

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: MAJOR RAUL PEDROSO
ASC CHAIRPERSON

DATE: February 15, 2011

FROM: SERGEANT JESSE MEDINA
CRASH INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

SUBJECT:
OFFICER OF THE MONTH
NOMINATION / FEBRUARY
SGT J. MCRAE, OFC C.
CHALLENGER

I would like to take this opportunity to nominate Sergeant John McRae and Officer Chris Challenger for officer of the month. Coral Gables Case # 11-001031.

During the last week of January 2010, Sergeant John McRae learned of a suspicious incident occurring in the Coral Gables Waterway. A resident on Orduna Dr., living along the Waterway, advised Sergeant McRae of a Personal Water Craft (PWC) traveling at a high speed. She reported the PWC traveled out of the Waterway at 0200 hrs and re-entered at approximately 0220 hrs. Sergeant McRae made only a mental note of this fact due to no known incidents reported at the time related to the reported suspicious incident. On January 31, 2010, Officer Chris Challenger, while patrolling the area of Old Cutler Bay stopped a PWC for not having Florida registration number on the PWC. Officer Challenger cited the driver.

On February 2nd an attempted theft of a PWC occurred at 130 Casuarina Concourse. The resident from the attempted theft had video of the two subjects attempting the theft. Two thefts of PWC were committed at 631 Arvida Parkway on another day but during the same time frame of the previously attempted theft. Both were during the 0200 hrs time frame. Sergeant McRae was contacted again by the Orduna Dr. resident stating she heard and observed PWCs traveling along the Waterway on the same night the thefts occurred at 631 Arvida Parkway. The times were the same as previous nights. Sergeant McRae began efforts to put pieces of a puzzle together. He ordered his officers to focus their patrols along the areas of the thefts, the Waterway, and nearby communities. He also collected video evidence from victims of the thefts.

Sergeant McRae adjusted the Marine Patrol's schedules in an attempt to apprehend the subjects committing the thefts. Sergeant McRae gambled on the subjects' consistent methods of committing the crime. He hoped the thefts would continue long enough so he and his officers would be fortunate enough to catch the subjects in the act. On the morning of February 9, 2011, the gamble paid off because of the coordinated efforts initiated by Sergeant McRae and the keen observation skills of Officer Challenger.

On February 9, 2011, at approximately 0205, the Orduna resident contacted the Coral Gables Police Department stating a PWC had traveled outbound in the Waterway. Sergeant McRae and

Officer Challenge, anticipating the incident, were already in the area and now strategically positioned themselves for subject apprehension. Officer Challenger, in an unmarked vehicle, drove to the boat ramp where he observed a truck with a PWC trailer on the ramp backed into the water. Sergeant McRae was in a Marine Patrol vessel standing by near the mouth of the Waterway. Another call was received by G4S Security at 0222 hrs advising a PWC was spotted near 1 Casuarina Concourse and then again at 0237 hrs advising of another PWC leaving the Gable Estates' channel. A Patrol officer observed the PWC traveling inbound toward the ramp from the Hardee Bridge at 0240 hrs. The Orduna Dr. resident observed the PWC pass by at 0241 hrs. Sergeant McRae advised Patrol and coordinated their efforts to standby the area of the boat ramp; however, wait until the PWCs were out of the water to avoid any possibility of a chase. When they pulled up the ramp the subjects were stopped by Officer Challenger and Patrol units. The subjects were arrested and charged with Theft, Altering a Vessel Registration, Altering Vessel Hull ID Number, and Failure to Display Registration Number on Vessel


Sergeant McRae's and Officer Challenger's patience and tenacious efforts resulted in the apprehension of two subjects. Their gathering of evidence, community contacts, and knowledge of the Gables' Waterways helped predict the final outcome of this crime. Like a coach, Sergeant McRae placed all key players in a position to execute the play to perfection with no negative results. An officer patrolling his area, enforcing the law by citing a violator, and a sergeant making a mental note then following it up with an organized strategic plan is what resulted in apprehending two subjects and preventing future thefts from the Coral Gables community.

I request you give Sergeant John McRae and Officer Chris Challenger your utmost consideration for the month of February.


Thank you.

Reviewed By


Date



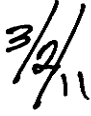
Major Scott Masington
Special Enforcement Division



2/16/11



Major Raul Pedroso
Award Committee Chairperson




3/2/11

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: MAJOR RAUL PEDROSO
ASC CHAIRPERSON

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2011

FROM: OFFICER WILLIAM BARROW 
SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT:
OFFICER OF THE MONTH
NOMINATION

I respectfully request that Sergeant John McRae and Officer Christopher Challenger be considered for Officer of the Month for February 2011. Sergeant McRae and Officer Challenger were able to arrest two subjects that had been committing thefts of Personal Watercraft (PWC) in Coral Gables and other jurisdictions.

A PWC was stolen from Gables Estates and video surveillance showed that a black PWC with no "FL" numbers was used in the theft. Earlier in the week Officer Challenger had conducted a stop of a black PWC with no "FL" number and issued a citation to the rider, Alberto Garcia. After learning of the video footage, Sgt. McRae made the possible connection to Officer Challenger's earlier stop and the PWC theft, due to the similar craft in both instances. The Marine Patrol unit had been advised of complaints from a resident on the Coral Gables Waterway near U.S. 1 of PWC's running through Coral Gables Waterway late at night. This seemingly unrelated incident led Sgt. McRae to believe that the subjects in the PWC thefts were using the ramp at Riviera Dr. and U.S. 1 to conduct the thefts. Sgt. McRae was able to link multiple sources of information, of seemingly unrelated incidents, to determine times when those committing the PWC thefts would likely make another attempt.

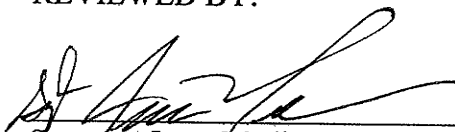
As a result of the information that was pieced together, members of the Marine Patrol Unit adjusted their hours to coincide with the earlier thefts and the noise complaints. On 02/07/2011 Officer Challenger and Officer Barrow surveilled the ramp at Riviera Dr & U.S. 1 and Seminole Boat ramp using an unmarked vehicle. They also surveilled the entrance to the Coral Gables Waterway and Gables Estates by boat. No activity was observed that evening. On 02/08/2011 Sgt. McRae and Officer Challenger repeated the surveillance. A vehicle matching the description of a vehicle registered to the subject Alberto Garcia, was observed at the Riviera Dr. & U.S. 1 ramp. It was backed down the ramp with a two place PWC trailer. The subjects had both left on a single PWC and went to Gables Estates and stole a PWC from behind 1 Casurina Concourse. The subjects were seen via video surveillance leaving on two PWC and returning to the Coral Gables Waterway. Officer Challenger set up in a position so he could observe the subjects as they returned to their vehicle and trailer. He also coordinated with midnight shift officers so the subjects could be safely taken into custody. Officer Challenger observed the subjects load the PWC's onto the trailer and then begin to remove the "FL" numbers and registration decal from the PWC they had just stolen and replace them with different "FL" numbers and registration decal. The subjects also removed the H.I.N. plate and replace it with another. As the subjects

attempted to leave the ramp Officer Challenger coordinated a safe and efficient arrest of the subjects with the assistance of midnight shift officers. Alberto Garcia and Sergio Aguirre were arrested on multiple charges; Motor Vehicle Theft, Altering Vessel Registration Decal, Alter/Remove/Cover Hull ID plate and Failure to display FL registration number.


Officer Challenger continues to work investigating the incident with Det. Salcedo, lending his expertise in marine related matters. The investigation continues and new information is being discovered almost on a daily basis.

Using their experience, investigative skills and proactive policing, Sergeant McRae and Officer Challenger were able to apprehend two subjects that had committed multiple crimes in multiple jurisdictions. Both Sergeant McRae and Officer Challenger went above and beyond in their efforts to successfully take two repeat offenders off the street.

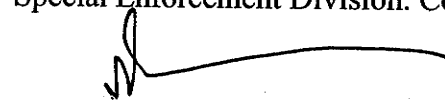
REVIEWED BY:


Sergeant Jesse Medina
Acting Special Enforcement Division Lieutenant

2-24-11
Date


Major Scott Masington
Special Enforcement Division. Commander

2-24-11
Date


Major Raul Pedroso
Award Selection Committee

3/2/11
Date

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: MAJOR RAUL PEDROSO
ASC CHAIRPERSON

DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2011

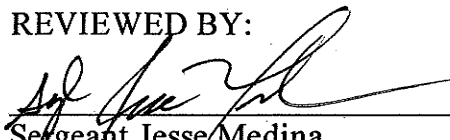
FROM: OFFICER CHRISTOPHER CHALLENGER
SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT:
OFFICER OF THE MONTH
NOMINATION


I nominate Sergeant John McRae for Officer of the Month. On January 31, 2011, I conducted a traffic stop of a black jet-ski and issued a citation to the driver for no FL numbers. Later that week, while I was on my regular days off, a jet-ski was stolen and video surveillance footage revealed that the subject used a black jet-ski with no FL numbers. Sgt. McRae remembered that I stopped a similar jet-ski earlier in the week and believed it to be related. With late night reports from residents of a jet-ski traveling fast in the Gables Waterway, Sgt. McRae believed that the subjects were using the ramp at Riviera Drive and Ponce De Leon Boulevard. Sgt. McRae recommended that the Marine Patrol Unit adjust our hours to 0300 hours on Monday (02/07) and Tuesday (02/08). On Tuesday night, the subjects lowered their black jet-ski with no FL numbers into the water at the Riviera Drive/Ponce De Leon Boulevard ramp and proceeded to steal a resident's jet-ski. Sgt. McRae and I, with the help of the midnight shift, were able to apprehend and arrest subjects before they could leave the area of the boat ramp.

Without Sgt. McRae connecting the events together and adjusting our working hours, the subjects would have been able to commit the jet-ski thefts without being apprehended.

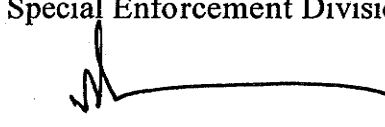
REVIEWED BY:


Sergeant Jesse Medina
Acting Special Enforcement Division Lieutenant

2-24-11
Date


Major Scott Masington
Special Enforcement Division. Commander

2/24/11
Date


Major Raul Pedroso
Award Selection Committee

3/2/11
Date

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: MAJOR RAUL PEDROSO
ASC CHAIRPERSON

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2011

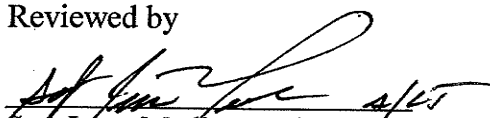
FROM: SERGEANT JOHN MCRAE 
MARINE PATROL SERGEANT

SUBJECT:
OFFICER OF THE MONTH
NOMINATION

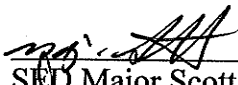
I would like to address a nomination for Officer of the Month made for me by Officer Chris Challenger. While the nomination is appreciated it is incomplete in that if I am to be nominated then Officer Challenger himself should also be considered. His actions in partnership with mine resulted in the arrests. He was the officer who originally stopped the subjects and identified one of them which provided an important part of the overall information I put together in making the determination to adjust shifts and where to direct our efforts. He was also half of the surveillance part of the team roving between the two possible boat ramps in an unmarked vehicle while I was in the police boat in the bay in case they came from the Seminole boat ramp located at Dinner Key and went to an area not monitored by any security. He watched the subjects once they returned to their launch point from the unmarked vehicle and initiated the eventual stop with the assistance of the Alpha shift. His actions are every bit as important as mine to the outcome of the case.

Reviewed by

Date


Sgt. Jesse Medina Acting SED Lt.

3-2-11


SED Major Scott Masington

3-2-11


ASC Major Raul Pedrosa

3/4/11