

SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Incident:	January 20, 2018
Time of Incident:	5:28 am
Location of Incident:	██████████ Chicago, IL 60620
Date of COPA Notification:	January 20, 2018
Time of COPA Notification:	6:20 am

On January 20, 2018, Officers John Brownridge and Dominique Allen (Officers), responded to a domestic battery call at ██████████. As the officers arrived, Officer Brownridge exited the vehicle and approached the residence. Officer Brownridge observed ██████████ standing on the porch holding a female, his wife ██████████ around the neck and stabbing her. Officer Brownridge gave verbal commands to drop the weapon. ██████████ refused, and Officer Brownridge discharged his weapon, striking ██████████

II. INVOLVED PARTIES

Involved Officer #1:	Officer John Brownridge / Star#9075 / Employee ID# ██████████ / DOA: June 27, 2016 / Unit: 006 / Male / Black.
Involved Individual #1:	██████████ / Male / Black / DOB: ██████████, 1956

III. ALLEGATIONS

Pursuant to section 2-78-120 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) has a duty to investigate all incidents in which a Department member discharges their firearm in a person's direction or where a person sustains serious bodily injury as a result of police actions. During its investigation of this incident, COPA did not find evidence to support allegations of excessive force related to Officer Brownridge's firearm discharge.

#### IV. APPLICABLE RULES AND LAWS

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##### General Orders<sup>1</sup>

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1. G03-02, Use of Force (effective October 16, 2017 - February 29, 2020)
2. G03-02-01 Force Options (effective October 16, 2017 - February 29, 2020)

#### V. INVESTIGATION<sup>2</sup>

##### a. Interviews

In a post Miranda, **Electronic Recorded Interview (ERI)**<sup>3</sup> with the Department, ██████████ stated that he was guilty and going to jail. ██████████ stated he did not care about being arrested and had nothing to say. ██████████ stated that he wanted to be taken out of his misery. Detective Roberts asked ██████████ if he needed a lawyer, and he replied that he did not need a lawyer. He stated that he was his lawyer. ██████████ stated that he was guilty of everything. Detective Roberts asked him why he tried to kill his wife. ██████████ stated that he was trying to get killed. ██████████ admitted to stabbing his wife. ██████████ said he knew he was going to jail and wanted the police to shoot him to take him out of his misery.

██████████ stated his goal was to have responding officers kill him by shooting him in the head while expressing that he had no reason to live and wanted to leave this world. ██████████ admitted to hearing the verbal commands to drop the knife. ██████████ stated that he had been smoking and drinking.<sup>4</sup>

In an **ERI**<sup>5</sup> with Detectives Roberts and Loftus, ██████████ stated that she met ██████████ when he was released from custody years prior. ██████████ explained that ██████████ had been unemployed for more than year and that he became upset because he believed she was being unfaithful and wanted ██████████ to buy alcohol for him. ██████████ stated that ██████████ is very high-strung with a history of violent crime. ██████████ relayed that prior to the Department being called, ██████████ declared that he would die tonight and began to strike ██████████ grabbed the telephone and ██████████ responded by obtaining a knife and threatening to kill ██████████

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<sup>1</sup> Department general and special orders, also known as directives, “are official documents establishing, defining, and communicating Department-wide policy, procedures, or programs issued in the name of the Superintendent of Police.” Chicago Police Department, General Order G01-03, Department Directives System, effective May 5, 2020, accessed September 9, 2022, <http://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6386>.

<sup>2</sup> COPA conducted a thorough and complete investigation. The following is a summary of the material evidence gathered and relied upon in our analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Att. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Upon reviewing the ERI, COPA determined that there was no need to interview ██████████. Additionally, ██████████ declined COPA’s request for a statement. See Att. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Att. 23.

Upon members' arrival [REDACTED] declared their arrival to [REDACTED] grabbed her by the neck, escorted her to the front porch while threatening to kill her. As members approached the residence, [REDACTED] began to stab [REDACTED] while insisting that the members shoot him. Members ordered [REDACTED] to drop the knife, to which he responded with words to the effect of "no" and instructed the members to shoot him. As the member discharged their weapon, [REDACTED] continued to stab [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] explained that [REDACTED] had declared he wanted to kill both of them, but he was not going to kill himself because God does not forgive suicide and that he would make sure the police killed him. [REDACTED] relayed that [REDACTED] smokes cocaine and consumes Jack Daniels. [REDACTED] was clear that she believed the responding member saved her life.<sup>6</sup>

In a **statement to COPA**<sup>7</sup> on April 23, 2018, **Officer John Brownridge**<sup>8</sup> stated that he was on duty and was the passenger officer and partnered with Officer Dominique Allen. Office of Emergency Management & Communication (OEMC) dispatched the officers to respond to a person with a knife call. Officer Brownridge explained that once he arrived on the scene, he and his partner observed a man, [REDACTED] angry and shouting while standing on the porch. Officer Brownridge then observed a woman, [REDACTED] who [REDACTED] was holding in a chokehold or headlock, so she could not move.<sup>9</sup> Officer Brownridge exited the vehicle while Officer Allen parked. As soon as he observed [REDACTED] standing on the porch, Officer Brownridge reacted and exited the vehicle before he thought about anything else. Officer Brownridge had a flashback to his PDT and remembered what was on the screen.<sup>10</sup> Officer Brownridge ran towards the foot of the stairs and drew his weapon while telling [REDACTED] to drop the knife.<sup>11</sup>

[REDACTED] brandished the knife and told Officer Brownridge that he would have to shoot and kill him.<sup>12</sup> Officer Brownridge observed [REDACTED] begin to stab [REDACTED] multiple times, and Officer Brownridge fired his weapon, striking [REDACTED]<sup>13</sup> Officer Brownridge holstered his weapon, ran up on the porch, turned [REDACTED] over, and positioned his arms to be handcuffed when another officer approached and placed [REDACTED] in handcuffs. Officer Brownridge rendered aid to [REDACTED] seemed afraid. Officer Brownridge asked [REDACTED] if she was okay and got no response. Officer Brownridge added that the knife had a black handle. After [REDACTED] was shot, he told Officer

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<sup>6</sup> Upon review of the ERI, COPA determined there was no need to interview [REDACTED]

<sup>7</sup> Atts. 32 and 34.

<sup>8</sup> A Synoptic Report details that Officer Brownridge had no chemical impairment at the time of this incident. *See* Att. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Att. 34, Page 15, Lines 13-15.

<sup>10</sup> Att. 34, Page 13, Lines 22-24 (Officer Brownridge stated he "flashed back to what was on the screen", presumably referring to his PDT).

<sup>11</sup> Att. 34, Page 14, Lines 1-4.

<sup>12</sup> Att. 34, Page 14, Lines 5-10.

<sup>13</sup> Att. 34, Page 14, Lines 5-12.

Brownridge to shoot him in the heart and asked why he did not finish the job.<sup>14</sup> Officer Brownridge relayed that ██████ seemed disappointed that he did not die.

Officer Brownridge estimated that about twenty seconds passed between his verbal direction to drop the knife and when he fired his weapon.<sup>15</sup> Officer Brownridge added that he stopped firing his weapon when ██████ released ██████ and fell backward.<sup>16</sup> Officer Brownridge said he had no option other than using his weapon to stop the threat. Officer Brownridge relayed that he did not immediately see the knife after he fired his weapon and does not know who recovered the knife. Officer Brownridge stated he was equipped with a body-worn camera (BWC) but made a split-second decision and exited the vehicle without turning on his BWC.<sup>17</sup>

In a **statement to COPA**<sup>18</sup> on April 23, 2018, **Officer Dominique Allen** stated essentially the same information as Officer Brownridge. Upon arrival Officer Allen observed ██████ standing outside and did not appear to have anything in his hand. Officer Allen unknowingly drove past the residence and then backed up. As she backed up, she looked to her left and observed ██████ and a distressed ██████ standing outside. ██████ was standing behind ██████ holding her, but had not begun to stab ██████

Officer Allen stated that Officer Brownridge exited the vehicle and approached the residence while she parked. Officer Allen exited the vehicle and heard ██████ yelling; “You’re going to have to shoot me because I am going to kill her.”<sup>19</sup> Officer Brownridge ordered ██████ to stop and drop the knife. Officer Allen observed ██████ using a knife to stab ██████ and as she approached the residence, she heard gunshots.<sup>20</sup>

Officer Allen stated that the incident happened so fast, and all she could think of was how they would stop ██████ from killing ██████ Officer Allen explained that Officer Brownridge tried to stop the situation. Officer Allen further explained that Officers David Bahena and Luis Ochoa arrived and approached the residence as the incident was unfolding. Officer Allen explained that she reported the incident to OEMC via radio. Officer Allen said she observed a knife with a black handle on the ground after the shooting. Moments later, supervisors arrived on the scene, and she was removed from the area.

In a **statement to COPA**<sup>21</sup> on February 7, 2018, **Officers David Bahena and Luis Ochoa** stated essentially the same information as Officer Brownridge and Officer Allen. Upon arrival at the location, they exited their vehicle and heard gunshots.<sup>22</sup> The officers ran towards the house, approached the front porch, and observed ██████ face down on the porch. Officer Ochoa

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<sup>14</sup> Att. 34, Page 38, Lines 4-7.

<sup>15</sup> Att. 34, Page 20, Lines 23-24.

<sup>16</sup> Att. 34, Page 21, Lines 18-20.

<sup>17</sup> Att. 34, Page 35, Lines 16-19.

<sup>18</sup> Atts. 29 and 37.

<sup>19</sup> Att. 37, Page 9, lines 5-9.

<sup>20</sup> Att. 37, Page 14, Lines 21-24, Page 15, Lines 1-4.

<sup>21</sup> Atts. 30, 31, 38, and 39.

<sup>22</sup> Officer Bahena recalled hearing two or three gunshots.

assisted Officer Brownridge with placing handcuffs on [REDACTED] when Officer Brownridge stated that the knife was under [REDACTED]

Officers Bahena and Ochoa turned [REDACTED] over to see where he was shot and retrieve the knife. [REDACTED] was sitting on the porch screaming [REDACTED] wanted to kill her while covered in blood. The officers called for an ambulance. [REDACTED] stated that he wanted the officer to shoot him in the heart. Officer Bahena further stated that he asked [REDACTED] why he was doing this, and [REDACTED] said he had been drinking and this bitch brought guys to the house. [REDACTED] stated that he wanted to die.

### b. Digital Evidence

**Body Worn Camera**<sup>23</sup> (BWC), **In-Car Camera**<sup>24</sup> (ICC), and **Third-Party Surveillance footage**<sup>25</sup> depict Department vehicles arriving on the scene. Officer Brownridge exits the vehicle and approaches the residence. Officer Brownridge observes [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] standing on the porch.<sup>26</sup> As [REDACTED] stabs [REDACTED] Officer Brownridge orders him to put down the knife and show his hands.<sup>27</sup> Seconds later, Officer Brownridge discharges his weapon, striking [REDACTED] causing both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to fall.<sup>28</sup> As other officers approach, Officer Brownridge is observed turning [REDACTED] over to place him in handcuffs.

Officers Bahena and Ochoa assist Officer Brownridge with placing handcuffs on [REDACTED]. The knife is recovered underneath [REDACTED].<sup>29</sup> [REDACTED] is observed off to the side, bleeding from her injuries and talking on the phone. [REDACTED] is on the phone telling someone that she has been stabbed. The officers notify dispatch of the officer-involved shooting with hits and request an ambulance. [REDACTED] is heard yelling, that members should let him die and should have shot him in the heart.<sup>30</sup> The officers check [REDACTED] for injuries and determine that she was not shot but bleeding due to being stabbed. [REDACTED] again tells the officers to let him die. The officers tell [REDACTED] they would not let him die.

Supervisors arrive on the scene and are given details of the incident. Officer Brownridge is instructed to wait inside a patrol vehicle. Moments later, Chicago Fire Department (CFD) personnel arrive on the scene and tend to both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Officer Jones accompanies [REDACTED] while CFD transports him. During the transport [REDACTED] yells that he wants to die and would die in jail.

### c. Documentary Evidence

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<sup>23</sup> Att. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Att. 50.

<sup>25</sup> Att. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Att. 21, file Brownridge AXON\_Body\_2\_Video\_2018-01-20\_0539 at 00:00.

<sup>27</sup> Att. 21, file Allen AXON\_Body\_2\_Video\_2018-01-20\_0538 at 00:33.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*, at 00:34.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*, at 03:25. Officers are observed turning [REDACTED] over and handing the knife to Officer Allen.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*, at 03:15.

**Event Queries**<sup>31</sup> and **911 Calls**<sup>32</sup> detail reports from a woman who stated that her husband hit her and pulled a knife on her. The female declined medical attention, and it is unknown if drugs or alcohol were involved. A report of two gunshots was heard in the area. Dispatch overheard a male saying the caller was going to die with him tonight. A male is overheard saying shoot me.<sup>33</sup> The police fired shots. A female caller stated that her mom called and said her husband was trying to kill her. The husband's name is [REDACTED]. Finally, the Event Queries detail the Department's response to this incident.

**Detective Supplementary Reports**,<sup>34</sup> [REDACTED] **Arrest Report**,<sup>35</sup> **Inventory Sheets**,<sup>36</sup> **Crime Scene Processing Reports**,<sup>37</sup> and **Evidence Technician photographs**<sup>38</sup> detail essentially the same information as the BWC, ICC, third-party video footage, the ERIs from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and the members' statements. All the physical evidence recovered was inventoried and logged under RD# [REDACTED]. Additionally, CPD reports detail that [REDACTED] was arrested for Domestic Battery and Attempt Murder-First Degree. The officers responded to a person with a knife call at [REDACTED] was placed into custody after he was observed stabbing his wife, [REDACTED] multiple times with a knife. The knife was recovered underneath [REDACTED] chest area.<sup>39</sup> The Evidence Technician's photographs show the crime scene at [REDACTED] blood, clothing, and other personal items on the residence's porch.<sup>40</sup>

**Medical Records**<sup>41</sup> for [REDACTED] detail that he was treated at Advocate Christ Medical Center for two gunshot wounds to the right wrist and pelvis. [REDACTED] disclosed that he uses cocaine, drinks alcohol, and smokes cigarettes regularly.

**Medical Records**<sup>42</sup> for [REDACTED] detail that she was treated at Advocate Christ Medical Center for multiple stab wounds.

**Officer John Brownridge's Tactical Response Report**<sup>43</sup> (TRR) details [REDACTED] actions as not following verbal direction, physical attack with a knife, imminent threat of a battery with a knife, and using force likely to cause death or great bodily harm by stabbing [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Officer Brownridge details his response as member presence, verbal direction and control techniques, zone safety, tactical positioning, and additional unit members. Officer Brownridge details his force as three discharges of his semi-automatic weapon. Finally, the TRR details that all the required notifications were made, and that Lieutenant Glenn White determined that Officer Brownridge's weapon discharge complied with Department policy.

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<sup>31</sup> Att. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Atts. 42 to 48.

<sup>33</sup> Att. 45 at 01:19.

<sup>34</sup> Att. 33.

<sup>35</sup> Att. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Att. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Att. 51.

<sup>38</sup> Att. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Att. 4, Page 5.

<sup>40</sup> Att. 28, Pictures 2 to 10, 26, 30, 31, 40-50.

<sup>41</sup> Att. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Att. 19.

<sup>43</sup> Att. 6.

## VI. LEGAL STANDARD

The applicable standard of proof is preponderance of the evidence. A **preponderance of evidence** has been satisfied when the evidence indicates that it is more likely than not that the conduct occurred and violated Department policy. If the evidence gathered in an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the misconduct occurred, even if by a narrow margin, then the preponderance of the evidence standard is met.

## VII. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION<sup>44</sup>

### i. Applicable Department Policies

#### 1. G03-02: Use of Force<sup>45</sup>

The Department's highest priority is the sanctity of human life. In all aspects of their conduct, Department members will act with the foremost regard for the preservation of human life and the safety of all persons involved. The main issue in evaluating every use of force is whether the amount of force the officer used was objectively reasonable in light of the totality of the circumstances faced by the officer.<sup>46</sup>

Factors to be considered by the officer include but are not limited to: whether the subject is posing an imminent threat to the officer or others; the risk of harm, level of threat or resistance presented by the subject; and the subject's proximity or access to weapons.

Department members will use only the force that is proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a subject. This may include using greater force or a different type of force than that used by the subject. The greater the threat and the more likely that the threat will result in death or serious physical injury, the greater the level of force that maybe necessary to overcome it. When or if the subject offers less resistance, however, the member will decrease the amount or type of force accordingly.

Deadly force is force by any means that is likely to cause death or great bodily harm. It includes but is not limited to: firing of a firearm in the direction of the person to be arrested; firing of a firearm at a vehicle in which the person to be arrested is riding; intentional striking of a subject's head with an impact weapon; and application of a chokehold, defined as applying direct pressure to a person's trachea (windpipe) or airway (front of the neck) with the intention of reducing the intake of air.

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<sup>44</sup> While Brownridge failed to activate his BWC when exiting his vehicle, COPA determined that the immediate threat presented by ██████████ required immediate action from the officers and therefore determined that a BWC allegation was not warranted. Additionally, Officer Brownridge's activation, while late, allowed for the incident to be captured during the buffer period.

<sup>45</sup> Chicago Police Department, General Order G03-02, effective October 16, 2017, to February 29, 2020.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.* at (III)(B)(1).

A threat is imminent when it is objectively reasonable to believe that: the subject's actions are immediately likely to cause death or great bodily harm to the member or others unless action is taken; the subject has the means or instruments to cause death or great bodily harm; and the subject has the opportunity and ability to cause death or great bodily harm.

## 2. G03-02-01: Force Options<sup>47</sup>

Per Department policy, all uses of force must be objectively reasonable, necessary under the circumstances, and proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a subject.

An assailant is a subject who is using or threatening the use of force against another person or themselves which is likely to cause physical injury. Assailants are divided into two categories: (1) a subject whose actions are aggressively offensive with or without weapons; and (2) a subject whose actions constitute an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to a Department member or to another person. When dealing with an assailant whose actions constitute an imminent threat of death or bodily harm, Department policy authorizes the use of firearms and other deadly force responses.

### b. Legal Analysis

A preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that Officer John Brownridge's use of deadly force was objectively reasonable in light of the totality of circumstances he faced in this incident. Officer Brownridge's use of deadly force was a last resort and was necessary to prevent the imminent threat of death or great bodily harm presented by ██████████ to ██████████ ██████████. Based upon the below factors, COPA finds that ██████████ posed an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm.

First, it was objectively reasonable for Officer Brownridge to believe that ██████████ actions were immediately likely to cause death or great bodily harm to ██████████ unless action was taken. Here, officers were dispatched to respond to a person with a knife call.<sup>48</sup> Upon arrival to the scene of the call, officers saw ██████████ angry and shouting on the porch of a residence.<sup>49</sup> Officer Brownridge saw ██████████ holding ██████████ in a chokehold or headlock.<sup>50</sup> Officer Brownridge exited the vehicle and ran towards ██████████ and told ██████████ to drop the knife.<sup>51</sup> ██████████ brandished his knife. ██████████ stated that Officer Brownridge would have to shoot and kill him. Then, Officer Brownridge saw ██████████ stab ██████████ multiple times. Officer Brownridge discharged his weapon striking ██████████. Officer Brownridge tried to deescalate the situation by asking ██████████ to drop the knife, but ██████████ continued to stab ██████████. Officer Brownridge's weapon discharge occurred in direct response to ██████████ use of deadly force against ██████████ ██████████.

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<sup>47</sup> Chicago Police Department, General Order G03-02-01, effective October 16, 2017, to February 29, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Atts. 32 and 34.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> Att. 34, Page 15, Lines 13-15.

<sup>51</sup> *Id.* at Page 14, lines 2-4.



Second, it was objectively reasonable for Officer Brownridge to believe that [REDACTED] had the means or instruments to cause death or great bodily harm. Officer Brownridge was directly aware that the call to officers was dispatched to a person with a knife call. Officer Brownridge personally witnessed [REDACTED] brandish a knife and stab [REDACTED] multiple times. The interviews, documentary, and digital evidence support a conclusion that [REDACTED] had a knife with a black handle that he used to stab [REDACTED]

Third, it was objectively reasonable for Officer Brownridge to believe that [REDACTED] had the opportunity and ability to cause death or great bodily harm. Officer Brownridge saw [REDACTED] holding [REDACTED] in a chokehold or headlock. As [REDACTED] stabbed [REDACTED] Officer Brownridge ordered him to put down the knife and show his hands. The interviews, documentary, and digital evidence support that [REDACTED] actively stabbed [REDACTED] until Officer Brownridge discharged his weapon and both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] fell to the ground.

Based on the analysis set forth above, COPA finds that Officer Brownridge’s use of deadly force in this incident was authorized under Department policy.

Approved:

[REDACTED]

9-28-2022

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Angela Hearts-Glass  
Deputy Chief Investigator

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Date

[REDACTED]

9-28-2022

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Andrea Kersten  
Chief Administrator

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Date