

SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	February 7, 2019/ Unknown/ 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	February 8, 2019/ 5:40 p.m.
Involved Officer #1:	Griffin III, Burdett, Star #19118, Employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: 26-May-1998, Police Officer, Unit of Assignment: 005, DOB: [REDACTED]-1968, Male, Black
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] 1973, Female, Black
Case Type:	Domestic (Harassment/Intimidation)

I. ALLEGATIONS

Officer	Allegation	Finding
Officer Burdett Griffin III	1. It is alleged that on or about February 7, 2019 at an unknown time, at or near 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL, Officer Burdett Griffin III harassed [REDACTED] by calling her multiple times.	Sustained
	2. It is alleged that on or about February 7, 2019 at an unknown time, at or near 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL, Officer Burdett Griffin III intimidated [REDACTED] by stating words to the effect of, "You called COPA. You deserve to be beat."	Not Sustained
	3. It is alleged that on or about February 7, 2019 at an unknown time, at or near 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL, Officer Burdett Griffin III directed profanities at [REDACTED] stating words to the effect of, "You're a bitch."	Not Sustained
	4. It is alleged that on or about February 7, 2019 at an unknown time, at or near 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL, Officer Burdett Griffin III threatened to have a third-party break [REDACTED] car windows.	Not Sustained
	5. It is alleged that on or about February 7, 2019 at an unknown time, at or near 555 W Harrison Street,	Not Sustained

Chicago, IL, Officer Burdett Griffin III threatened to kill [REDACTED]

6. It is alleged that on or about February 7, 2019 at an unknown time, at or near 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL, Officer Burdett Griffin III attempted to interfere with an investigation in that he called and intimidated [REDACTED] after learning she filed a complaint with COPA.

Not Sustained

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

On February 7, 2019, [REDACTED] (Ms. [REDACTED]) went to the Domestic Court building located at 555 W Harrison Street, Chicago, IL to obtain an Order of Protection against the mother of her “on again, off again” boyfriend’s [REDACTED], as [REDACTED] (Ms. [REDACTED]) was previously harassing her. Upon arriving to the courthouse, Ms. [REDACTED] began receiving phone calls from Officer Burdett Griffin III (Officer Griffin), which she alleged were threatening in nature.

There were seven **Case Reports**² made from January 20, 2019 through February 12, 2019. Both Ms. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED] are both the victim and offender in several incidents of **harassment**.³ Ms. [REDACTED] filed a **telephone threat** report for the phone calls received from Officer Griffin while at the courthouse.⁴ The report documents the alleged threats made by Officer Griffin to Ms. [REDACTED]

The **Transcripts**⁵ from the court hearing on February 7, 2019 document that Officer Griffin and Ms. [REDACTED] engaged in a complicated relationship for four years. Throughout their relationship, the two of them broke up and got back together several times. During the off periods, Ms. [REDACTED] alleged that Officer Griffin’s [REDACTED], Ms. [REDACTED] harassed her via telephone and social media. On the day of the hearing, Ms. [REDACTED] initially arrived at the courthouse to file a Stalking No Contact Order against Ms. [REDACTED]. However, when she entered the building, she received several phone calls from an unknown number. Upon answering the phone, she recognized the voice to be that of Officer Griffin. During the phone conversation, Officer Griffin indicated that he knew Ms. [REDACTED] called COPA.⁶ He stated that she deserved to be beat, called her a “bitch,” and threatened to have Ms. [REDACTED] break [her] car windows. Ms. [REDACTED] further alleged that Officer Griffin threatened to kill her. Initially, the Judge advised Ms. [REDACTED] that she should be seeking a stalking no contact order against Ms. [REDACTED]. However, during the hearing, Ms. [REDACTED] stated, “Yes. But he scared me today when he called me because I wasn’t expecting him to call me.”⁷ Therefore, the Judge granted an emergency order of protection for Ms. [REDACTED] against Officer Griffin.

¹ Officer Griffin’s [REDACTED]

² [REDACTED]

³ See Att. 20, 23, 25, &26

⁴ See Att. 22

⁵ See Att. 13

⁶ Prior to going to court, Ms. [REDACTED] had not yet contacted COPA. However, she did advise [REDACTED] that she was going to file a police report as well as report Officer Griffin to COPA.

⁷ *Id.* at p8, line 19-20

Text Messages⁸ provided by Ms. ██████ document several conversations between she and Ms. ██████ and between she and Officer Griffin. None of the text messages were threatening. There was a screenshot with the name “█████ ██████” and phone number “+█████” which Ms. ██████ alleges is a conversation between she and Officer Griffin that was sent to Ms. ██████⁹

Text Messages provided by Officer Griffin document that on August 5, 2020, he and Ms. ██████ were engaged to be married.¹⁰ On August 6, 2020, Ms. ██████ advised Officer Griffin not to call her anymore and stated the ring was going back.

COPA received an **Email** from Ms. ██████ on February 9, 2019 in which she stated that she realized how Officer Griffin became aware she was going to speak with COPA.¹¹ Ms. ██████ stated she had a conversation with a woman named “█████” via text. During the text message conversation on January 31, 2019, Ms. ██████ mentioned that she was going to the police station to file a report and was reporting the incident to COPA. Additionally, Ms. ██████ attached the screenshot of the conversation.

COPA obtained a statement from ██████ on February 8, 2019, at approximately 12:26 p.m., on the fourth floor of COPA offices located at 1615 W Chicago Ave, Chicago, Illinois. Ms. ██████ initially called COPA to file a complaint because she believed Officer Griffin gave her cell phone number to Ms. ██████. Ms. ██████ believed Officer Griffin used Ms. ██████ to harass her. Ms. ██████ and Officer Griffin broke up multiple times throughout the course of their relationship. During the breakups, Ms. ██████ harassed Ms. ██████ via telephone, text and on social media. During her statement, she alleged essentially the same information as she stated during the February 7, 2019 court hearing.

COPA obtained a statement from **Officer Burdett Griffin III**¹⁴ on November 24, 2020 at approximately 1:26 p.m., on the fourth floor of COPA offices located at 1615 W Chicago Ave, Chicago, Illinois. Officer Griffin stated he and Ms. ██████ dated off and on for five years. The two ██████ in August 2020 and the ██████ lasted one month. Officer Griffin and Ms. ██████ maintained their primary residences. However, the two of them “stayed,” together during their relationship. Officer Griffin stated he last spoke to Ms. ██████ August 2020. Officer Griffin and Ms. ██████ relationship ended because he failed to set a date for their wedding.

When asked about the date of the incident and whether he spoke with Ms. ██████ Officer Griffin stated, “we spoke every day.” Officer Griffin admitted that he may have contacted Ms. ██████ from different phone numbers and possibly concealed phone numbers when calling Ms. ██████

⁸ See Att. 10

⁹ See Att. 10 p8

¹⁰ See Att. 27

¹¹ See Att. 9

¹² Ex-girlfriend of ██████

¹³ See Att. 6, Ms. ██████ called and spoke with COPA prior to a log number being generated and prior to coming in for a statement

¹⁴ Officer Griffin appeared with his attorney, ██████, who was present during the interview. Officer Griffin’s interview is incorporated as Att. 15, 16, 17 & 18

██████████ but “never on February 7th.”¹⁵ However, he was unable to articulate how he was sure he did not call Ms. ██████████ from different phone numbers on the date of the incident. Furthermore, Officer Griffin reported, “she said she was already down there when I called.”¹⁶ When asked to explain, he clarified stating that Ms. ██████████ was already at 555 W. Harrison Street.

Ms. ██████████ believed that Officer Griffin was still romantically involved with Ms. ██████████ and this belief caused them to break up. Officer Griffin stated that between January 23rd and February 7, 2019, Ms. ██████████ and Ms. ██████████ were “beefing heavy,”¹⁷ and Ms. ██████████ wanted him to take sides. However, Officer Griffin refused. Ms. ██████████ and Ms. ██████████ had conflict on and off after Ms. ██████████ contacted Ms. ██████████ in 2017 or 2018. Officer Griffin stated he had text messages that he allowed both Ms. ██████████ and Ms. ██████████ to view to diffuse the conflict.¹⁸ However, it did not work. Officer Griffin stated he sent screenshots to both Ms. ██████████ and Ms. ██████████ to clarify that he was being neutral. Officer Griffin stated Ms. ██████████ previously blocked him from her cell phone but did not recall if he was blocked on February 7th. Ms. ██████████ mentioned months later after the incident that she filed a complaint, and he responded to her saying, “I told her I’d have to deal with COPA, I’d have to deal with the Department. It’s not just an order of protection.”¹⁹ After the incident, Officer Griffin blocked Ms. ██████████ and she called him from an unknown number as well as came to his residence to talk while his roommate was present. Officer Griffin denied all the allegations.

III. LEGAL STANDARD

For each allegation COPA must make one of the following findings:

1. Sustained - where it is determined the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence;
2. Not Sustained - where it is determined there is insufficient evidence to prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
3. Unfounded - where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that an allegation is false or not factual; or
4. Exonerated - where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that the conduct described in the allegation occurred, but it is lawful and proper.

A **preponderance of evidence** is evidence indicating that it is **more likely than not** that the conduct occurred and violated Department policy.²⁰ 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.

¹⁵ See Att. 16 at 5:45

¹⁶ See Att. 17 *Id.* at 18:57

¹⁷ See Att. 17 at 13:09

¹⁸ See Att. 17 *Id.* at 16:16

¹⁹ See Att. 17 *Id.* at 26:14

²⁰ See *Avery v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 216 Ill. 2d 100, 191 (2005) (a proposition is proved by a preponderance of the evidence when it has been found to be more probably true than not).

Clear and convincing evidence is a higher standard than a preponderance of the evidence but lower than the “beyond-a-reasonable doubt” standard required to convict a person of a criminal offense.²¹ Clear and convincing is defined as a “degree of proof, which, considering all the evidence in the case, produces the firm and abiding belief that it is highly probable that the proposition . . . is true.”²²

IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

COPA finds **Allegation 1**, alleging that Officer Griffin harassed ██████████ by calling her multiple times, is **SUSTAINED**. To sustain this allegation, COPA must find that it is more likely than not that the alleged misconduct occurred. In this case, on the date of the incident, Ms. ██████████ alleges that Officer Griffin was blocked from her phone and was unable to receive incoming calls from his phone number. Officer Griffin offered that he and Ms. ██████████ spoke every day and admitted that he may have contacted Ms. ██████████ from different phone numbers and possibly concealed phone numbers when calling Ms. ██████████. Although he denied doing this on February, 7, 2019, COPA does not find this credible, as he was unable to articulate how he was sure he did not call Ms. ██████████ from different phone numbers on the date of the incident. Furthermore, during his statement, Officer Griffin reported, “she said she was already down there when I called.”²³ When asked to explain, he clarified stating that Ms. ██████████ was already at 555 W. Harrison Street. Therefore, it is more likely than not that the alleged misconduct occurred as reported by Ms. ██████████. Accordingly, **Allegation 1** is **SUSTAINED**.

COPA finds **Allegations 2 through 6**, alleging that Officer Griffin intimidated ██████████ by stating words to the effect of, “You called COPA. You deserve to be beat,” directed profanities at ██████████ stating words to the effect of, “You’re a bitch,” threatened to have a third-party break ██████████ car windows, threatened to kill ██████████ and attempted to interfere with an investigation in that he called and intimidated ██████████ after learning she filed a complaint with COPA, are **NOT SUSTAINED**. During their statements to COPA, both Ms. ██████████ and Officer Griffin provided conflicting statements as to their roles in the incident in that they each blame the other as the aggressor. Officer Griffin denied all the allegations. There were no witnesses to the telephone call or other evidence to prove the allegations are more likely to have occurred than not. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to prove the above allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. Accordingly, **Allegations 1 through 6** are **NOT SUSTAINED**.

V. RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE FOR SUSTAINED ALLEGATIONS

a. Officer Burdett Griffin III

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History

²¹ See e.g., *People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036 (2016).

²² *Id.* at ¶ 28.

²³ See Att. 17 *Id.* at 18:57

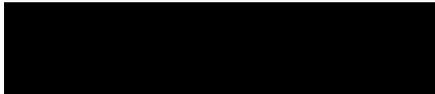
1. **Complimentary History:** 21 awards, including 12 Honorable Mentions

2. **Disciplinary History:** None

ii. Recommended Penalty, by Allegation

1. Allegation No. 1- 10 Day Suspension

Approved:



Sharday Jackson
Deputy Chief Administrator – Chief Investigator

January 30, 2022

Date