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Fired officer had been suspended two times

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Former Alexandria Police Officer Kenny Rachal was disciplined a number of times in his 15 years with the department, including two suspensions, before being fired in December for an Easter Sunday altercation with a woman who later settled her lawsuit out of court.

Other blemishes detailed in Rachal's personnel file include findings that he violated department rules on "rude and discourteous behavior" and was responsible for the death of a K-9 that was in his care.

Rachal's personnel file was obtained by The Town Talk following a public records request.

Rachal also is among the top three city officers in the use of a Taser stun gun, having discharged the high-voltage disabler 11 times in the past three years, according to data submitted by the department.

Alexandria Police Chief Daren Coutee said Rachal's disciplinary file didn't necessarily contain more submissions than the average police officer's.

But "of course you're not going to find 150 of them that's been suspended for the same thing twice, that's for sure," Coutee said.

Coutee said he had to be careful answering questions because of Rachal's case before the Alexandria Police and Fire Civil Service Board.

Scrutiny of Rachal's aggressiveness on Easter Sunday and in other incidents in his career can lead to disparate conclusions, said Dan Broussard, who is Rachal's attorney in a case before the civil service board in which Rachal is seeking reinstatement to the department.

"Kenny's a proactive guy," Broussard said. "He's going to enforce the law the way he sees fit."

"Some officers won't do anything," Broussard said. "Some guys do what's gotta be done."

At the first civil service hearing last week, the board voted not to reinstate Rachal after hearing testimony on whether he was terminated within the required time frame.

The next hearing is scheduled for Feb. 20, in which much more evidence and testimony will be presented in the arrest that got Rachal fired: the April 8 Easter Sunday incident in which Rachal is seen using a Taser on Doris Moses.

The arrest was captured on police video that became fodder for the Internet. On the video, Rachal also is seen taking Moses to the ground to arrest her.

Rachal was placed on leave in late 2007 and fired on Dec. 11.

The personnel file

Nowhere in Rachal's personnel file is he reprimand for using a Taser.

But there are other findings.

Rachal was suspended for 14 days in 1999 for an off-duty incident in which he chased and caught a 16-year-old who allegedly was speeding in the Charles Park area.

Rachal was found to have used excessive force and improper tactics when he arrested the boy.

In 2002, Rachal received a rash of complaints, according to his file.

In February of that year, several people who were at a disturbance on Lee Street contended that Rachal was rude and discourteous.

Rachal and many other officers responded to the disturbance, in which Rachal is alleged to have made a demeaning comment to members of another Alexandria officer's family.

That charge was investigated and found to be "not sustained" because "there is ample testimony that the officers were inundated with a barrage of complaints, profane language and the task of dealing with another officer's family in a heated environment," according to the report.

In March 2002, Rachal received discipline for the death of Rudy, a K-9 with the Police Department that died after being left unattended in Rachal's car for six hours.

In June 2002, Rachal was one of three officers who faced an internal investigation over whether they used excessive force while making an arrest.

All three officers denied that the force used was more than necessary, but when they were confronted with pictures of the man's injuries, they had no explanation. Rachal was one of those who arrested the suspect and was not the officer accused of unnecessary force.

The investigation of the incident found the charge of excessive force was "not sustained," but all three were found to have used "rude and discourteous behavior," according to the report.

And an investigation in April 2003 found Rachal had not been patrolling as he was supposed to on two consecutive days in January.

A global positioning system in Rachal's car showed he had spent hours at a family member's home on both occasions. Rachal told investigators that he received a supervisor's OK on the first shift because he was ill, and that the tracking system on his unit was faulty on the second day.

Taser usage

Rachal has deployed his Taser 11 times since Jan. 1, 2005, placing him second among individual officers' usage.

The length of time that Rachal had been armed with a Taser, however, is unclear.

Coutee said Tasers initially were assigned to higher-ranking officers.

"When we initially started, you know, we only had 20 or so" Tasers, Coutee said. "Everybody wasn't issued one at the time."

Also, there are 38 officers who have been issued Tasers. Ten of those officers have never used the device, according to data submitted by city police.

Those who have them sometimes use them on after-hours jobs that supplement income, such as working security at bars, Coutee said.

One of the times Rachal used his Taser was on April 2, 2007, at GG's Club. Rachal was working off-duty security when Alexandria Aces Manager Ricky VanAsselberg got into a fight and had to be subdued, according to Rachal's report.
