



STATE OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

LETITIA JAMES  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DIVISION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE  
LAW ENFORCEMENT MISCONDUCT  
INVESTIGATIVE OFFICE

March 6, 2025

Chief Joseph Cecile  
Syracuse Police Department  
511 S. State Street  
Syracuse, NY 13202

*Via Email*

Re: Executive Law 75(5)(b) Referral of Police Officer Hannah Roebuck  
OAG Matter No. 1-794211317

Dear Chief Cecile,

The Office of the New York State Attorney General has reviewed your agency's referral of Police Officer Hannah Roebuck pursuant to Executive Law Section §75(5)(b) from July 2019 to June 2024.<sup>1</sup> Based on our review, we have not made a finding of a pattern or practice of misconduct on the part of Officer Roebuck.

However, we identified significant shortcomings regarding Officer Roebuck's response to a March 7, 2020 incident involving a woman alleging attempted sexual assault (Incident No. 20-187840).

On March 7, 2020, at or around 1:42 am, the Complainant, a 37-year-old Black female, called 911 alleging that an individual attempted to sexually assault her, but she was able to fight him off by using a pair of scissors. Upon responding to the home of the alleged perpetrator, which was where the Complainant apparently had been staying for the past few days, officers found the Complainant sitting on a bed in a side room, appearing upset. The alleged perpetrator was standing in the hallway, a few feet away from the Complainant. As another officer was interviewing the Complainant, Officer Roebuck interrupted the Complainant and asked, "What's her issue?" After the other officer responded, Officer Roebuck said, within earshot of the Complainant and in a sarcastic manner, "Great. Great. So what's the plan for the evening? I mean..." Subsequently, Officer Roebuck told the Complainant to be quiet because it was the alleged perpetrator's "time to speak."

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the referral, Officer Roebuck's last name was Brauchle.

When the officers engaged with the alleged perpetrator, it appeared that he was not proficient in English, but they did not seek interpretive assistance or ask whether nearby family members could help interpret.

Officers advised the Complainant to leave the home and to contact someone who could help her in doing so. When the Complainant asked to press charges, an officer told her that both parties had made bad decisions and instead encouraged the Complainant to find stable living conditions.

A supervisor arrived on scene while the Complainant was exiting the home. As the Complainant told the supervisor that the alleged perpetrator tried to rape her, Officer Roebuck said, “no he didn’t,” within earshot of the Complainant. It does not appear that any further investigative steps were taken by Officer Roebuck or other officers, apart from drafting an incident report. The officers did not prepare a Domestic Incident Report. A supervisor who responded to the call concluded that the facts, as outlined by the Complainant, did not amount to a crime, and that officers were professional and acted in accordance with SPD policies and procedures.

Officer Roebuck’s actions in connection with this incident were problematic in several ways. From the outset, she was discourteous and dismissive of the Complainant in violation of SPD Policies 320.5.9(f) and 318.2, which respectively prohibit discourteous and disrespectful language and require officers to show compassion and understanding to victims. The questioning of the Complainant was conducted in the presence of the alleged perpetrator, her self-disclosed history of prostitution was held against her, and the officers did not take victim or witness statements, including from witnesses who might have corroborated the Complainant’s allegations. Given the sensitive nature of the Complainant’s allegations, the officers should have approached her with a more sensitive response, remaining objective and removing personal judgements from their assessment of those allegations.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, Officer Roebuck and the other officers did not complete a Domestic Incident Report, as required by SPD Rules and Regulations, V. 1, Article 3, § 26.13 and Executive Law § 837(15). They also did not provide the Complainant with information about counseling, transportation, or shelter information as required by Executive Law § 625-a, SPD Procedure 309.1(b) and SPD Policy 318.5(a).

Finally, SPD Policy 332 requires SPD officers to make reasonable efforts to provide language assistance to people who are Limited English Proficiency. Here, the officers did not seek to utilize an interpreter or ask any bilingual family members to translate to facilitate communication with the alleged perpetrator.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., *Addressing Sexual Offenses and Misconduct by Law Enforcement: Executive Guide*, Int’l Ass’n of Chiefs of Police, June 3, 2011, <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/document/addressing-sexual-offenses-and-misconduct-by-law-enforcement-executive-guide>; *Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias*, US Dep’t of Justice Office of Violence Against Women, May 2022, <https://www.justice.gov/media/1224961/dl?inline>; Pocket Guide for Police Response to Sexual Assault, New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault, p. 6, [https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc\\_archives/sartkit/tools/lawenforcement/Pocket%20Guide%20for%20Police%20Response%20to%20Sexual%20Assault.pdf](https://www.ncjrs.gov/ovc_archives/sartkit/tools/lawenforcement/Pocket%20Guide%20for%20Police%20Response%20to%20Sexual%20Assault.pdf).

Given the findings described above, we recommend that SPD retrain Officer Roebuck and the other involved officers on SPD policies regarding courtesy, responding to allegations of sexual assault, and interviewing victims of a crime.

Thank you,

Tyler Nims  
Chief, Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigative Office  
New York State Office of the Attorney General