



Log #2022-4494

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 20, 2022, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) received an Initiation Report from Chicago Police Department Lieutenant Edward Ramirez, #711, Unit 004, alleging misconduct by a CPD member. Lieutenant Ramirez alleged that on October 19, 2022, at approximately 10:38 pm, at or near ██████████ Sergeant Lynn Meuris, #1369, Unit 004, committed misconduct by grabbing ██████████ face and pulling her hair without justification.² Upon review of the evidence, COPA served an additional allegation that Lieutenant Meuris called ██████████ a, “fucking cunt.” Following its investigation, COPA reached sustained findings regarding the allegations of excessive force and verbal abuse.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE³

On October 19, 2022, at 8:29 pm, ██████████ telephoned 911 and reported her juvenile daughter, ██████████ and her daughter’s friend, ██████████ missing from ██████████ ██████████ Officer Vitaliy Volyanskyy and Officer Derek Sanderson were dispatched and at approximately 8:43 pm they found ██████████ and ██████████ in the vicinity of 7900 S. Crandon Avenue. ██████████ and ██████████ were cooperative as the officers drove them back to ██████████

At approximately 8:50 pm, the officers, along with ██████████ and ██████████ arrived at ██████████ and were met by the girls’ parents. Although both girls were initially cooperative with the officers, they ultimately refused to exit the police vehicle. Officer Volyanskyy stood outside the vehicle and spoke to them in an attempt to coax them to exit the backseat of the police vehicle peacefully. From approximately 8:50 pm until 10:05 pm Officer Volyanskyy spoke with ██████████ and ██████████ but was unsuccessful in convincing them to exit the police vehicle peacefully.

At approximately 10:09 pm Sergeant Lynn Meuris arrived on scene, and after being briefed by Officer Volyanskyy and Officer Sanderson, spoke to ██████████ and ██████████ to convince them to exit the police vehicle. At approximately 10:28 pm, after being unsuccessful in convincing the two girls to exit the vehicle, Sergeant Meuris instructed the officers to pull them

¹ Appendix A includes case identifiers such as the date, time, and location of the incident, the involved parties and their demographics, and the applicable rules and policies.

² One or more of these allegations fall within COPA’s jurisdiction pursuant to Chicago Municipal Code § 2-78-120. Therefore, COPA determined it would be the primary investigative agency in this matter.

³ The following is a summary of what COPA finds most likely occurred during this incident. This summary utilized information from several different sources, including BWC footage, police reports, CPD members’ statements to COPA.

out of the vehicle. For the next four minutes the Officers and Sergeant Meuris struggled with the girls to get them out of the vehicle.⁴ During the physical struggle, Sergeant Meuris ordered ██████ not to bite her. ██████ replied that she only trying to bite a string hanging from ██████ clothing.⁵

After the girls were successfully removed from the police vehicle, ██████ was placed in handcuffs, and ██████ was placed into the backseat of her parents' vehicle waiting nearby. While standing on the street, ██████ continued to argue with Sergeant Meuris, accusing Sergeant Meuris of being disrespectful to her. Sergeant Meuris, who was bent over and conducting a search when ██████ called her disrespectful, popped up and pointed her index finger in ██████ face. Sergeant Meuris raised her voice and yelled over ██████ as she yelled back at her. Then, Sergeant Meuris simultaneously used her left hand and grabbed the front of ██████ face and her right hand to grab the back of ██████ hair.⁶ Officer Volyanskyy, who was standing next to ██████ and Sergeant Meuris, repeatedly called out, "Sarge, sarge, sarge." He then placed himself between Sergeant Meuris and ██████ stated, "Sarge, I got it," and put ██████ into the back of his marked police SUV.⁷ Then, Sergeant Meuris slammed the back door shut while yelling, "You tried to bite me, you fucking cunt!" at ██████⁸

████████ was allowed to leave with her parents while ██████ was transported to Hartgrove Hospital for a psychiatric evaluation at her mother's request.

Neither ██████ nor their respective parents, cooperated with COPA's investigation into this incident.

During her statement to COPA,⁹ Sergeant Meuris explained that she grabbed the front of ██████ face and the back of her hair to prevent ██████ from biting her. Sergeant Meuris stated that ██████ continued to be uncooperative and argumentative after she was handcuffed. Sergeant Meuris stated that she perceived ██████ to tilt her head as if she was about to bite or headbutt her.¹⁰ Sergeant Meuris stated that because of her perception, coupled with the fact that ██████ had already attempted to bite her moments earlier, she decided she was not going to allow ██████ to bite, headbutt, or batter her in any way, and therefore

⁴ While the officers struggled to remove the girls from the backseat, one of the girls exclaimed that "she" was trying to pull down her panties and was trying to "rape" her. The body worn camera footage showed two girls in the throes of a mental health crisis and multiple officers attempting to remove them from the back of the police vehicle. COPA attempted to take statements from both girls and their parents, however, none of the parties cooperated with COPA's investigation. As such, there is no objective verifiable evidence to support an allegation of attempted sexual assault. Without any additional evidence or a statement from an involved party, COPA elected not serve this allegation. See Att. 17 at 1:49:20 to 1:49:37.

⁵ Att. 19 at 00:26:10

⁶ Att. 17 at 1:56:53.

⁷ Att. 17 at 1:56:55 to 1:57:12

⁸ Att. 17 at 1:57:55. In addition to calling ██████ a "fucking cunt", Sergeant Meuris also used other profanity in front of the juveniles, including the words, "goddamnit", "fucking" and "motherfucking" (all seemingly for emphasis) and stating words to the effect of, "They act like they ain't never gonna see another pussy in their lives." Att. 17 at 1:51:25.

⁹ Att. 44

¹⁰ Att. 44, p. 24, lines 23-24, and p. 25, lines 1-2.

grabbed her face and back of her hair to prevent [REDACTED] from harming her.¹¹ Sergeant Meuris added that she used her hold of [REDACTED] head as a control tactic and placed her in the back of the police vehicle to transport her to Hartgrove Hospital as her mother requested. Sergeant Meuris believed she was justified with this course of physical restraint because she had been instructed in the Chicago Police Department's training academy that grabbing the head and hair is an acceptable control tactic (i.e. control the head, control the body).¹²

Sergeant Meuris admitted she called [REDACTED] a, "fucking cunt." Sergeant Meuris explained that she did it out of frustration and anger that [REDACTED] attempted to bite her.¹³

In his statement to COPA, Officer Volyanskyy stated Sergeant Meuris was "upset", and that he saw Sergeant Meuris put her fingers on [REDACTED] mouth.¹⁴ He added that he grabbed Sergeant Meuris' hand and said, "Sergeant, I got it. I got her. I got her."¹⁵

After the incident concluded, Officer Volyanskyy completed a Crisis Intervention Report.¹⁶ Sergeant Meuris completed Tactical Response Reports documenting her interactions with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].¹⁷ CPD Commander Keith Milmine, #45 indicated that Sergeant Meuris' use of force against [REDACTED] was not in compliance with Department policy and directives.¹⁸

III. ALLEGATIONS

Sergeant Lynn Meuris:

1. Grabbing [REDACTED] face and pulling her hair without justification.
 - Sustained.
2. Calling [REDACTED] a, "fucking cunt."
 - Sustained.

IV. CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Based on the totality of the circumstances, COPA finds Sergeant Meuris' perception that [REDACTED] was about to bite her, thereby justifying her use of force, was unreasonable. These circumstances include the fact that [REDACTED] was already in handcuffs and surrounded by other officers, that body worn camera footage shows [REDACTED] did not attempt to bite Sergeant Meuris in the moments prior to grabbing her face and hair, that the video also shows Sergeant Meuris reacting negatively to [REDACTED] calling her "disrespectful", that Officer

¹¹ Att. 44, p. 24, lines 2-5.

¹² Att. 44, p. 25, lines 16-24.

¹³ Att. 44, p. 26, lines 4-24, and p. 27, lines 1-4.

¹⁴ Att. 39, p. 17, line 24, and p. 18, line 1.

¹⁵ Att. 39, p. 18, lines 2-4.

¹⁶ Att. 2

¹⁷ Atts. 8 and 9

¹⁸ Att. 8, p. 3

Volyanskyy felt it necessary to intervene between Sergeant Meuris and [REDACTED] and that [REDACTED] was a juvenile in the throes of a mental health crisis. COPA does not believe that Sergeant Meuris intentionally misled COPA in her statement, rather, COPA finds that her perception of the incident was not a reasonable interpretation of how the event occurred.

COPA is unable to assess the credibility of any of the civilian subjects related to this incident, as they did not participate in CPA's investigation.

V. ANALYSIS¹⁹

COPA finds that Allegation #1 against Sergeant Meuris, that she grabbed [REDACTED] face and pulled her hair without justification, is **Sustained**. Under CPD policy, members may only use force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a person.²⁰ Consistent with the Department policy that all uses of force must be objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional, Department members will refrain from using force against a person that is secured and restrained with handcuffs, or other restraining devices (e.g., flexible restraining devices), unless the member must act to prevent injury to the Department member, the restrained person, or another person.

Sergeant Meuris stated that she perceived [REDACTED] behavior and demeanor to be a precursor of an imminent attack. Sergeant Meuris stated that she reacted by grabbing [REDACTED] head and hair as a compliance hold to prevent [REDACTED] biting her. Although that may have been Sergeant Meuris' perception in the moment, the related body worn camera footage showed that although [REDACTED] was arguing with, was verbally aggressive, and talking over, Sergeant Meuris, she did not appear to pose the immediate physical threat. Rather, [REDACTED] was in handcuffs and surrounded by multiple officers. Additionally, Officer Volyanskyy's attempts to intervene, by calling out "Sarge" repeatedly, by grabbing Sergeant Meuris' hand, and eventually taking control of [REDACTED] away from Sergeant Meuris, further indicates that other officers did not perceive [REDACTED] as an immediate threat. Sergeant Meuris' reaction was based on anger, retaliation, and/or frustration. As such, it was not reasonable or permissible for Sergeant Meuris to use force against [REDACTED] and Allegation #1 is sustained.

Additionally, COPA finds Allegation #2 against Sergeant Meuris, that she called [REDACTED] a "fucking cunt," is **Sustained**. The recordings from the relevant body worn cameras captured Sergeant Meuris calling [REDACTED] a, "fucking cunt" after [REDACTED] was secured in the back of a marked police vehicle. Sergeant Meuris admitted to the offense, adding that she was angry and frustrated with [REDACTED] and that she believed [REDACTED] was going to bite. COPA notes that, even if [REDACTED] attempted to or even succeeded in biting Sergeant Meuris, Sergeant Meuris still would not have been justified in directing profanity at her. Considering the video evidence capturing the profanity, as well as Sergeant Meuris admission, COPA finds Allegation #2 sustained.

¹⁹ For a definition of COPA's findings and standards of proof, see Appendix B.

²⁰ See G03-02-01 (II)(C), Force Options (effective April 15, 2021).

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION

a. Sergeant Lynn Meuris

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History²¹

Sergeant Meuris’ complimentary history is comprised of 73 Achievements, including one Special Commendation, one Department Commendation, one Military Service Award, and one Unit Meritorious Performance Award. She has no recent sustained disciplinary history.

ii. Recommended Discipline

Here, COPA has found that Sergeant Lynn Meuris violated Rules 2, 8 and 9 by grabbing [redacted] face, pulling her hair and calling her a, “fucking cunt”. This incident was captured on several body worn cameras. Sergeant Meuris also admitted to directing profanity at the juvenile, explaining that she was angry and frustrated. COPA recognizes that Sergeant Meuris was faced with a difficult and frustrating situation. Additionally, [redacted] did not sustain any physical injury from Sergeant Meuris’ use of force. However, Sergeant Meuris was in a leadership role as a sergeant and not only used force without justification and directed profanity at a juvenile, but she did so in front of officers she was supervising. Finally, COPA notes that the profanity Sergeant Meuris used was particularly vulgar and directed at a juvenile. Based on this information, combined with Sergeant Meuris’ history, COPA recommends a significant suspension up to separation.

Approved:

[redacted signature]

Stacy Jackson
Deputy Chief Administrator – Chief Investigator

April 28, 2023
Date

[redacted signature]

Andrea Kersten
Chief Administrator

April 28, 2023
Date

²¹ Att. 45

Appendix ACase Details

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	October 19, 2022 / 10:27 pm / [REDACTED] Chicago, IL 60617.
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	October 20, 2022 / 8:45 am.
Involved Officer #1:	Sergeant Lynn Meuris / Star #1369 / Employee ID # [REDACTED] / DOA: August 29, 2005 / Unit: 004 / Female / White.
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] / Female / Black.
Involved Individual #2:	[REDACTED] / Female / Black.

Applicable Rules

- Rule 2:** Any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
- Rule 3:** Any failure to promote the Department's efforts to implement its policy or accomplish its goals.
- Rule 5:** Failure to perform any duty.
- Rule 6:** Disobedience of an order or directive, whether written or oral.
- Rule 8:** Disrespect to or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.
- Rule 9:** Engaging in any unjustified verbal or physical altercation with any person, while on or off duty.
- Rule 10:** Inattention to duty.
- Rule 14:** Making a false report, written or oral.
- Rule 38:** Unlawful or unnecessary use or display of a weapon.
- Rule __:** *[Insert text of any additional rule(s) violated]*

Applicable Policies and Laws

- G03-02-01: Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective April 15, 2021).

Appendix B

Definition of COPA's Findings and Standards of Proof

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** can be described as evidence indicating that it is **more likely than not** that a proposition is proved.²² For example, if the evidence gathered in an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the conduct complied with CPD policy than that it did not, even if by a narrow margin, then the preponderance of the evidence standard is met.

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. Clear and convincing can be 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.”²³

²² 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 is found to be more probably true than not).

²³ *People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036, ¶ 28 (quoting Illinois Pattern Jury Instructions, Criminal, No. 4.19 (4th ed. 2000)).

Appendix C**Transparency and Publication Information**

Check all that apply:

- Abuse of Authority
- Body Worn Camera Violation
- Coercion
- Death or Serious Bodily Injury in Custody
- Domestic Violence
- Excessive Force
- Failure to Report Misconduct
- False Statement
- Firearm Discharge
- Firearm Discharge – Animal
- Firearm Discharge – Suicide
- Firearm Discharge – Unintentional
- First Amendment
- Improper Search and Seizure – Fourth Amendment Violation
- Incidents in Lockup
- Motor Vehicle Incidents
- OC Spray Discharge
- Search Warrants
- Sexual Misconduct
- Taser Discharge
- Unlawful Denial of Access to Counsel
- Unnecessary Display of a Weapon
- Use of Deadly Force – other
- Verbal Abuse
- Other Investigation