop and subsequent investigation. The family member present — the complainant's daughter — acted as a go-between, but not as a trained interpreter. No effort was made to facilitate effective two-way communication.

This incident was reported through RPD's Professional Standards Section (PSS) and assigned Case No. 2024-0084.

2. Key Findings

- **Interpreter Denial:** Despite clearly identifying as Deaf, no attempt was made to provide Lan Nguyen-Santiago with a qualified interpreter at the scene.
- **Improper Reliance on Family Member:**
 - Officer spoke directly to the complainant's daughter, not to Ms. Nguyen-Santiago.
 - No effort was made to ask questions of the motorist herself.
 - The daughter relayed officer statements but was not functioning as a neutral, trained interpreter.
- **Complainant Statement (PSS File):**

"I did not get a chance to explain or ask anything. The officer just spoke to my daughter and not to me. I felt ignored."

- **Body-Worn Camera (BWC):**

- Reviewed and confirms no interpreter use.
- Officer Fantigrossi is not interviewed or appears in any statement in the records produced via FOIL.
- Not all BWC footage appears to be released. The officer takes the motorists documentation but there is no footage returning it or final instructions. We filed an appeal to get the missing footage.

3. Outreach Log

- **Office of the Chief of Police and Executive Deputy Chief of the RPD** — Contacted via email with no responses
- **Community Affairs** — Contacted via email with no responses
- **Professional Standards Section (PSS)** — Contacted via email with no responses
- **Tomesha Angelo & Kaitlyn Turner** — Listed Deaf Community Liaisons (included in outreach, no response)

Full emails and outreach attempts are included in the [03_Communications/](#) folder.

4. FOIL Records

FOIL-2025-3060 was filed to obtain all internal documentation of the investigation, including interviews, statements, and BWC footage. All responses are included in the [01_FOIL_Documents/](#) folder.

5. BWC Footage (Not Included)

BWC footage was reviewed and analyzed but is not included in this packet due to privacy and hosting concerns.

It is available upon request by serious advocates, attorneys, or journalists. Contact admin@transparentlawenforcement.com for access.

6. Assessment & Commentary

Based on the available documentation and body-worn camera footage, it is the assessment of Transparent Law Enforcement that:

- The RPD failed to meet its obligations under both the ADA and its own General Order 517.
- The use of the complainant's daughter as a stand-in for a certified interpreter constituted a clear policy violation.
- The absence of any interview or statement from Officer Fantigrossi, despite the seriousness of the complaint, reflects a breakdown in internal accountability.
- No evidence exists that RPD reviewed or even acknowledged the ADA implications of this incident.
- This case highlights systemic risk to Deaf motorists in Rochester and warrants further scrutiny by advocates, legal professionals, and oversight bodies.

7. Status and Handoff

This case file is now considered closed for further pursuit by Transparent Law Enforcement. We will provide an update on the BWC appeal we have submitted. We are making this documentation available for public interest, journalistic review, or further legal/advocacy engagement.
