

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

**TO:** ASST. CHIEF MICHAEL C. MILLER      **DATE:** APRIL 30, 2016  
AWARDS SELECTION CHAIRPERSON

**FROM:** SERGEANT ERASMO LOPEZ *EJ.*      **SUBJECT:**  
UNIFORM PATROL DIVISION      OFFICER OF THE MONTH

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PPO Luaces was released from Field Training on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016. During this time, PPO Luaces has displayed exceptional investigative skills, has made sound decisions in the absence of detailed instructions and has concentrated on developing solutions.

It is with great pleasure that I nominate PPO Luaces for the distinguish award, Officer of the Month, based on the totality of her actions during a Theft call under case # 16-2860, an Armed Robbery call under case # 16-3211, and another Armed Robbery call under case # 16-3278. Documented below are three incidents that motivated me to generate this memo.

**First case,**

On April 10, 2016, at approximately 1522 hours, PPO Luaces was dispatched to AT&T, 215 Miracle Mile, in reference to a theft of a cell phone. Upon her arrival, contact was made with AT&T employee, Mr. Moises Rivero, who advised that at approximately 1330 hours, he had left his company cell phone, valued at \$780.00, on the counter unattended while helping some customers. Mr. Rivero advised that the cell phone was no longer on the counter when he returned approximately ten minutes later. Security camera footage revealed a white female with glasses and short black hair wearing a red shirt and black and white pants, later identified as Ms. Consuelo Almeida. Ms. Almeida then looked around, canvassed the area several times, and walked towards the side of the counter that the cell phone was on. Ms. Almeida then proceeded to grab the phone and walk away with it. Ms. Almeida then told her friends, who were being helped by an employee that they all had to leave. Ms. Almeida and her friends then left the store with the cell phone in her hand.

Mr. Rivero made several attempts to call the cell phone, but it had been turned off. After approximately ten attempts, PPO Luaces asked Mr. Rivero to call the pre-paid phone that Ms. Almeida's friend had purchased with cash instead. Ms. Almeida's friend answered and PPO Luaces asked to speak to the female who was with her matching the description of the security camera footage. Ms. Almeida was then passed the phone and PPO Luaces advised her that the security camera footage revealed her taking the phone and that she needed to come back to the

store to return it. Ms. Almeida arrived and was placed in custody under case # 16-2860. The stolen property was recovered. PPO Luaces took the initiative and instead of just writing a simple theft report, she sought new ideas and approaches which resulted in the apprehension of the offender at the time the crime was committed.

### **Second case,**

On April 21st, 2016, at approximately 1918 hours, units were dispatched to 3833 SW 8Street reference an Armed Robbery under case # 16-3211. Officer St. Amand responded to the scene to conduct the investigation and additional units were dispatched to canvass the area. Mrs. Annia Vilarino, a witness, advised that she is the owner of the plaza and she has surveillance cameras around the plaza parking lot. Ms. Vilarino advised that she heard a loud noise and came out to the parking lot to see if there had been an accident. Ms. Vilarino became suspicious of the incident and decided to take a picture of the tag of the Silver Chevy Impala with her cell phone. PPO Luaces displayed great investigative skills by running the tag through NCIC/FCIC. It revealed it was a rented vehicle from Hertz Rent a Car out of Orlando, Fl. While all the responding units were checking the area, PPO Luaces immediately called the Hertz Rent a Car and was able to obtain valuable information such as who rented the vehicle and the credit card on file. PPO Luaces also inquired as to whether or not the vehicle was equipped with OnStar system or GPS tracking device. PPO Luaces was advised that the vehicle was equipped with OnStar and could be tracked with a warrant. Upon CID Detective Cachinero's arrival, PPO Luaces responded to the scene and provided pertinent subject information which matched the description given by the witness. Due to PPO Luaces's initiatives, valuable information was provided to Detective Cachinero in a time sensitive case. PPO Luaces demonstrated self-reliance and resourcefulness.

### **Third case,**

On April 24, 2016, at approximately 1956 hours, units were dispatched to Nordstrom, 4310 Ponce De Leon Blvd. in reference to an Armed Robbery under case # 16-3278. Upon PPO Luaces arrival at Nordstrom, she noticed a white Kia LX parked against traffic in a prohibited parking spot in front of the entrance with no visible tag. PPO Luaces observed a white female in the passenger seat, later identified as Mrs. Rubio. PPO Luaces thought that the suspicious vehicle could be linked to the robbery and calmly advised over the radio that she would be initiating contact. PPO Luaces made contact with Mrs. Rubio who advised that she was waiting for her boyfriend, who was later identified as Mr. Charafardin, who had gone inside the store to buy a ring. PPO Luaces noticed the male's wallet on the center console of the vehicle and knew that he would be unable to purchase a ring without it. PPO Luaces then noticed the vehicle license plate (CZLT92) was upside down on the rear passenger seat and advised dispatch of the tag. Mrs. Rubio seemed very anxious and nervous and proceeded to point behind PPO Luaces and yell "Babe, Babe." At that point, PPO Luaces observed the white male she was pointing at exit Nordstrom and proceed to walk westbound, pretending not to know Ms. Rubio. Due to the

suspicious vehicle and no description of the male involved the armed robbery, PPO asked the male to stop and conduct an investigation.

A records check revealed that Mr. Charafardin had an extensive criminal history of burglary, theft, narcotics, resisting with violence, and carrying a firearm without a concealed weapons permit. The Nordstrom Loss Prevention Officer (LPO) stated that Mr. Charafardin was acting suspicious by walking back and forth and in and out of the store. The LPO further stated that Mr. Charafardin had asked the clerk to show him the most expensive ring the store had for sale. Post Miranda via card, it was determined that Mr. Charafardin was attempting to commit a theft of a ring but was unsuccessful due to PPO Luaces's quick response. Security camera footage revealed that Mr. Charafardin did not match the description of the armed robbery subject. PPO Luaces conducted a Field Interview and issued several citations to Mr. Charafardin.

PPO Luaces' investigative skills deterred a crime from being committed, provided valuable intelligence and information to several other police departments and jewelry stores that were victimized by Mr. Charafardin. Officer St. Amand investigated the armed robbery under case # 16-3278, which was unrelated to PPO Luaces's inquiry.


PPO Luaces's actions in these three cases illustrate the passion she has for her profession and her dedication to the citizens of the City of Coral Gables. It was her great instincts and keen observation skills that led to the capture of the offender who stole the cell phone and possibly prevented the theft of an expensive engagement ring. It is this constant display of professionalism, positive attitude, and investigative tenacity that makes PPO Luaces an exceptional and strong candidate for the Officer of the Month Award.

**REVIEWED BY:**

**DATE**

  
Lieutenant Cordell Atherley  
Uniform Patrol Division

5/3/14

  
Major Raul Pedrosa  
Uniform Patrol Division

5/5/16

  
Asst. Chief Michael C. Miller  
Award Selection Chairperson

5/9/16

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