

**SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	December 3, 2018/ 3:55 PM / [REDACTED]
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	April 16, 2019 11:23AM
Involved Officer #1:	Rita Blunt, Star# 15625, Employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment 1/3/95, Unit 011, DOB [REDACTED]66, Female, Race: Black
Involved Officer #2:	Kristen Hanson, Star# 1524, Employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment 9/13/99, Unit 015, DOB [REDACTED]76, Female, Race: White
Involved Individual 1:	[REDACTED] DOB [REDACTED]62, Male, Black
Involved Individual #2:	[REDACTED] DOB [REDACTED]81, Male Black
Case Type:	Domestic Related False Report

**I. ALLEGATIONS**

<b>Officer</b>	<b>Allegation</b>	<b>Finding</b>
Officer Rita Blunt	1. It is alleged by [REDACTED] that on or about December 3, 2018 at approximately 3:55 PM at or near [REDACTED] Officer Blunt provided a material and willful false statement to law enforcement when she accused [REDACTED] of Aggravated Assault in violation of Rule 14.	Unfounded
Sgt. Kristen Hansen	1. It is alleged by COPA that on or about December 3, 2018 at approximately 4:00PM, at or near [REDACTED] Sgt. Kristen Hansen failed to activate her body worn camera while engaged in police activity.	Sustained / Violation Noted
	2. It is alleged by COPA that on or about December 3, 2018 at approximately 4:00PM, at or near [REDACTED] Sgt. Kristen Hansen deactivated the body	Sustained / Violation Noted

worn camera of Officer Richard Corona Jr. without cause.
--

## II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

██████████ provided a statement<sup>1</sup> to COPA and related that on December 3, 2018 at approximately 5:00 PM, he came home early from work to find that the locks on the door to his house had been changed. Mr. ██████████ stated that he and his wife, Officer Rita Blunt, previously had a dispute about the ownership of the house and were in the process of getting a divorce. When Mr. ██████████ looked in the window, he could see Officer Blunt and another man inside the house. He asked to be let in, but no one answered. Mr. ██████████ then attempted to break into the home by kicking in the door. Once he entered the house, he saw Officer ██████████ on the phone calling the police. Mr. ██████████ then called the police as well. Mr. ██████████ then went into the basement to get a drill to remove the new locks that had placed on the doors. While he was in the house, he witnessed Officer Blunt and the unknown male run out of the back of the house. Then, he went into the back yard where he threw the unused locks over the back fence into the alleyway. When the police arrived, Officer Blunt signed a complaint against Mr. ██████████ for Aggravated Assault,<sup>2</sup> claiming that he intentionally threw the locks at her and her nephew.

The other black male at the scene was later identified as ██████████ Rita Blunt's nephew, who is a locksmith. According to Mr. ██████████<sup>3</sup> Officer ██████████ asked him to come over that afternoon and change the locks on her home. Mr. ██████████ was aware that the two were in the process of getting a divorce, though he was not sure why. He never witnessed or suspected abuse by Mr. ██████████ prior to that day. Mr. ██████████ account of that day was similar to Mr. ██████████ account. He stated that Mr. ██████████ tried to get into the house by kicking in the door. Mr. ██████████ saw Officer Blunt was scared when Mr. ██████████ was kicking in the door, and she rushed him outside with her where they fled into the alleyway behind the house. Mr. ██████████ witnessed Mr. ██████████ throw the locks over the fence at Officer Blunt. Mr. ██████████ said he could see Mr. ██████████ through the fence.

Security footage obtained by COPA<sup>4</sup> confirms Mr. ██████████ account of events. Mr. ██████████ can be seen on camera kicking in his front door. Once he gains entry to the house, he can be seen in the back yard trying to break into the detached garage. He then finds a box of unused locks near one of the doors to the house. He throws the locks over the rear fence into the alleyway where Officer Blunt and Mr. ██████████ are located. Officer Blunt can be seen jumping out of the way to prevent the locks from hitting her. The police then arrive at the scene. The OEMC Event Query<sup>5</sup> from the incident shows that both Mr. ██████████ and Officer Blunt called 911. Mr. ██████████ called complaining that his wife had locked him out of the house and stated that she was armed and a

<sup>1</sup> Att. 13

<sup>2</sup> Att. 3

<sup>3</sup> Att. 11

<sup>4</sup> Att. 12

<sup>5</sup> Att. 2

Chicago Police Officer. Officer Blunt called and stated that her husband had kicked in the door to their home and was in the building with weapons.

Responding officers activated their body-worn cameras<sup>6</sup> as they investigated the scene of the incident and interviewed the parties and witnesses. On video, Officer Blunt admits to changing the locks on the house without a court order. She also expresses to the responding sergeant that she wants an order of protection against Mr. [REDACTED]. She states that when he kicked in the door, she became afraid and that he threw locks at her over the backyard fence. Later in the video, she can be heard sobbing and appears visibly upset. Mr. [REDACTED] admits to kicking in the door to the responding sergeant. He states that when he came home, he thought his key was stuck but then noticed a new lock on the door. He saw Officer Blunt look at him through the window and saw another man in the apartment. He then tried to break into the house in order to change the locks back. The police also briefly speak with [REDACTED] on camera. Mr. [REDACTED] confirms that he was there to change the locks and that Mr. [REDACTED] kicked the door in and threw locks over the fence. Mr. [REDACTED] was arrested on December 3, 2018 and charged with Aggravated Assault. On August 12, 2019 the case was dismissed on a Nolle Prosequi determination by the assistant state's attorney.<sup>7</sup>

Sgt. Kristen Hanson was the responding sergeant. Based on BWC footage and CPD records,<sup>8</sup> Sgt. Hanson was equipped with a body-worn camera when she responded to [REDACTED] but she did not activate the camera at any time while she was on scene. On the body-worn camera of Officer Richard Corona Jr.,<sup>9</sup> Sgt. Hanson can be seen reaching over and turning off Officer Corona's camera before she speaks with Officer Blunt's attorney. In her statement to COPA,<sup>10</sup> Sgt. Hanson could not recall whether she attempted to activate her body-worn camera or whether there was a malfunction. Sgt. Hanson was not able to locate or produce any documentation of a malfunction on December 3, 2018. Sgt. Hanson stated that she de-activated Officer Corona's camera because she believed her conversation with Officer Blunt's attorney was privileged.

Based on the evidence obtained, COPA determined that there was insufficient evidence to serve Officer Blunt with any allegations in this case. Therefore, she was not asked to provide a statement to COPA.

### III. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

#### Allegations Against Officer Rita Blunt

COPA finds that Allegation 1 against Officer Rita Blunt, that she made a false complaint of aggravated assault against [REDACTED] is **Unfounded**. Mr. [REDACTED] has accused his wife, Officer Rita Blunt, of making a false accusation of aggravated assault against him to the responding police officers, resulting in his arrest. Such a false accusation would be a violation of Rule 14 of the

---

<sup>6</sup> Att. 15 – 31

<sup>7</sup> Att. 35

<sup>8</sup> Att. 34

<sup>9</sup> Att. 22

<sup>10</sup> Att. 32

Chicago Police Department Rules and Regulations. In order to sustain such an allegation, COPA must find that Officer Blunt knowingly made a misstatement of material fact on an official report.

The crime Mr. [REDACTED] was accused of was aggravated assault. In Illinois, “(a) person commits an assault when, without lawful authority, he or she knowingly engages in conduct which places another in reasonable apprehension of receiving a battery.” 720 ILCS 5/21-1(a). When that act is committed on in an individual occupying a public way, it becomes an aggravated assault. 720 ILCS 5/12-2(a).

Mr. [REDACTED] admits that he threw the locks over the fence. However, he disputes is that he intended to hit Officer Blunt with them. Based on the available evidence, COPA cannot determine what Mr. [REDACTED] intentions were. While intent is relevant to the criminal case against Mr. [REDACTED] what matters for a violation of Rule 14 determination is whether Officer Blunt willfully made a material and false statement to law enforcement when she accused Mr. [REDACTED] of aggravated assault. It is clear from the video and witness testimony that Mr. [REDACTED] was upset at being locked out of his home. He can be seen on camera kicking in the door to force his way into the house. When Mr. [REDACTED] threw the locks into the alley, he threw them forcefully and they landed close to where Officer Blunt was standing, causing her to jump out of the way. That fact that she had to evade the locks to prevent a battery is evidence that she was in fear of receiving a battery. Additionally, based on Mr. [REDACTED] actions prior to throwing the locks over the fence, it would be reasonable for Officer Blunt to believe that he was directing the locks at her, even if that was not Mr. [REDACTED] intent. COPA finds that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that Officer Blunt willfully made a material and false statement. Therefore, based on clear and convincing evidence, COPA finds the allegation against Officer Blunt is **Unfounded**.

#### **Allegations Against Sgt. Kristen Hanson**

COPA fins that Allegation 1 against Sgt. Hanson, that she failed to activate her body-worn camera, is **Sustained**. Special Order S03-24 states that officers must have their body-worn cameras activated while engaged in law enforcement activity. Based on available body-worn camera records, Sgt. Hanson did not activate her body-worn camera at all on December 3, 2018. When Sgt. Hanson was dispatched to [REDACTED] she was there to handle a domestic disturbance involving a police officer. Sgt. Hanson was engaged in law enforcement activity. There is no evidence of a malfunction in Sgt. Hanson’s camera and Sgt. Hanson herself could not recall if she tried to activate the camera or if it failed due to a malfunction. Therefore, based on a preponderance of the evidence COPA finds Allegation 1 is **Sustained**.

COPA fins that Allegation 2 against Sgt. Hanson, that she deactivated Officer Corona’s body-worn camera without cause, is **Sustained**. Special Order S03-04 states that body-worn cameras cannot be deactivated until a scene is secured and cleared unless a victim, witness, or confidential informant requests that the camera be deactivated. In this case, no victim or witness can be seen or heard making such a request. Sgt. Hanson states that she turned off the camera because she was going to speak with the victim’s attorney and she was concerned with attorney-client privilege. Sgt. Hanson is mistaken about the nature of attorney client privilege. Sgt. Hanson was not the lawyer’s client, so conversations between her and the attorney would not be subject to privilege. Further, as a both Sgt. Hanson and Officer Corona were present while Officer Blunt was

speaking with her attorney, their presence as third parties would break any privilege. Therefore, Sgt. Hanson's reason for deactivating Officer Corona's camera does not fall under the exceptions laid out in Special Order S03-04. For this reason, based on a preponderance of the evidence, COPA finds Allegation 2 is **Sustained**.

#### IV. RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE FOR SUSTAINED ALLEGATIONS

##### a. Sgt. Kristen Hanson

##### i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History

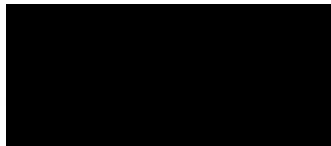
1. **Complimentary:** 3 Crime Reduction Awards (2004, 2009, 2019), 1 Complimentary Letter, 1 Department Commendation, 19 Honorable Mentions, 1 NATO Summit Service Award, 1 Unit Meritorious Performance Award
2. **Disciplinary:** None

##### ii. Recommended Penalty, by Allegation

1. **Allegation No. 1:** Violation Noted
2. **Allegation No. 2:** Violation Noted

Although Sgt. Hanson violated the Special Order regarding body-worn camera usage, the violation was not intentional. This is evidenced by Sgt. Hanson instructing others to turn their cameras on. Additionally, her instruction to Officer Corona to turn his camera off was based on a reasonable mistaken belief and attempt to protect attorney-client privilege. Therefore, COPA recommends a Violation Noted for these violations.

Approved:



August 28, 2020

---

Andrea Kersten  
*Chief of Investigative Operations*

---

Date

Appendix A

Assigned Investigative Staff

---

<b>Squad#:</b>	9
<b>Investigator:</b>	Ryan McPhail
<b>Supervising Investigator:</b>	Sharday Jackson
<b>Deputy Chief Administrator:</b>	Andrea Kersten