

From the desk of:

Medaria Arradondo

Chief of Police

Minneapolis Police Department

350 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 130

Minneapolis, MN 55415



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**TO:** Officer Timothy Thao Badge #7203

**CC:** MPD Internal Affairs

**DATE:** February 24, 2021

**RE:** OPCR Administrative Case #20-00847

**CHIEF'S DECISION:**

- Discharge
- Suspension                      Duration:
- Written Reprimand
- Permanent Demotion
- Temporary Demotion Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SUMMARY OF BASIS FOR DECISION

This memo summarizes my approach and reasoning for my decision as Chief of the Minneapolis Police Department that Officer Timothy Thao receive a Written Reprimand. This memo accompanies the enclosed MPD Worksheet.

**Policies Violated:**

**MPD 7-402(IV)(A)(3) Pursuit Policy**

**Facts Supporting Decision (see also Investigation Summary):**

On 9/18/2019, Officer Walls and Officer Thao were assigned to marked Minneapolis Police squad 123. Officer Thao was driving; Officer Walls was passenger.

Officer Walls and Officer Thao observed an "unlicensed Hyundai Sonata" exiting the parking lot located at 1530 6<sup>th</sup> Street South. <sup>4</sup> Officer Thao noted in his statement, "the area we were in had a history of stolen vehicle(s) by Somali juvenile males. The driver seemed to be a Somali juvenile male."<sup>5</sup> Based off the recent events in the area, Officer Thao began to follow the vehicle.

Officer Thao followed the vehicle as it turned northbound on to 15<sup>th</sup> Av S, eastbound on to Riverside Parkway, then northbound onto Cedar Av S toward Washington. The vehicle made a west bound turn onto the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South exit off of Washington Av S, going through a yellow light.<sup>6</sup>

Officer Thao stated the suspect vehicle sped up, passed two vehicles on the left hand side, crossing the double yellow dividing lines, to make a right hand turn onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Street S. Officer Thao activated the squad lights and sirens, then proceeded to catch up to the vehicle, which had exited onto Hiawatha Av going southbound.

The determination was made to disengage the vehicle when the vehicle "began to drive away at excessive speeds and failed to stop for the lights and sirens."<sup>7</sup>

**Facts of this Case:**

Did Officer Thao violate the department's Pursuit Policy?

- Officer Thao observed an unlicensed vehicle in an area which recently had seen a rise in vehicle thefts and car jackings.
- Officer Thao observed the suspect vehicle driving in a manner he believed was "reckless."
- Officer Thao attempted to stop the vehicle.
- The location where the stop was initiated was not conducive to a safe stop.
- When it was clear the vehicle was not going to pull over and speeds became too high, Officer Thao shut off his lights and siren.
- Total elapsed time for the incident was less than 3 minutes.

- Officer Thao recognized that he should not have pursued the vehicle; stating in the future he would not pursue.

As Chief of Police I am responsible for providing clear expectations on what is acceptable behavior in our workplaces as well as what will not be tolerated. Based on my review of the facts of this investigation and Officer Thao's admission that he in fact should not have pursued the vehicle I am issuing a written reprimand to Officer Thao.