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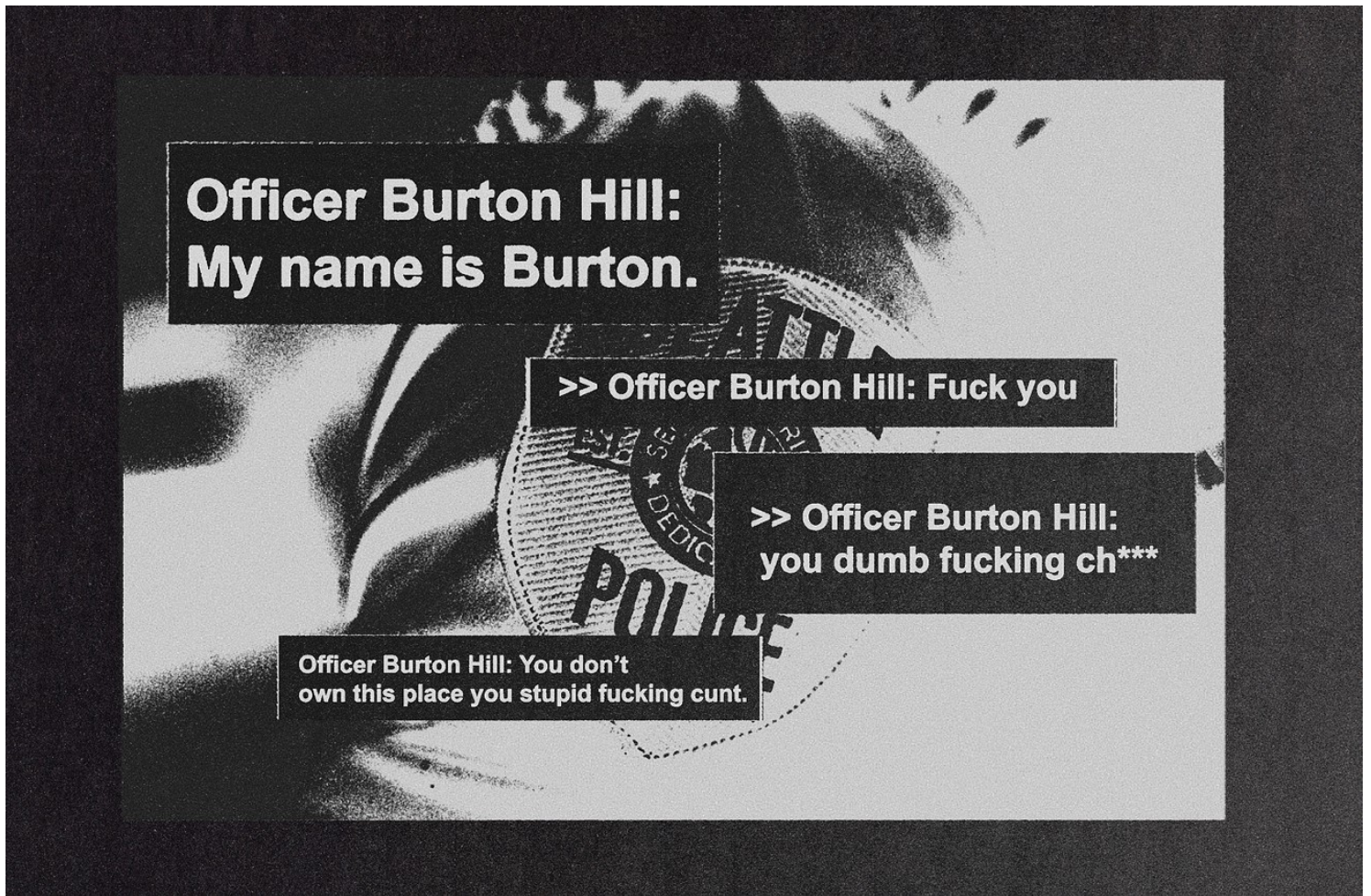
NEWS

Sep 22, 2023 at 9:00 am

Seattle Police Officer Hurls Racist Slur at Chinese-American Neighbor

Audio Captures a Cop and His Wife Arguing with the Neighbor, Who Is an
Elderly School Bus Driver

ASHLEY NERBOVIG



Officer Burton Hill, caught on audio hurling racist and sexist slurs at his elderly Chinese-American neighbor. PHOTO OF PATCH: LESTER BLACK. DESIGN: ANTHONY KEO

During a confrontation last year, a Seattle Police officer hurled racist slurs and sexist language at his elderly Chinese-American neighbor. He also appeared to threaten to put her in jail. The woman recorded the audio of the incident, and a Chinese social services organization recently filed a complaint with the Office of Police Accountability (OPA). In the past, the OPA has recommended firing officers for making derogatory comments or using [racial slurs](#), even when [not on duty](#).

The audio serves as a snapshot of what court records describe as an ongoing campaign by Seattle Police Officer Burton Hill, who is also a realtor, and his wife, Agnes Miggins, to drive the woman, Zhen Jin, out of the Kenmore

condominiums where they all live. Jin, who works as a Seattle Public School bus driver, also lives with and takes care of her blind, elderly Palestinian-American uncle. Neither Jin nor her uncle speak English fluently.

King County District Court granted both Jin and Miggins reciprocal protection orders against one another. Miggins sought her protection order first; however, at a February court hearing Jin's attorney argued that Miggins wanted to use the court system as part of a harassment campaign against Jin. As part of the evidence, the attorney played a clip of Hill calling Jin a “dumb fucking ch***.”

The Argument

The court records and a 20-minute long audio recording obtained by *The Stranger* lay out the story of that alleged harassment campaign.

One night in August of 2022, Hill and Miggins bang on Jin's door and initiate an argument with her and her uncle. The couple and Jin share a covered balcony entrance and stairway, and their front doors open a few feet away from one another.

Seattle Police Officer Burton Hill Hurls Anti-Asian Slur...



Broadly speaking, in the audio recording the couple accuse Jin of trying to kill their dog by leaving chicken bones outside in the condo's courtyard, which Jin denies. They also constantly dismiss Jin as an actor in the conversation because she doesn't own the property. (In fact, she and her uncle both own the property, according to King County property records, but an error made it appear as if the condo belonged only to her uncle. Property records also show Hill does not own any condo at the complex.) Anyway, in response to the accusations, Jin's uncle tries to explain his allergy to dogs while she defends herself against the couple's attacks.

At one point during the argument, Miggins says Jin is "nothing" because she doesn't own the condo. Hill then tells Jin's uncle that she's a problem, and she laughs nervously before saying, "it's mine."

In response to her laugh, Hill insults her with a racial slur used against East Asians: "You think that's funny, you dumb fucking ch***?"

At another point, Hill says, "You don't own this place you stupid fucking cunt."

Hill and Miggins also level unfounded accusations about Jin stealing money from her uncle. After making those claims, Hill tells Jin, "You're going to jail."

Later in the recording, Hill also mocks the uncle's accent, and Miggins tells the uncle that she knows "...Your country doesn't like dogs."

In the recording, Hill says his name is "Burton," and he mentions he works in [real estate](#). When Jin's uncle says he knows Hill works as a police officer, Hill does not contradict him. A July 2023 SPD roster shows that Burton J. Hill works as an officer in the department's Southwest Precinct. Voter registration

data shows Hill's address as the condo across from Jin. Neither Hill nor Miggins returned our calls for comment. SPD declined to comment on the audio recording until after the completion of the OPA investigation.

Update, 1:20 pm: In a statement, Seattle Police Chief Adrian Diaz said he listened to the audio and then decided to put officer Hill on paid administrative leave. He also told staff to review the cop's arrest and investigation history. Finally, he apologized and said, "We clearly have more work to do to build trust between the department and the people we serve."

The OPA has opened six investigations into Hill since he first joined SPD in 2016, including the most recent one involving his comments about Jin. In his five previous OPA cases, four out of the ten allegations against him involved bias-policing complaints, though the OPA sustained none of those accusations.

Jin and her uncle also declined to provide comment for the story.

An Alleged Harassment Campaign Against Chinese-Americans

King County District Court records show the animosity between Hill, Miggins, and Jin began over complaints about the couple allowing their dog to roam the condo complex unleashed. Because Jin's uncle can't see, he worried the dog could become a hazard for him. Jin tried to resolve the issue through the condo's homeowner's association, but Miggins is the president of the association, said Mia Niu, a community liaison for the Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC).

However, after the court granted Miggins a protection order in February, Jin's attorneys said Miggins became bolder about harassing Jin.

crimes. For a vulnerable adult, include incidents or threats of abandonment, abuse, neglect and/or financial exploitation. Include specific date/s and details of the incident.

I live in an 8 Unit Condominium. zhen has called me names, spit on my dog and threatened to spit on me. zhen is emailing all homeowners attacking my character, listing untrue exusations. zhen has harassed me since this summer 2022. I am worried walking by her not knowing what she may say or do.

17. Past Incidents. What happened in the past that makes you want a protection order?

Jin denied the claims Miggins lays out here, and Miggins did not provide any of the emails to the court.

Jin filed for her own order of protection against Miggins in April 2023 after a series of incidents, including Miggins allegedly calling the Seattle Public School district to falsely tell them that her order of protection prevented Jin from being near children.

The court served a notice about the upcoming protection order hearing to the couple's address at the end of April, and a man matching Hill's description answered the door. The process server said the man would not give his name, but he did identify himself as the co-resident and he refused to take the documents. When the process server left the papers by the door, the man said, "This was not considered served." Courts fairly regularly ask cops to serve court summons for orders of protection, making this an odd way for Hill to respond to the process server.

leaving the same with John Doe, I delivered the documents to an individual who refused to give their name who identified themselves as the co-resident. The individual tried to refuse service by refusing to take documents and did not state reason for refusal (documents left, seen by subject). The individual appeared to be a gray-haired white male contact 35-45 years of age, 5'10"-6'0" tall and weighing 200-240 lbs. A man answered the door. I asked for the subject, he said she was not home. I asked if she lived there, he said yes. I asked if he resided there, he said yes. I asked if he would mind if I left the documents for her, he said yes he would mind. I told him I was required to leave the paperwork. He told me to leave them at the door. Which I did as he watched. He told me that this was not considered served. I told him it was because they both resided. He sarcastically said sure. I departed., a person of suitable age and discretion who stated they reside at the

Strange behavior.

At the May hearing for Jin's temporary order of protection against Miggins, King County District Court Judge Raul Martinez said that Miggins's call to the district amounted to a direct attempt to interfere with Jin's employment, which gave the court enough evidence to grant her an order of protection against Miggins. Judge Martinez noted the "harassment also has strong overtones of racism." In June, a King County District Court granted Jin a one-year order of protection against Miggins.

On that same day in June, a judge granted an order of protection against Miggins to a different Chinese-American woman who used to live in the condo complex as well. That woman told the court that Miggins's actions caused her to move out of the condo complex. Judge Pro Tem Stephen Rochon said Miggins's alleged harassment in that case was motivated by "racial animus." That woman also did not provide comment and asked *The Stranger* not to include her name in this story.

In one of her order-of-protection petitions, Jin noted that her security camera caught Miggins saying "one down, one to go" after the other Chinese-American woman moved out of the complex.

In Jin's petition to the court, she described the alleged harassment as "traumatizing" and said the ordeal had undermined "my confidence that the judicial system can protect me."

 Comments 26



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Ashley Nerbovig



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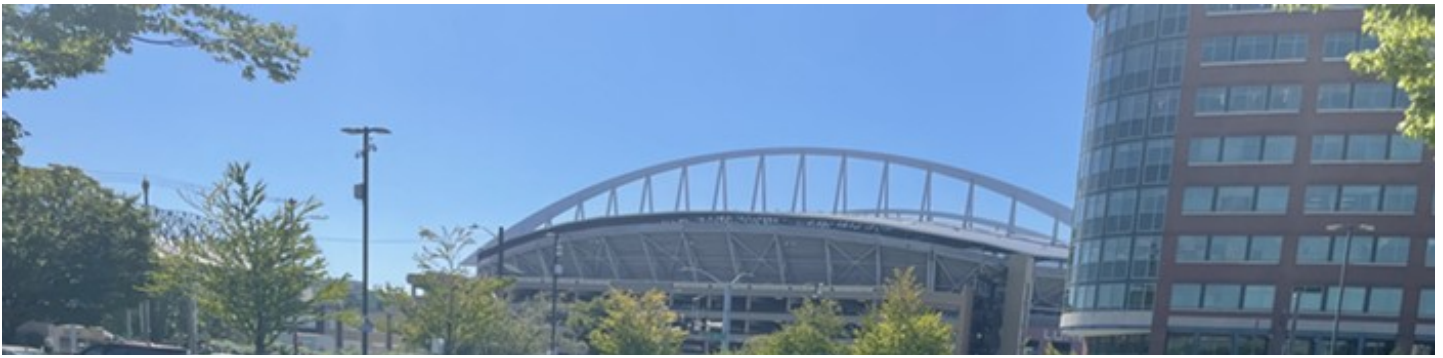
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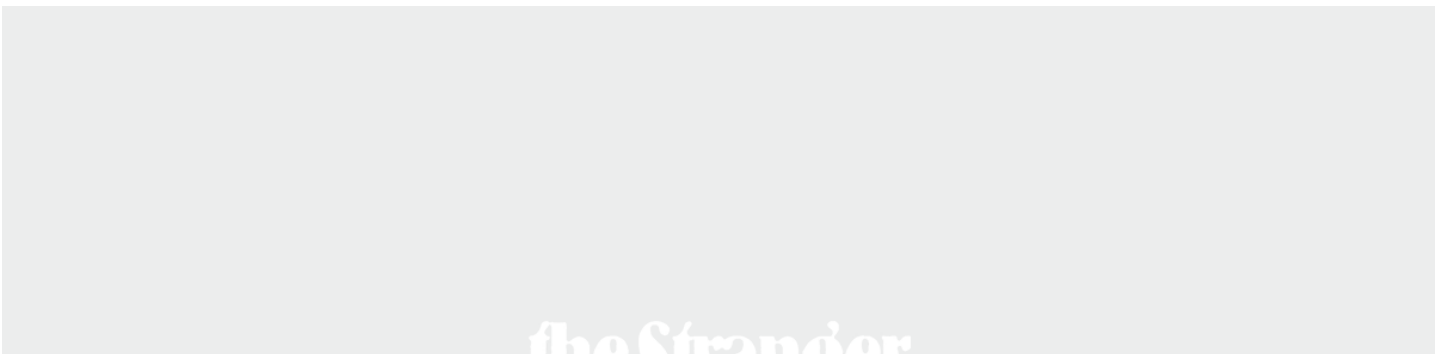
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