



Stephen Meswarb, Co-Acting Executive Director  
Mark Silverstein, Legal Director, Co-Acting Executive Director

August 13, 2012

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Sheriff J. Grayson Robinson  
Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office  
13101 E. Broncos Parkway  
Centennial, Colorado 80112  
[grobinson@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:grobinson@co.arapahoe.co.us)

Re: Investigation of ACLU concerns raised in July 16 letter

Dear Sheriff Robinson,

Thank you for meeting with me and Mark Silverstein on August 9, 2012. We appreciated you taking the time to provide us with the results of your investigation into the ACLU of Colorado's concerns, expressed in our letter dated July 16, 2012, about an "Alert" to the public about "Gypsy scams." We addressed our concerns to you because the Alert, which was posted on the web site of the Arapahoe County Bar Association, appeared to indicate that it had been issued by the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office.

The "Alert" described "Gypsies" as "medium to dark complexioned Caucasian[s], who are often mistaken as Hispanic. Dark hair and dark eyes are common characteristics." It further stated that "Gypsies" commit major crimes, including home repair fraud, and burglary, and that "Gypsies" are usually career criminals. The ACLU raised concerns that such a description encouraged racial and ethnic profiling.

Based on our discussion with you, we now understand that neither you nor anyone in your office had authorized the "Alert" to have been released to the public. Indeed, we learned that you had specifically *declined* to approve issuing that text in a proposed alert to the public. We were heartened to learn that you agreed that the particular text quoted above was inappropriate for a Sheriff's Office alert to the public.

You also explained that the text of the "Alert" originated from a seminar at a national law enforcement conference produced by the Arizona-based law enforcement consulting firm, Gryphon Training Group, which had been attended by investigators in your department. We

understand that you have decided that your department will no longer participate in that organization's trainings or seminars. We applaud this decision. The web site of Gryphon Train Group advertises such seminar topics as "Rom Gypsies and Their Crimes" and "Polish Gypsies and Their Crimes." It is not appropriate for law enforcement to slander entire ethnic groups by equating them with criminal activity.

Furthermore, the ACLU of Colorado commends you for your decision, which you announced to us in our meeting, to discontinue the use of the term "Gypsy" in the "Gypsy and Traveler Scams" alert that is posted on the website of the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office. We believe that there is no good reason to describe a particular type of criminal activity in terms that malign a particular ethnic group. Labeling a particular scam as a "Gypsy" scam provides no additional useful information to the public, and it risks undermining the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office policy that prohibits biased policing.

Thank you very much for your prompt attention to this matter and for the seriousness with which you addressed our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara J. Rich". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Sara J. Rich  
Staff Attorney