

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL *Illinois State Toll Highway Authority*

NOTICE OF POSTING OIG Case # IG-2017-011 Respondent: Dionne Wrenn

Pursuant to 605 ILCS 10/8.5 (e)(3), the attached redacted summary report is being posted to the Illinois Toll Highway Authority's public website. As required by law, the Office of the Inspector General for the Illinois Toll Highway Authority sent a copy of this redacted report to the Respondent to provide suggested redactions or a written response. Respondent provided a response within the allocated time and requested that her response be published with this report, and that response can be found at the end of this document.

OIG issued a summary report on October 26, 2017 that described its investigation, which established reasonable cause to find that Respondent failed to return the \$300.00 bank provided at the start of her shift before leaving work. The evidence including video recordings that show the Respondent with the bank bag in the booth, but the bag is not subsequently seen and the receipts reflect a \$300.00 shortage for that same day. Under these circumstances the money was missing either due to gross negligence or intentional misappropriation, and OIG recommended that the Tollway impose discipline up to and including discharge

Tollway Operations initiated termination proceedings, and, after reviewing Respondent's explanation, it decided to terminate Respondent's employment.



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OIG Case # IG-2017-011 October 26, 2017

This report provides a summary of evidence set out in the attached investigative materials, and the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG's) analysis of that evidence. An index of these investigative materials is attached.

I. INTRODUCTION

On August 14, 2017, **Constant**, Toll Audit Manager reported that he had identified a \$300.00 cash shortage associated with the collection activity of Toll Collector Dionne Wrenn (Wrenn) on July 9, 2017 at Plaza 45. **Constant** provided a detailed account of activity he saw on booth and plaza video recordings that showed Wrenn preparing her bank bag and her collected funds deposit bag in the booth, leaving her booth with her personal items (including a large bag/purse), and then transferring the collected funds deposit bag to her supervisor

noted that the bank bag was never seen in the plaza video. Following his normal protocol for these situations, said he would arrange for a physical search of the plaza and conduct an audit of the plaza funds.

When interviewed by OIG investigators, **Sectors** confirmed that he never received Wrenn's bank deposit, and denied taking the money himself. But **Sectors** conceded that he did not follow proper procedure when he failed to accurately complete paperwork as he should have when Wrenn left early that day. In her interview with OIG investigators, Wrenn could not explain how the bank money was missing, and was unsure if she turned it in, but she denied taking the money.

Based on this investigation, the facts show that Wrenn's \$300.00 bank from July 9, 2017 cannot be accounted for and is missing, and OIG finds that there is reasonable cause to believe that Wrenn either acted with gross negligence or misappropriated the money because it was last seen in her possession. The investigation further established that **Security** failed to follow Tollway Operations procedures to confirm that Wrenn returned the bank. For these violations, OIG recommends that the Tollway impose discipline up to and including discharge as commensurate with these findings.

II. <u>APPLICABLE RULES</u>

A. The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 1: General Policies and Responsibilities, Section A: "Fundamental Principles", provides in relevant part:

The Tollway requires public trust and confidence in its employees. Integrity is essential. Employees must act according to the highest ethical principles and standards, in accordance with the Tollway's Code of Ethics, the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct, and all applicable local, state and federal laws imposing standards of ethical behavior. Employees should avoid all situations that could give the appearance of conflict of interest or impropriety. Violations will be grounds for discipline up to and including discharge.

B. Toll Collectors Introduction Booklet; Cash Handling Section Page 7, provides in relevant part:

<u>Secure money at all times</u>. Do not mix your money and the Tollway issued bank or the collected tolls. Do not place money inside pockets, coats use a transport bag. Do not leave money unattended for any reason.

C. Toll Services Department Administrative Directive 4.08, provides in relevant part:

Each shift supervisor shall ensure that the following is adhered to:

1. Each collector's bank is returned to the Plaza Change Fund before the end of the collector's shift. Upon receipt of collector's bank, it is the shift supervisor's responsibility to count and verify the bank in front of said collector returning his or her bank.

D. The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline, Section A: Employee Conduct, provides in relevant part:

The Tollway expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of both the employees and the organization. The rules of conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to follow Tollway or Departmental policies or procedures, including safety rules
- Neglect of duties

E. The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline, Section L: Theft and Misappropriation, provides in relevant part:

Any employee who commits theft or misappropriation of Tollway property, participates in the theft or misappropriation of property belonging to others while on duty or present on Tollway premises, or has knowledge of such a theft or misappropriation and fails to promptly report it, may be subject to discipline up to an including discharge.

In making the determination to discipline a Tollway employee for theft or misappropriation, the following factors shall be considered:

- Whether the employee is in a position of trust and his/her integrity may reasonably be questioned.
- Whether the employee has responsibility for public funds and his/her honesty may reasonably be called in to question.
- Whether the employee has brought discredit upon the Tollway and his/her continued employment would erode the public's confidence in the Tollway.
- Whether the employee has had unexplained cash shortages as evidenced by audit reports.

III. BACKGROUND

A. Complaint

On August 14, 2017, contacted OIG to report a cash shortage at Plaza 45 involving collector Dionne Wrenn. indicated that he felt that the money may have been misplaced at the plaza, so he said he would first have a physical search of the plaza conducted and then audit the plaza. In early September, informed the OIG that the search was unsuccessful, and he explained that his initial assessment that the money had somehow been misplaced was incorrect and he suspected that the money had been stolen. If explained that video recordings from July 9 that he had previously reviewed showed that the bank bag was in Wrenn's possession in the booth but never seen again, and the missing \$300.00 was not accounted for in subsequent Plaza 45 deposit activity. Furthermore, audit established that the money had not been returned to the Tollway as of September 5.

B. Subject/s

1. Dionne Wrenn

Tollway records reflect that Wrenn began working at the Tollway as a Seasonal Toll Collector from November 2011 - January 2012. The Tollway re-hired Wrenn as a Part-time Toll Collector in March 2012. She has generally been assigned to Plaza 45, and on July 9, 2017 she was scheduled to work from 6:00 am until 2:00 pm, although her Kronos record indicates she left work due to an injury on duty. Her employment evaluations from 2016 and 2017 indicated that

she needed improvement in areas including job proficiency, quality and accuracy, and attendance. She was disciplined between 2015 and 2017 seven times, including two suspensions, for such things as: performance, unsecured funds and attendance. On September 28, 2017, following Wrenn's OIG interview, Toll Operations placed Wrenn on suspension pending investigation.

2.

Tollway records reflect that **began** began working at the Tollway as a plaza supervisor in May 2012. He currently supervises Plaza 45, and on July 9, 2017 he worked from 5:40 am until 2:23 pm. His employment evaluations are all satisfactory or better and there is no record of any discipline.

IV. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

A. Documents

- 1. July 9, 2017, Plaza Change Fund (TC-42) report reflecting a \$300.00 shortage for Wrenn's July 9, 2017 issued bank.
- 2. July 9, 2017, PH Cash Report screen shot reflecting the issuance of the \$300.00 bank to Wrenn at 6:00 a.m. and return of the bank at 11:03 a.m.¹
- 3. Email July 9, 2017 at 2:10 p.m. from the total to Toll Audit and District Supervisor indicating Wrenn did not turn in her bank and he believed it would be in Wrenn's collected funds deposit bag.
- 4. July 9, 2017, Unusual Occurrence Report (UOR) (TC-8) written by indicating that Wrenn's \$300.00 bank should be in with her collected deposit.
- 5. July 9, 2017, Toll Collector Performance Report for Wrenn showing no overage in her deposit. The lack in an overage demonstrates that her \$300.00 bank was not accidentally included with her collected funds deposit.
- 6. July 9, 2017, Collector Bank Issuance Report (TC-126) showing Wrenn's \$300.00 bank as not returned.
- 7. Email September 5, 2017 at 2:39 p.m. from entitled Plaza 45 audit. detailed several concerns about money tray security, and also identified outstanding TC-42's including on for \$300 on July 9.
- 8. September 3, 2017, Collector Bank Issuance Report (TC-126) showing Wrenn's \$300.00 bank as returned.
- 9. September 24, 2017, Collector Bank Issuance Report (TC-126) showing Wrenn's \$300.00 bank as returned.

¹ Wrenn departed the plaza at approximately 8:58 a.m.

B. Video Footage²

- 1. July 9, 2017, Plaza 45, Lane 72, 8:07 a.m. 8:12 a.m. showing Wrenn in her booth preparing her \$300.00 bank bag with her last name written on it and also preparing her collected funds deposit bag.
- 2. July 9, 2017, Plaza 45, Count Room, 8:50 a.m. 8:52 a.m. showing Wrenn retrieving her money tray and large bag/purse from the count room.
- 3. July 9, 2017 Plaza 45, Parking Lot, 8:56 a.m. showing Wrenn exiting the plaza with her large bag/purse and entering her vehicle.
- 4. September 3, 2017, Plaza 45, Lane 72, 10:05 a.m. showing Wrenn in her booth preparing her \$300.00 bank bag with her last name written on it.
- 5. September 3, 2017, Plaza 45, Lane 72, 10:07 a.m. showing Wrenn exiting her booth with the \$300.00 bank bag with her last name written on it.
- 6. September 3, 2017, Plaza 45, Supervisor's Office, 10:08 a.m. 10:10 a.m. showing Wrenn turning in her \$300 bank bag to the second s
- 7. September 24, 2017, Plaza 45, Lane 71, 10:22 a.m. showing Wrenn in her booth preparing her \$300.00 bank bag with her last name written on it and exiting the booth.
- 8. September 24, 2017, Plaza 45, Supervisor's Office, 10:23 a.m. 10:25 a.m. showing Wrenn turning in her \$300.00 bank bag to

C. Interviews



On September 28, 2017, OIG Investigators interviewed to the second secon

In summary, stated the following:

confirmed that he is the Plaza Supervisor at Plaza 45 and that his responsibilities include the plaza change fund. Supervises Dionne Wrenn at Plaza 45. He recalled July 9, 2017 because Wrenn left her shift early after she apparently tripped near her booth and didn't feel well. Stated Wrenn did not turn in her issued bank that day, and he initially presumed that she must have included her bank with her collected funds deposit. Stated Wrenn's \$300.00 bank. Admitted that he had not actually received Wrenn's bank, but he claimed that he assumed her bank had been mistakenly included with her collected funds deposit, and he made

² As discussed more fully in the **sector** interview summary, plaza video between 8:12 am and 8:50 am was automatically overwritten before it could be saved; however **sector** provided a detailed account of what he observed on the video before it had been overwritten.

the incorrect entry so the change fund would balance in the PH Cash system. Investigators told that the \$300.00 bank was not in Wrenn's collected funds deposit bag and never made it to the Tollway. In the stated that Wrenn must have stolen it. When asked if he took the missing \$300.00 and the denied taking it.

2. Dionne Wrenn

On September 28, 2017, OIG Investigators interviewed Dionne Wrenn (Wrenn), Part Time Toll Collector providing her voluntary advisements for union employees, orally and in writing, which she acknowledged understanding. At that point, Wrenn asked, "Is this about stealing money?" Wrenn requested and was provided union representation. Wrenn was asked, orally and in writing, for consent to audio record the interview. Wrenn's union representative, advised Wrenn not to audio record the interview and Wrenn declined to audio record.

In summary, Wrenn stated the following:

Wrenn recalled working on July 9, 2017 at Plaza 45 because that was the day she tripped and went home early but did not recall when she left. Investigators asked Wrenn if she remembered turning in her \$300.00 bank. She initially said that she had taken a break that morning and thinks she turned it in then. But when reminded that she had left at 8:56 am, Wrenn then became less certain of returning the bank, using words like 'supposed' and 'guessed.' When asked again if she did turn it in to her supervisor **and the second for**, Wrenn said, "I'm hoping he told me to turn it in." After she was told that the bank was not accounted for, Wrenn said she must have turned it in. When asked if she might have left the money in her tray and then found it later Wrenn said no. Wrenn denied stealing the \$300.00 bank saying it was too risky, and she opined that if she did steal it, it would be on video.

3.

On October 6, 2017, OIG Investigator interviewed interviewed interviewed, Toll Audit Manager providing him administrative advisements for non-union employees, orally and in writing, which he acknowledged understanding. Was asked, orally and in writing, for consent to audio record the interview. We declined having the interview audio recorded.

In summary, stated the following:

As part of his Toll Audit duties, **but** identified a shortage of \$300.00 in Plaza 45's change fund from July 9, 2017, which he traced back to Wrenn's bank, and he initially believed the money was missing or misplaced. According to **but**, missing money is not uncommon, and, in his experience, banks and deposits are sometimes simply forgotten or left unattended by collectors. In those situations, **but** has found that a search of the plaza usually turns up the missing funds. However, in this case, **but** requested search did not find the funds, and his subsequent audit of plaza funds established that the money never made it to the Tollway, and he then suspected theft.

explained that, at the time he identified a \$300.00 shortage, he reviewed relevant video from July 9, 2017. According to **100**, the video showed Wrenn in the lane 2 toll booth shortly

before she left work, and during that time she handled three clear plastic bags that collectors use to return and deposit money. One bag had her last name written in large letters on it, and explained that this is the bag that collectors use to return their bank, and is called either the change fund bag or the bank bag. At Plaza 45, collectors typically start their shifts with a bank of \$300.00 to make change, and they return that money when they have collected sufficient toll revenue; generally on a break. The video also shows Wrenn preparing two other clear plastic bags, which said were the deposit bags used by collectors to turn in any tolls collected while in the booth, and they are referred to as the collected funds deposit bags containing currency and coins. said that the video then showed Wrenn collecting all three clear plastic bags, her money tray and a personal large bag/purse and departing the booth when she is relieved by another Toll Collector. said that video next showed Wrenn entering the plaza count room and setting down her money tray, the two collected funds deposit bags and her large bag/purse. did not see the bank bag marked with her name. The video then showed Wrenn take her collected funds deposit bags and enter the supervisor's office where she scanned her collected funds deposit bags in the presence of her supervisor, did not see the . bank bag marked with her name while Wrenn was in the supervisor's office. Wrenn then left the supervisor's office and completed her deposit by placing the collected funds deposit bags in the safe. Wrenn left the count room for approximately 27 minutes leaving her money tray and her noted that nobody entered the count room during that time. large bag/purse unattended. saw Wrenn return to the count room, retrieve her money tray, and large bag/purse, and depart the count room. Approximately 6 minutes later Wrenn is seen walking to her vehicle carrying several personal items including the large bag/purse previously visible in the video.

noted that once Wrenn left her booth with all three clear plastic bags, the bank bag is not seen again. explained that all of the video he originally viewed was no longer available because some portions had been automatically overwritten since he last viewed it to free up storage space on the camera servers. saved the three segments of remaining video off the server and it includes: 1) video of Wrenn in her booth at the end of her shift, 2) video of Wrenn retrieving the money tray and her personal items, and 3) video of Wrenn walking to her vehicle in the parking lot carrying several personal items including the large bag/purse.

OIG asked to access and review video footage from more recent Sundays that Wrenn and worked together to determine how Wrenn made her deposits and returned her bank on days there were no shortages. The accessed and reviewed video from September 3, 2017 and September 24, 2017, and provided copies to the OIG. The video shows, on each of those days Wrenn in her booth preparing a clear plastic bank bag marked with her name, and subsequently handing the bank bag to the supervisor's office between 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. during her second break.

V. ANALYSIS

Tollway records reflect that the \$300.00 bank provided to Wrenn at the start of her shift on July 9, 2017 was never returned to the Tollway as required. The facts gleaned from this investigation show that on July 9, 2017, Wrenn started work around 6:00 am, but left early after she tripped near her booth and didn't feel well. Video shows Wrenn preparing her bank bag and the toll collections deposit bags in the booth. Tollway told the OIG that he observed video that is no longer available and it showed Wrenn handing the collected funds deposit bags to the bank bag and then putting them in the safe. To noted that none of the plaza video footage showed the bank bag after it was last visible in the booth video.

have at least five years of Tollway experience and are Dionne Wrenn and well-aware of their duties and how to perform them. Tollway protocol requires Toll Collectors to return the bank bag to the supervisor at some point during their shift after they have collected sufficient tolls. This is something that Wrenn and know how to do, as video from Plaza 45 from days when no shortage was reported depicts a normal pattern where Wrenn prepares the bank bag with her name on it in the booth and then subsequently hands it to at the plaza. Yet Wrenn's bank bag with \$300.00, last seen in Wrenn's possession, went missing on July 9, 2017 and the \$300.00 has not been accounted for or located. Both Wrenn and deny taking the money, but both bear responsibility for its disappearance. The investigation developed evidence that establishes reasonable cause to believe that Wrenn either was negligent and misplaced the money or took the money, and that failed to follow procedures for the return of the bank that allowed Wrenn's negligence or theft to remain undetected.

told the OIG that he reviewed video that showed Wrenn prepare the \$300.00 bank but marked in the PH Cash System that he did never hand it to . Although receive the \$300.00 bank, it is clear that the bank was not included with the collected funds deposit because there continues to be a \$300.00 shortage in Plaza 45's change fund. admitted to the OIG that he never actually received Wrenn's bank deposit, and that admission is supported by the records. First, the PH Cash system reflects that received Wrenn's bank deposit at 11:30 a.m.; this is clearly incorrect as Wrenn had made her collected funds deposit and departed the plaza several hours earlier. Second, sent an email that same day to his supervisor admitting that he forgot to collect Wrenn's \$300.00 bank and expressing his belief that the bank must be in her collected funds deposit. Third, the handwritten TC-126 form completed by and maintained at the plaza does not include a checkmark next to Wrenn's bank, which indicates that never received her bank.

Wrenn bears the most responsibility for her failure to return the \$300.00 bank. The review of then-available video showed Wrenn in her toll booth preparing her bank in a clear plastic bag with her name written on it, and once she leaves the tollbooth, the \$300.00 bank is never seen again. Although she denied taking the money, she could only provide vague answers when asked about whether she returned the money. These explanations starkly contrast to her certainty at making her collected funds deposit, and are especially instructive since it is clear that, on days when she had no shortages, Wrenn prepared the bank bag in her booth as she had on July 9 and

then she is seen handing the bag to **sector of** in the plaza during a break usually several hours after her shift start. Wrenn's inability to provide more certain answers, coupled with **sector** not seeing an exchange on July 9, strongly suggests that Wrenn never returned the bank, especially since the bank bag was last seen in Wrenn's possession in the booth. Wrenn's recent discipline for unsecured funds, coupled with her most recent evaluation indicating a need to improve work accuracy and completeness, reflects prior issues with her inattentiveness to Tollway funds, and could have provided motivation to not admit even an inadvertent misplacement of the bank.

In addition, addition actions did not meet the expectations for the Plaza Supervisor. admitted that he made a false entry into PH Cash so that the change fund would balance because he thought the bank may have mistakenly been included in the collected fund deposit. The explained that his lapse in protocol resulted because he was working quickly to handle Wrenn's injury-on-duty issue. The fact that on the same day he sent an email to his supervisor advising about the incorrect entry shows that he took some corrective steps and supports his claim he did not take the money. However, admits that he did not attempt to contact Wrenn after he learned that her bank had not been included with her collected funds deposit. The fact shows actions fall below expectations for Plaza Supervisors and constitute violations of Tollway and Operations policies.

VI. <u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>

This investigation established reasonable cause to believe that Wrenn never turned in her \$300 issued bank and never collected it in violation of Tollway and Operations policies.

For these violations, OIG recommends that Dionne Wrenn be disciplined up to and including discharge for her failure to secure and return Tollway funds, which constituted at best Gross Negligence for failure to follow policy and procedure, creating the appearance of impropriety and neglecting her duties as a Toll Collector, and at worst Theft/Misappropriation of Tollway funds.

In addition, OIG recommends that **be** disciplined for Negligence for failing to follow Tollway policy and procedure for securing and collecting Tollway funds.

VII. RULE VIOLATIONS

The following are sustained rule violations:

A. Dionne Wrenn

1. <u>The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures</u> <u>Manual, Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline, Section A: Employee</u> <u>Conduct.</u>

Failure to follow Tollway or Departmental policies or procedures, including safety rules.

Neglect of Duties

- 2. Toll Collectors Introduction Booklet; Cash Handling Section Page 7
- 3. <u>The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures</u> <u>Manual, Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline, Section L: Theft and</u> <u>Misappropriation</u>
- 4. <u>The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures</u> <u>Manual, Chapter 1: General Policies and Responsibilities, Section A: "Fundamental</u> <u>Principles."</u>

B.

1. <u>The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures</u> <u>Manual, Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline, Section A: Employee</u> <u>Conduct.</u>

Failure to follow Tollway or Departmental policies or procedures, including safety rules.

Neglect of Duties

2. Toll Services Department Administrative Directive 4.08.



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL *Illinois State Toll Highway Authority*

RESPONDENT'S SUGGESTED REDACTION/PUBLIC RESPONSE OIG Case # IG-2017-011 Respondent: Dionne Wrenn

Pursuant to 605 ILCS 10/8.5 (e)(3), the attached Response of Dionne Wrenn is being made public at her request.



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Theodor J. Hengesbach – Inspector General

Date, February 26, 2018

RESPONDENT'S SUGGESTIONS FOR REDACTION/PUBLIC RESPONSE

Re: Dionne Wrenn

OIG Case # IG-17-011

Please check the appropriate line and sign and date below. If no line is checked the Office of Inspector General will not make your response public when the redacted report is made public.

Below is my public response. Please make this response public when the summary report is made public; or

Below are my suggestions for redaction. I do not wish for these suggestions to be made public.

one Wrenn

Respondent's Signature

Instructions: Please write or type suggestions for redaction or a public response on the lines

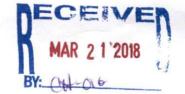
For a Hendance. I only received my Second Suspension pending in vestigation for shortage of \$300.00.

Return this form and any attachments by March 26, 2018.

to:

Office of the Inspector General Illinois State Toll Highway Authority 2700 Ogden Avenue Downers Grove, IL 60515

Or fax documents to fax number 630-795-7661



2700 Ogden Avenue Downers Grove, IL 60515 p. 630.241.6800 Ext. 1300 f. 630.795.7661 **OIG Hotline 866.786.5544**

March 19,2018

RESPONDENT'S SUGGESTION FOR REDACTION/PUBLIC RESPONSE

Re: Dionne Wrenn

OIG Case # IG-17-011

Below is my public response. Please make this response public when the summary report is made public.

I Dionne Wrenn was only suspended one time it was for attendance. I only received my second suspensions, was until September 28, 2017 when I was suspension pending investigation for shortages of \$300.00

On July 9, 2017 when I had the accident in my toll booth. Before I left the plaza 45 I saw the supervisor Micheal Montgomery looking around the office as puzzled and he was using profanity if he had misplace something as he was balancing the safe. I asked supervisor Micheal what was wrong he stated nothing was wrong so I left the building .

On September 28, 2017, OIG Investigators interviewed me Dionne Wrenn, Part Time Toll Collector. At that point, Wrenn asked, "Is this about stealing money?" I never said this statement because I never knew what I was coming to CA or the inspectors office for. I never knew any money was missing until I was in the inspectors office so the above statement about me say "Is this about stealing money?' Is untrue.

In Summary, Wrenn stated the following: Wrenn denied stealing the \$300.00 bank saying it was too risky. I never said this statement.

The statement I said was why would I risk my job for \$300.00 or taken any monies at the tollway.

