

## Deputy cleared of any wrongdoing

by [Kimberly Boim](#)

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A Dawson County sheriff's deputy has been cleared of any misconduct in the arrest of a Roswell woman videotaping a GOP rally.

Capt. Tony Wooten was placed on paid leave earlier this week pending the outcome of an internal investigation into his conduct during the arrest of Nydia Tisdale.

"We have concluded our internal investigation, and Tony will be back on full active duty immediately (Friday, Aug. 29)," Sheriff Billy Carlisle said.

Tisdale, 51, accused Wooten of inappropriate contact during her arrest, and others said there were violations of her civil rights, according to Carlisle.

"I am confident she was not inappropriately touched and procedures were followed based on eyewitness accounts," Carlisle said.

Three or four eyewitnesses were interviewed at separate times, according to Carlisle.

"When there are serious accusations made against one of my officers, it is my duty to look into it," Carlisle said today. "Those were serious accusations. I just want all the facts out there. It's standard procedure to place a deputy on paid leave during an investigation."

Dawson County Sheriff's Major Ray Goodie conducted the investigation.

"I asked Ray to get this thing done by 5 p.m. today (Friday)," Carlisle said. "People are really emotional right now, and I hate what I'm seeing and hearing. I want all the facts out there before we go into the Labor Day weekend.

Carlisle explained his office's investigative process in the Tisdale case:

"We got a search warrant Tuesday (Aug. 26) for her video camera, and we downloaded the section about Burt's Pumpkin Farm. We went to just that part of that time and day and reviewed," he said. "That's when I went to the county attorney (Joey Homans).

"Joey represents me, the county, and Tony. We didn't want to leave Tony out of this. We're right there with him through thick and thin."

Wooten continued to receive his full pay during the suspension period.

"We didn't take one penny from him," Carlisle said.

Wooten joined the Dawson County Sheriff's Department on April 19, 1998, and has risen to the rank of captain and public information officer.

He has no disciplinary actions against him, according to Carlisle.

Tisdale was charged with criminal trespass and felony obstruction of an officer. If convicted, the felony charge carries a penalty of not less than one year, and no more than five years, in prison. Criminal trespass is a misdemeanor and carries up to a \$1,000 fine and/or 12 months in jail.

Carlisle plans to meet soon with Dawson County District Attorney Lee Darragh regarding the criminal charges.

Tisdale's camera was returned to her today.

Present at the GOP rally held at Burt's Pumpkin Farm in northwestern Dawson County on Saturday, Aug. 23, were:

Gov. Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal, U.S. Senate Candidate David Perdue, Attorney

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General Sam Olens, Congressman Doug Collins (9th district), Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens, state school superintendent candidate Richard Woods, Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, and Department of Labor Commissioner Mark Butler.

It was during Butler's remarks that Tisdale was asked to turn off her camera.

"It was my call," said Burt's Pumpkin Farm property owner Johnny Burt. "She was right up in everybody's face filming, making everyone uncomfortable.

Burt said he gave Wooten a signal to remove her from the property.

"He did everything I asked him to do," Burt said.

Wooten was dressed in a department-issued black polo shirt with the Dawson County sheriff's logo on the left front side. He was also wearing khaki pants. His badge and firearm were visible, according to photos posted online.

"We are going to be looking into that and may change (dress) procedures for officers working private security," Carlisle said.

During Tisdale's arrest, she asked repeatedly for Wooten to identify himself.

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