

REDWOOD CURTAIN COPWATCH
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March 23, 2010

Open Letter To Eureka Police Chief Garr Nielsen,
Eureka City Council members,
Eureka Mayor,
Eureka City Attorney, Sheryl Schaffner:

Re: EPD Sergeant Rodrigo Reyna-Sanchez threatens to kill!

It is unfortunate that we must write to you again about yet another series of violent incidences, one of many, wherein Eureka Police Officer Rodrigo Reyna-Sanchez is targeting, physically abusing, and *threatening the life* of a vulnerable Eureka resident. The City's lack of response to any of our prior letters and its failure, to date, to expel dangerous officers such as Sanchez from the police force exhibits your unwillingness to protect the people of Eureka. **However, with this explicit notice of severe threats and abuse by Sanchez against a specific person, you have a moral and legal obligation to take whatever actions to prevent further abuse or even murder by Rodrigo Reyna-Sanchez.**

We learned about a year ago that Sanchez had blatantly threatened to kill Shawn "Rutherford" Hill. **"I'll shoot you in the back of the head"** were the words Sanchez used. Sanchez has since made such explicit threats on at least two more occasions. Sanchez has told Shawn that "you are a piece of shit because you do heroin", that "no one will know or care if I kill you, "if you have a seizure tonight- and I know where you sleep- I'll shoot you."

Many times *during the day*, Sanchez will see Shawn and tell him to "move on", whether he be standing on a corner or sitting on a public bench. Sanchez will also often demand identification from Shawn and put him in handcuffs, although on those frequent occasions, Sanchez is neither in the process of ticketing Shawn nor is he investigating a crime. Shawn, who is a lifetime resident of this area, is houseless; so he is very vulnerable, having no walls to cover with, to this harassment and danger from Sanchez.

On or about March 11, 2010, Officer Sanchez **threw Shawn off the back ledge behind the library**. He also threatened Shawn, referencing the Derringer packed in his [Sanchez'] ankle. With other officers behind him (names unknown to us), Sanchez pointed his gun at Shawn and told him "You even move, speak, fart, or anything, I'll shoot you in the back of the head, stupid." That makes twice that Sanchez has pointed a gun at Shawn. In every instance wherein Sanchez approaches Shawn, Shawn is doing nothing violent, saying nothing violent, and doing nothing to harm another.

Some months ago, Shawn watched Sanchez and another officer, at about 5 or 6 am, cut up his survival gear - sleeping bag, clothes, and blankets- behind the library.

Sanchez has ordered Shawn to get in his patrol car and driven him both ways over the Samoa bridge, speaking so to intimidate Shawn, then dropping him off back in Eureka.

Sanchez recently kicked Shawn in the head while he was sleeping (on public property).

Neither Shawn's act of sleeping in hidden public areas, which he is forced to do due to his status as houseless, nor his substance addiction issues pose a threat to Sanchez. Shawn is not hurting another person, and has never threatened Sanchez verbally or otherwise. **Indeed, Sanchez has Shawn extremely scared.** So much so, Shawn now checks in with Redwood Curtain CopWatch *every day* so that we know that he is alive. Over the past two weeks, there have been two instances at night- one in which Sanchez physically abused Shawn, and the other, wherein Sanchez, again, verbally threatened Shawn with further violence or *death*.

We have not seen Shawn since Saturday. Hopefully, he has found a safe haven, out of danger from your viscous and murderous police. It is horrible and unacceptable for our community to have to worry, due to police violence and threats to kill, when we have not seen some one, and it is despicable that your officers, Sanchez being one of the worst, target the most vulnerable people.

As we have reminded you before, several of the young men who were killed by Eureka Police Department had prior awareness and had expressed to others that the police were going to kill them. You are now on notice about Shawn.

We do not want Shawn "Rutherford" Hill harmed AT ALL by Sanchez or any other officer. If Shawn is not in contact with us for a long period of time or is found dead or seriously injured, we will have every reason to suspect Sgt. Sanchez (or someone acting on behalf of him, EPD, or other local "law enforcement."). That being said, we much prefer that you (and each entity to which this letter is going) protect Shawn and prevent the anticipated violence against him.

Sanchez' abuse and threats against Shawn are ILLEGAL. As is *any* retaliation for this or other complaints.

Once again, and in light of the recent shooting (in the head!), we implore you to EXPEL RODRIGO REYNA-SANCHEZ from the Eureka Police Department.

Sincerely,

Redwood Curtain CopWatch

*cc: Civil Liberties Monitoring Project
Civil Liberties Defense Center
Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
Ms. Susie VanKirk
Eureka Times-Standard
Humboldt County Public Defender
Humboldt County Conflict Counsel
Humboldt County Alternate Conflict Counsel
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
Eureka Times-Standard
North Coast Journal
Humboldt State Lumberjack Newspaper
Greenfuse Publication*