Response to:
RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM CITY COUNCIL
Informal Report

Dated: August 26, 1992

Concerning my wanting to be involved in the Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity Training being conducted at the Houston Police Academy

Submitted by
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RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM CITY COUNCIL
Informal Report

TO: Mayor and Council	Page 1 of 1
SUBJECT: Constituent William Johnston's Complaint Regarding Denial of Participation in Gay/Lesbian Sensitivity Training for Houston Police Cadets	Date August 26, 1992 Report No.
REASON FOR THIS SUBMISSION (Nature and date of Council Request to which this responds): Pop-off, August 25, 1992, Constituent William Johnston	
FROM (Department or other responding unit): Houston Police Department	**Council District affected:**
DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE:	**For further information contact:** Sgt. H.L. Lawrence **Phone:** 247-5900

William Johnston is requesting specific reasons as to why he was not selected for participation in the gay/lesbian sensitivity training program presented to Houston Police Cadets during pre-service training. An inquiry revealed the following:

1. Mr. Johnston has made numerous requests to participate as a panel member. The selection of panel members was the responsibility of Intercare Hospital and Mr. Johnston's requests were forwarded to Ms. Cathleen Hardy, Director of Community Relations for Intercare Hospital.

2. Ms. Hardy stated that Mr. Johnston has attended two (2) meetings with Intercare Staff regarding selection of panel members. Ms. Hardy said that Mr. Johnston's participation on the panel was not considered due to the fact that two issues he insisted on including in his presentation are in direct conflict with established principles of the program as they now exist. Specifically, Mr. Johnston's presentation includes an appeal to all gay or lesbian members of the Houston Police Department to openly proclaim their sexual orientation. It is the belief of Intercare Hospital and the Houston Police Department that this is a very personal and private issue that is strictly a matter of personal choice. Additionally, Mr. Johnston expressed a strong desire to include the religious persecution aspect of gay/lesbian individuals in his presentation. Ms. Hardy advised that the program is designed to strictly exclude any discussion of religion due to the controversial nature of individual beliefs and values with respect to this issue.

3. Ms. Hardy further stated that Mr. Johnston's credibility has suffered due to the fact that on several occasions he untruthfully advised her that Earl Campa, Administrative Manager, Houston Police Academy, had approved Mr. Johnston's participation on the panel and that Mr. Johnston's claims to having previous instructional experience at the Houston Police Academy are likewise false. Mr. Campa confirmed that a check of Academy records indicates that Mr. Johnston has not been used as a primary instructor in any course for the Emergency Communications Division and also verified that Mr. Johnston has never been used as an instructor for in-service training in his capacity as a Senior Police Communications Operator.

November 24, 1992

To the Honorable Bob Lanier, Mayor of the City of Houston and Honorable Members of the City Council of the City of Houston.

On October 13, 1992 I once again appeared before this Mayor and Council to ask to be allowed to participate in the Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity Training Classes being conducted at the Houston Police Academy.

On the afternoon of October 13th I received a call from Scott Legs in the Mayor's assistance office who told me that he had "RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM CITY COUNCIL" form dated August 26, 1992 that would explain why I had not been asked to participate in the Gay and Lesbian sensitivity training program. I picked up a copy provided by him and it's contents have caused me to generate this response.

My report to you today is submitted with the highest respect for this Mayor and Council. I have lived in Houston for over 10 years now and I am proud to call Houston my home. My soul is troubled by the fact that I feel forced to give you this however I feel in all fairness that I not only correct what I know to be inaccuracies in the August 26, 1992 report, but with this I be allowed to offer you *my side of the story* which as you can tell by reading the August 26th report to you, I was never contacted while the *inquiry* was being conducted.

I ask your patience as you read what might be seen and probably will be a rather lengthy report yet I want to supply you with some background on myself and the facts, not hearsay relating to why I feel I must be allowed to participate in the Gay and Lesbian sensitivity training classes. Hopefully this information will help you understand why I have been trying so desperately now for over a year to become involved in this very important program.

I moved to Houston over 10 years ago as an employee of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. I had worked for Missouri Pacific as a dispatcher until the merger of Union Pacific, Western Pacific and Missouri Pacific and quickly after the merger I found myself a many other's did without a job.

Long before working for Missouri Pacific and shortly after graduating from High School I went to work as a Patrolman for the Van Buren Police Department in Van Buren, Arkansas.

A friend, knowing my background in Law Enforcement and that I was looking for work told me the Harris County Sheriff's Office was hiring dispatchers. I picked up an application and began to fill it out yet the application was never returned to Harris County for one simply reason.
As I answered, what I felt was a standard application for employment, I was startled to read the fifth of sixth question on the application. It read:

"Have you ever committed a homosexual act ?" I answered, "YES."

The next question was:

"If YES, When ?" I answered, "This morning".

I never returned the application form to the Harris County Sheriffs Office for reasons to numerous to list within this report.

Sometime later I applied as a Dispatcher for the Metro Transit Authority, here in Houston. While leaving the Metro building I heard a car accident. The Houston Police responded quickly and for whatever reason I felt I would ask if the City of Houston was hiring dispatchers.

Not knowing where the Houston Police Department was located I walked into City Hall and spoke to an older woman who was working the Information Booth located in the lobby of City Hall.

I asked her if she would tell me where HPD was located and if they were hiring dispatchers. I hope I never forget that day.

After getting the information from her I said Thank You and started to leave. I must have had depression or a look of loss on my face because this older woman asked me, in a kind and caring way, "What was wrong ?".

Being new to Houston and not knowing a lot of people I was touched by the caring and compassion in this woman's voice and the look of concern on her face so I began to tell her how I had wound up in the lobby of Houston City Hall looking for work. I told her that I was afraid that Houston would ask me on the job application, if I were Gay just as Harris County had done.

Her advice to me was something to the effect of, *You go over there (to HPD) and apply for that job and tell them that you are qualified and that's it.*

Of course I do not remember the exact quote, but as I said before I hope I never forget her message, and that being that I deserved the same chance as anyone else and that I didn't have to explain my life to anyone. All that should be expected of me was how well I performed my assigned work.

I took her advice and in June of 1984 I began working as a Dispatcher for the Houston Police Department. I was happy that at no time did anyone ask me, to the best of my knowledge, anything about my sexual orientation.

I worked, in my little closet of security, for a long time feeling secure in my job and happy with my performance in the fourth largest city in this great nation.

It wasn't until the failed Gay rights referendum that I began to face the fact that in order to break out of the closet I must do something, just what to do wasn't clear to me.

I remember when a Mayor and a handful of City Council members in this great City of Houston took a bold step and wrote a Gay rights ordinance that would protect it's Gay and Lesbian employee's. I began to feel that as a gay employee of Houston perhaps someday I would not have to live in the constant fear I had faced all of my life of trying to conceal who and what I was from most of the word.

It was very hard later to watch the referendum called to a vote by a petition drive by voters go down into defeat and then later on realize that just a small percentage of register voters voted one way or the other. I was deeply disturbed that turnout in the Montrose percents was even lower that voter turnout city wide. The Gay and Lesbian community had failed to go and vote for themselves.

In the spring of 1987 I accidentally found KPFT radio on the FM dial and heard my first Gay and Lesbian Radio broadcast. Being a fan of radio since before high school I was moved to hear openly Gay and Lesbian people speak so frankly about their lives in such a very public manner.

On September 6, 1987 at 2 a.m., I began an adventure that would change my life. With the support of my immediate supervisors at H.P.D. and with close friends by my side, I signed on "After Hours", a weekly radio broadcast for the Gay and Lesbian Community of the Houston area. Every Saturday night we produced some of the most dynamic radio every heard. The only problem was that almost no one heard it. KPFT is owned and operated by the Pacificia Foundation and it's broadcast signal is one of the weakest in the Houston area. Despite the technical troubles we were able to produce radio that changed peoples lives.

No one was touched more by my work at KPFT than myself. We offered many Gay and Lesbian people something that they had never had before, Hope. We offered them the dream that someday they could live healthy happy lives free of the constant fear that most Gay and Lesbian people live in daily. The fear of their families, friends, churches, coworkers, the list goes on and on; free from the fear that *someone might find out.*

You are probably wondering what all this has to do with Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity training and why I am telling you my life story.

I am trying to build a foundation for you that will make it crystal clear as to why I should be allowed to participate in the Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity Training class.

First and foremost, I am am openly Gay member of the Houston Police Department.

Now before you start firing letters back and forth I understand as you do that my sexual orientation should not be important, well it is.

I am sure when the first Black, Hispanic and Woman fell into the ranks at the Houston Police Department many said aloud, *This will never work !* Well it did work because then as now it was the right thing to do. Are we blind to the fact that there are those in our society today that would put WHITES ONLY drinking fountains in the lobby of this City Hall building if they thought that they could get away with it.

In 1959 when a young black woman on her way home from work refused to give up her seat on the bus, not a seat behind the driver or a seat in the middle of the bus as many think. Mrs. Parks after a long day at work had stepped onto the front of the bus, paid her fare, stepped off the bus, walked to the back door where she entered the bus only to take a seat in the back that was set aside for blacks. As the bus filled and no seats were left in the front she was asked to give up her seat, to which she replied "no".

I am glad that I was not the driver of that bus back on the streets of Montgomery in 1959 because even though it was the LAW OF THE LAND, it was wrong and I would have stood with Rosa Parks and not the city of Montgomery.

I am glad that I was not a guard at one of the hundreds of prison camps throughout Germany when Hitler ordered millions of Jews to death. Over 600,000 homosexuals wore pink triangles to their deaths along with anyone and everyone that Hitler considered a threat to his perfect world. I would have stood with the Jews and said aloud, THIS IS WRONG !

President elect Bill Clinton has promised to life the ban on Gays serving in the military.
The forces of fear and division are already poised to fight him on this issue. I hope he can stand up to them and do what I know he feels in his heart is the right thing to do.

Today I ask each of you to do the right thing as well.

I would now like to address statements made in "RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM CITY COUNCIL" form dated August 26, 1992.

I have taken the liberty of numbering each line of the original report and will refer to each paragraph and line in this response.

Paragraph # 1 is correct, I have made numerous request to participate as a panel member in the Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity Training being conducted at the Houston Police Academy. The request have been made not only to the academy staff and the people with Intracare Hospital, I have also stood before Houston City council several times making the same request.

The attached "RESPONSE TO REQUEST FROM CITY COUNCIL" form made reference to in this report is the first official or unofficial response I have received from anyone in over a year of knocking on this very sealed door.

In paragraph # 2 lines # 1-2, the report reads "Mr. Johnston has attended two (2) meetings with Intracare Staff regarding selection of panel members."

I have never attended any meetings with Intracare Staff regarding the selection of panel members. I was contacted by telephone I believe in late 1991 by Travis Peterson of Janus and Associates at which time he told me of the plans to begin Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity training classes at the Houston Police Academy. I was told by Mr. Peterson that my name had come up in a couple of meeting because of the fact that many people in the Gay community knew I was an openly gay member of the Houston Police Department and that for almost 5 years I had produce a Gay and Lesbian radio show broadcast weekly over KPFT. After speaking to Mr. Peterson several time by phone I was invited by him to

attend a lunch that was later held at Bubba Yega's Restaurant in the Montrose area. Mr. Peterson was accompanied at that lunch with Lane Lewis who I was told was also working with Intra Care on the training at the academy.

During that lunch we discussed my views on many subjects, my background in police work not only with the Houston Police Department but with the Van Buren Police Department in Arkansas. To the best of my knowledge nothing was ever agreed on during that lunch except that I was ask by Mr. Peterson to put together a presentation of what I would like to see included in the training.

A few days later I received a phone call from Mr. Peterson informing me that they, Intracare Staff Members, had decided that I would not be allowed to work with the Gay and Lesbian training because, if I remember correctly, some members of the panel had come to the conclusion that I was to political and my views would not fit in with what they were trying to do. I remember pleading with Mr. Peterson that as a openly Gay member of the Houston Police Department I felt it vital that I be allowed to participate, not solely based on the fact that I was openly gay but based on my years of experience working within the system. As you can guess my request fell on deaf ears. I am sure that I pointed out to Mr. Peterson that I felt Intracare was making a mistake excluding me from the panel and that I would do all in my power to make certain that if Intracare was going to teach Gay and Lesbian sensitivity training classes they must first be sensitive to those like myself within the department willing to risk everything in order to put together a program that would help bridge the gap between the Gay and Lesbian community of our city and the Houston Police Department.

The lunch I attended with Mr. Peterson and Mr. Lewis was the only time I met with anyone from Intracare Hospital.

I would now like to point out as a matter of record that I can remember having only one (1) telephone conversation with Mrs. Hardy of Intracare. According to the HPD report to Mayor and Council Mrs. Hardy was contacted by Sgt. H.L. Lawrence assigned to Planning and Research at HPD.

At the invitation of Earl Campa of the Houston Police Academy I was an observer at one of the training classes for cadets at the academy on April 23, 1992 from 8 am until noon.

After attending that class for the cadets I called Mrs. Hardy by phone and once again asked to be considered for participation on the panel pointing out that the cadets had ask many question that IntraCare staff members did not have the answer to and that as a dispatcher for the Montrose area, a member of the HPD since 1984, and an openly gay man I felt I could have provided the cadets with answers.

This phone conversation with Mrs. Hardy was, if I remember short and not very pleasant. I was once again told the answer in NO, and I made it plain to Mrs. Hardy that what Intracare was doing by keeping me off the panel was unfair not only to me but to the Gay and Lesbian community and that I would ask City Hall why the City of Houston had given a contract to Intracare to teach sensitivity training when they were being so rude and short with me. I remember Mrs. Hardy warning me that if I pushed the issue that I might jeopardize the program and that Intracare might lose it's contract. I told her that the only thing

I was concerned with was that whoever taught the class at the academy that it must be open to gay and lesbian members of the Houston Police Department willing to risk all to help make this very important change in the way the Houston Police dealt with the gay and lesbian community.

I pointed out to Mrs. Hardy that we would not allow someone from the outside to do a program aimed at the Black community and then excluded Black members of our department from the panel.

I pointed out to Mrs. Hardy that we would not allow someone from the outside to do a program aimed at the Hispanic community and then exclude Hispanic members of our department from the panel.

I pointed out to Mrs. Hardy that we would not allow someone from the outside to do a program aimed at the Asian community and then exclude Asian members of our department from the panel.

I pointed out to Mrs. Hardy that it was wrong for Intracare to say they were conducting Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity Training and be so insensitivity to me as an openly gay member of the Houston Police Department.

That single phone conversation was the only time I spoke to Mrs. Hardy.

In paragraph 2 lines 2-5 the report says that "Johnston participation on the panel was not considered due to the fact that two issues he insisted on including in his presentation are in direct conflict with established principals of the program as they now exist."

I have NEVER made a presentation to Mrs. Hardy or anyone else therefore I have no idea what she is referring to. I was asked by Mr. Peterson to work up a presentation to show Intracare but that was never done, therefore Mrs. Hardy's statement is false.

In paragraph 2 lines 5-9. reads, "Johnston's presentation includes an appeal to all gay and lesbian members of the Houston Police Department openly proclaim their sexual orientation."

That statement is ridiculous. Again I have never made a presentation to Mrs. Hardy or anyone else, I have no idea where she reached this conclusion.

I would like to add that from September 6, 1987 until November 14, 1991 as host of a weekly radio program, I begged more than once over the airwaves of public radio for someone, anyone working within the H.P.D. not to come out of the closet screaming to the world " I am Gay" but to find the courage to contact me and tell me, Buddy Johnston, "hey I'm gay or lesbian and although I can't come out the closet I want to let you know that I appreciate the work you are doing at KPFT."

Not one time did ANYONE every contact me and I personally feel it is because they, the Gay and Lesbian people within the HPD are living in constant fear that someone might find out their true sexual orientation.

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I would also like to say as a mater of record that during my life and especially during my weekly radio broadcast I did tell everyone that I feel coming out is a very liberating experience however it is each persons decision and must be done on each persons own time schedule. I believe that the practice know as OUTING is rude and crude and that Gay and Lesbian people live in enough fear without having to fear each other.

In paragraph 2 lines 10-11, reads "Johnston expressed a strong desire to include the religious persecution of gay and lesbian individuals in his presentation."

What presentation ?

Again that statement is ridiculous. I have never made a presentation to Mrs. Hardy or anyone else.

For the record I believe in the Constitution of the United States that guarantees us separation of Church and State.

In paragraph 3 lines 1-5, reads "Johnston credibility has suffered".

Mayor and members of council with all due respect, read the August 26, 1992 report. Why was I as a member of the Houston Police Department not ever contacted for the so called inquiry ?

I would submit to a polygraph in order to back up my facts if this Mayor and Council could request Mrs. Hardy on behalf of IntraCare to submit to the same. Whose credibility is in question here ? I have nothing to lose and a chance to help my department and my community bridge and ever widening gap. Mrs. Hardy and IntraCare could lose their contract with the City of Houston.

In paragraph 3 lines 2-4. reads, "on several occasions he untruthfully advised her that Earl Campa, Administrative Manager, Houston Police Academy, had approved Mr. Johnston's participation on the panel.."

I did tell Mrs. Hardy that Earl Campa had told me that he had no problem with me being involved on the panel but that the decision of who was to participate would be left completely up to IntraCare Hospital.

In paragraph 3 lines 4-5 reads, "Mr. Johnston claims to having previous instruction experience at the Houston Police Academy are likewise false. Mr. Campa confirmed that a check of Academy records indicates that Mr. Johnston has not been used as a primary instructor in any course for the Emergency Communications Division and also verified that Mr. Johnston has never been used as an instruction for in-service training in his capacity as a Senior Police Communication Operator."

I have never said that I was a regular instructor for the Houston Police Academy.

Again, I only spoke to Mrs. Hardy once by phone after attending the class for cadets held at the academy on April 23, 1992. From what I remember as a short phone conversation Mrs. Hardy certainly has a different version of that conversation than I do.

During the single lunch I had with Mr. Peterson and Mr. Lewis I am sure that I told them that while working with the Van Buren Police Department I was sent to Little Rock, Arkansas and became a certified instructor for the Breathalyzer 1000. I returned to Van Buren and held classes for the City, County and just about any other law enforcement agency that needed officers to attend such classes.

I am certain that I told Mr. Peterson and Mr. Lewis that as a Senior Police Communication Operator that one of my jobs is to train newly hired employees for work on the mics.

I would also like to ask Mr. Campa to once again search the academy training records because during an In-Service class at the Houston Police Academy for the supervisors of the Emergence Communication Division, as President of the Houston Police Support Personnel Union I was given an hour of time to discuss the unions role and goals with the Emergency Communication Division.

Mrs. Hardy did not attend the lunch that I had with Mr. Peterson and Mr. Lewis. I was not present with Mrs. Hardy when she met with them to discuss our lunch. I have no knowledge of what Mrs. Hardy was told by Mr. Peterson and Mr. Lewis as a result of their meeting.

For whatever reason IntraCare hospital continues to exclude me from working with them in this very important project.

I have worked very hard at trying to remain within the structure of the system in dealing with IntraCare however my patience has run out. I am hurt that as an employee of the City of Houston, with an outstanding job performance record I was never questioned by anyone at HPD while this *INQUIRY* was taking place.

In conclusion, I thank you for reading this. I expect that this will clear up some of the inaccuracies in the report sent to you on August 26, 1992.