

SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	December 14, 2019, 6:00 p.m., 5655 South Pulaski Road
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	December 14, 2019, 7:31 p.m.
Involved Officer #1:	Cynthia Carrion, star #8047, employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: July 17, 2017, PO, Unit 008, DOB: [REDACTED], 1993, Female, White Hispanic
Involved Officer #2:	Nicholas Reno, star #15106, employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: June 25, 2018, PO, Unit 008, DOB: [REDACTED], 1997, Male, White
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED], 1996, Male, White Hispanic
Case Type:	Improper Stop/Seizure

I. ALLEGATIONS

Officer	Allegation	Finding
Officer Cynthia Carrion	It is alleged by [REDACTED] that on or about December 14, 2019 at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near 5655 South Pulaski Road, Officer Cynthia Carrion, star # 8047, committed misconduct through the following acts or omissions, by stopping [REDACTED] without justification.	Exonerated
Officer Nicholas Reno	It is alleged by [REDACTED] that on or about December 14, 2019 at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near 5655 South Pulaski Road, Officer Nicholas Reno, star # 15106, committed misconduct through the following acts or omissions, by stopping [REDACTED] without justification.	Exonerated

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE¹

On December 14, 2019, at approximately 6:00 p.m., Officer Cynthia Carrion (Officer Carrion) and Officer Nicholas Reno (Officer Reno) stopped [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) and explained that his license plate was not properly illuminated. Officers Carrion and Reno, immediately, asked [REDACTED] if he smoked because they smelled cannabis. [REDACTED] denied smoking cannabis, but admitted he just dropped off his friend who did smoke. Officer Carrion told [REDACTED] to step out of

¹ COPA conducted a thorough and complete investigation of this matter. The following is a summary of the material evidence gathered and relied upon in our analysis.

the vehicle because, due to the smell, she wanted to confirm nothing else was in the vehicle.² ██████ complied and moved to the back of his vehicle with Officer Reno. While Officer Carrion searched the vehicle, ██████ showed his lights were on by squatting down to the ground and looking up at the lights. Officer Carrion came around the rear of the vehicle, bent over and looked up at the lights, using her flashlight. Officer Carrion acknowledged the dim light and stated they have to be brighter. Officers Carrion and Reno stated, from their perspective they could not see the light.³ ██████ said he understood, later admitted he did not know the lights were dim,⁴ but continued to argue the officers pulled him over for no reason.⁵ After running ██████ name, Officer Carrion told ██████ they had to take him in because his license is suspended. Officer Reno explained his vehicle would be impounded because his license was suspended.⁶ ██████ received two citations, for no license plate light and a suspended license.⁷

III. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

COPA finds the allegation that Officer Carrion and Officer Reno stopped ██████ without justification is **Exonerated**. According to Illinois State law and Chicago Municipal Code, every motor vehicle shall be illuminated so that the license plate is clear and legible at a distance of fifty feet.⁸ While ██████ argues that he should not have been stopped because both his license plate light bulbs were lit, the officers stated it needed to be brighter. Prior to being stopped, in-car camera video captured ██████ vehicle beside an unknown vehicle and shows the unknown vehicle's license plate is clearly illuminated but ██████ is dark. Therefore, ██████ vehicle was not in compliance with State law or Municipal Code, and Officers Carrion and Reno were within CPD policy when they stopped ██████. Thus, this allegation against Officers Carrion and Reno is **Exonerated**.

² "After an officer is in possession of facts sufficient to support probable cause to believe that a vehicle contains contraband, the vehicle may be searched without a warrant and the search area includes any interior compartment of the vehicle that might reasonably contain the contraband." *People v. Contreras*, 2014 IL App (1st) 131889, ¶ 28. *see United States v. Wimbush*, 337 F.3d 947, 950-51 (7th Cir. 2003) (smell of marijuana gave rise to probable cause for warrantless search of vehicle revealing marijuana in passenger compartment)

³ Attachments 20, 21. In-car camera show ██████ vehicle beside another vehicle on the road. ██████ license plate does not appear to be illuminated, while the other vehicle's license plate light is clearly on. *See* Attachment 19.

⁴ In his interview with COPA, ██████ stated he had stock lights not LED, so they are not as bright but they can be seen. ██████ provided close up photographs, taken December 16, 2019, showing his vehicle had to lighted bulbs. *See* Attachments 8-11.

⁵ ██████ in his COPA interview, stated he believed Officer Carrion was hostile, profiled him as a gang member because she asked where he was going and if he had a gang affiliation, and she was trying to meet a monthly quota by stopping him. Contrarily, BWC shows Officer Carrion was professional and explained multiple times to ██████ why he was stopped, why his vehicle was searched and why he was being taken to the station. At one point, Officer Carrion acknowledged ██████ thinks he is being treated unfairly, but she is just doing her job.

⁶ Attachments 20, 21.

⁷ Attachment 4.

⁸ 625 ILCS 5/12-201(c) and MCC 9-76-050 (d).

Approved:



5-28-2020

Angela Hearts-Glass
Deputy Chief Administrator – Chief Investigator

Date

Appendix A

Assigned Investigative Staff

Squad#:	Six
Investigator:	Elizabeth Brett
Supervising Investigator:	Elaine Tarver
Deputy Chief Administrator:	Angela Hearts-Glass