



NASSAU COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Investigative Report

Incident #: 2025-00071696



Sgt. Mark Murphy, #599- Criminal Investigations Unit, Squad "B", Major Crimes Section

Offense Information:

Offense: Official Misconduct / Battery

F.S.S.: 838.022 / 784.03

Date of Occurrence: 7/6/2025

Time of Occurrence: 2:32 am

Location of Occurrence: 1997 S. Fletcher Ave.

Suspect(s) Information:

Name: William Charles Woods

Driver's License #: Privacy Information

Date of Birth: Privacy Information

Race/Sex: White / Male

Address: Privacy Information

Phone Number: Privacy Information

Victim(s) Information:

Name: State of Florida

Driver's License #:

Date of Birth: Click or tap to enter a date.

Race/Sex: Click or tap here to enter text.

Address: 76347 Veterans Way, Yulee, Fl 32097

Phone Number: 904-548-4700

Name: Tyler Deron Merritt

Driver's License #: Privacy Information

Date of Birth: Privacy

Race/Sex: White / Male

Address: Privacy Information

Phone Number: Unknown

Other(s) Information:

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Driver's License #:

Date of Birth: Click or tap to enter a date.

Race/Sex: Click or tap here to enter text.

Address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Phone Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

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Investigative Summary:

On 8/27/2025, I was assigned to investigate a battery and official misconduct that occurred on 7/6/2025 in reference to CCR 2025-54571. I was provided a green form, an email from the State Attorney's Office, an arrest and booking sheet, and a thumb drive containing In-Car Videos (ICV) and Body-Worn Camera (BWC) videos. The basis for this investigation stemmed from an email the States Attorney received, and forwarded to the General Counsel of the Nassau County Sheriff's Office. On 8/26/2025 the States Attorney was contacted by the Office of the Public Defender, Courtney Miller, in reference to the video and the written affidavits being in conflict.

I reviewed the offense report and the arrest and booking report. Deputy Woods stated in the arrest and booking report he authored, as well as in the offense report that he authored, that "the arrestee lunged out of the vehicle as I was trying to pull him out of the vehicle. The arrestee went limp and fell to the ground hitting his head on the asphalt parking lot ground." Importantly, the arrest and booking report is a sworn affidavit, sworn to by Deputy Woods.

The arrestee mentioned above in quotes is the victim, Tyler Merritt, in this investigation

I reviewed the videos that were provided to me of the incident (Body worn and in-car from Deputies Woods, Magalski, and Gordon). In the videos, the Victim was intoxicated but cooperative during the interaction. Shortly after he was secured in the vehicle, the Victim began to hit his head against the inside of the vehicle. From Magalski's BWC (body worn camera) view, there is a clear depiction of the actions of Woods. As he opened the back drivers' side door, the Victims' feet are clearly flat on the floorboard of the vehicle. The Victim leans inward slightly as the door opens as if he was surprised, at which point Woods braces the door with his left arm and hooks his right arm through the Victims' left arm and slings him out of the vehicle causing the Victims' head to strike the pavement knocking him unconscious. The Victim was handcuffed behind his back when this incident occurred and the Victim had no way to protect his fall. This video account differs substantially from what was written in the report alleging the Victim kicked the door or tried to lunge from the vehicle.

My investigation revealed that on 7/6/2025, Deputy Sheriff Will Woods, acting in a law enforcement capacity, responded to a call of an intoxicated person at the Hammerhead Bar. Prior to arriving, the Victim (Merritt) had left and was located in his vehicle at the Amelia Hotel by the Sea (1997 S. Fletcher Ave.). Additionally, Deputy Gordon and Deputy Magalski also responded to the scene. When contact was made, the Victim was extremely intoxicated and Woods attempted to do field sobriety exercises on the Victim. Due to his intoxication, he was unable to complete them and repeatedly said to arrest him for DUI. The Victim was then placed under arrest and into the rear of Woods' patrol vehicle, a marked Chevrolet Silverado. When the Victim was placed



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into the rear of the truck he was handcuffed with both hands behind his back, as is standard in a criminal arrest. Around 0232 hours, the Victim began banging his head against the door of the vehicle, at which point Woods opened the door, grabbed the still handcuffed Victim and pulled him from the vehicle causing him to fall from the rear of the vehicle down to the pavement, and causing his head to strike the ground. The Victim immediately lost consciousness after falling to the ground so rescue was called to evaluate at the scene, then transported the Victim to the hospital for clearance. Later the next morning, the Victim was transported to the jail where he was booked on the charge of DUI.

Based on my review of the videos, Woods used unnecessary force to control the handcuffed Victim in the rear of his vehicle by forcefully removing him from the vehicle, thereby causing the Victim further injuries (Battery). Woods then falsified the actual account of what happened in the arrest and offense report (Official Misconduct).

An arrest warrant was drafted and sent to the State Attorney's Office for review.

On 8/28/2025, as a furtherance of the investigation, I spoke with Sgt. Delacruz, the approving supervisor of the offense report and the arrest report, to see if the wording in the report was the actual wording of the affiant (Woods) or was it changed. The supervisor stated that he only made grammatical and spelling corrections. It should also be known that there is a record in New World (reporting system) of every change during the approval process. I reviewed the original submission and compared it to the merged submission and the documented details did not change; evidencing that they were authored by the Suspect.

On 8/29/2025, Woods was placed on suspension pending the approval of the arrest warrant.

On 9/2/2025, I met with the Honorable Judge Lester Bass to have the warrant signed.

Woods was contacted to come in for an investigative interview. Upon his arrival, he was placed in a recorded interview room. Woods was read his Miranda Rights, by form, and initialed and signed the document. After being advised of the reasons for the interview, he exercised his right to speak with an attorney. Woods was placed under arrest and transported to the Nassau County Detention Facility and booked on the listed charges.

On 9/3/2025, Deputy Magalski came in for a recorded interview. During the interview, it was learned that while discussing the call with Woods after the fact, the term "kick/lunge" was used to describe what the subject was doing. With Magalski being a newer deputy, the wording was used but not in the connotation that it represents. Magalski clarified what he meant was the subject leaned into the vehicle. He also stated that he was in the process of putting on his gloves and everything happened quickly. Due to his inexperience, his choice of wording needed to be more specific. Magalski was provided the opportunity to



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view the video, body worn and in-car, and pointed to the time the subject leaned inward was where he described it as "kick/lunge". He also clarified his statement of the door being pushed into Woods. He stated that from his perception, it appeared that is what happened, but after watching the video he could see that Woods had control of the door.

He further stated that he did not review any video prior to writing his report, to which he stated that he is learning the importance of doing so prior.

On 9/4/2025, Deputy Gordon came in for a recorded interview. I asked him if he had anything to add about the incident. His statement was that he wrote a supplement report and there is body worn video, therefore he had no other information to provide. The purpose of this interview was to be sure that Gordon did not have any information that he wanted to provide so that there were no surprises in the future.

The three video recorded interviews of Woods, Magalski, and Gordon, along with the thumb drive of the incident were placed into evidence.

Conclusion:

This case is Cleared by Arrest

Detective's Recommended Case Status and Disposition:

Status: Cleared

Disposition: Arrest Reason If Suspended: Choose an item.

Notes:

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Public Records Exemptions

Enclosed please find a copy of the response documents for your public records request. The following information is provided to explain the process employed to review and produce the response documents.

Reason	Description	Pages
Privacy Information		1