

SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	May 25, 2019/ 6:00PM/ [REDACTED]
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	May 30, 2019/7:38PM
Involved Member #1:	Tennell [REDACTED] Employee [REDACTED], Police Clerk, DOA June 1, 2016, Unit 002, Female, African American
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Female, African American
Case Type:	Domestic

I. ALLEGATIONS

Member	Allegation	Finding / Recommendation
Tennell Coleman	1. It is alleged that on May 25, 2019, at approximately 6:00PM, at or near the location of [REDACTED], the accused slapped [REDACTED] about the face with an open hand and/or pushed [REDACTED] about the head causing her head to strike a wall.	Sustained

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE¹

In his **Initiation Report**,² Sgt. Pulia documented that on May 30, 2019, he responded to a child abuse call at Comer’s Hospital. Upon arrival, Sgt. Poulia spoke with Beat 223 who related that the victim, [REDACTED] reported that [REDACTED] Civilian Department Member Tennell [REDACTED] slapped her on the face causing her to strike her head on a wall. Sgt. Pulia observed a 3–5-inch scratch/abrasion on [REDACTED] forehead. An evidence technician was requested to take **photos**³ of [REDACTED] injuries.

Case Report, RD# JC-284897,⁴ documents that on May 30, 2019, at approximately 2:55pm, officers responded to a child abuse call at [REDACTED] Upon arrival, it was reported that [REDACTED] noticed a scratch mark and bruising on [REDACTED] reported to officers that after she failed to place the cap back on the nail polish bottle, Civ. Coleman became angry and slapped her on the face, causing her to strike her head on the wall. Officers observed a 3-5-inch scar on [REDACTED] forehead with noticeable skin discoloration.

¹COPA conducted a full and complete investigation of this matter, including the interview of all pertinent civilian and officer witnesses, and the collection and review of digital, documentary, and forensic evidence.

² Att. 1

³ Att. 7

⁴ Att. 2

According to the **Detective Supplemental Report**,⁵ ██████████ ██████████ of ██████████ ██████████ and ██████████ of Civ. Coleman, was not home at the time of the incident. He was later told that, while Civ. Coleman was scolding ██████████ about the fingernail polish, she raised her hand and ██████████ ducked out of the way and hit a wall.

Civ. Coleman told detectives that while moving into their new home, ██████████ decided to paint her nails instead of unpacking like she was instructed to do. ██████████ dropped the nail polish and spilled it on the carpet and wall. Civ. Coleman, who was angry about the incident, raised her hand at ██████████ ducked and turned away, striking her head on the wall. Civ. Coleman applied an icepack to ██████████ head. The following day, Civ. Coleman observed a bruise on ██████████ forehead, and she apologized.

In a subsequent interview with detectives on June 3, 2019, ██████████ told detectives that they had just moved into their new home and that she was downstairs painting her nails when she dropped the bottle and spilled the polish. Civ. Coleman raised her hand at ██████████ who in turn, ducked and struck the right side of her face on the wall.

In a statement to COPA on August 22, 2019, ██████████ ██████████ related that when she went to school, ██████████ noticed a scar on the right side of her head and asked her what happened. ██████████ stated that there was a knot on her head that she sustained a few days prior. ██████████ told COPA that, on the date and time in question, she was supposed to be unpacking her belongings after moving into their new house. Instead, she decided to paint her nails in her bedroom. When ██████████ Civ. Coleman, came to ██████████ bedroom, she noticed the nail polish kit on the windowsill. ██████████ stated that she was not allowed to paint her nails in the house because they had just moved into the new house, and they had carpet. ██████████ retrieved the nail polish kit and began yelling at ██████████ went downstairs, followed by ██████████ As. Civ. Coleman was going down the stairs, she dropped the fingernail polish and the polish splattered on the stairs and the wall. Civ. Coleman then raised her hand up and ██████████ believed that Civ. Coleman was planning to strike her. ██████████ began walking backwards, away from ██████████ and turned around, striking the right side of her head against the wall. ██████████ explained that she did not know she was close to the wall because they had just moved into the house, and she was unfamiliar with the layout. Almost instantly, a knot formed on her head and ██████████ put frozen vegetables on her head to subdue the swelling. ██████████ also sustained a scar/abrasion on her head. ██████████ stated that the following day, ██████████ sent her a text message stating that she was sorry for putting a knot on her head. ██████████ stated that when she gets in trouble, she normally gets her phone or television privileges taken away. ██████████ stated that ██████████ spansks her with a belt and has never used her hand. ██████████ also stated that she and ██████████ have never been punched by ██████████.

██████████ denied telling DCFS, the doctors, and teacher that she was struck on the face. ██████████ stated that the situation broke her heart. She explained that ██████████ was hurt, and she has four kids to provide for and she did not want ██████████ to lose her job. ██████████ stated that both of her parents explained the possible consequences and how the situation could affect their family.

⁵ Att. 3

⁶ Att.



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In her statement to COPA on September 30, 2020, ██████████⁸ ██████████ ██████████, related that ██████████ was ██████████. She described ██████████ as timid and shy and always wanted to please others. ██████████ noticed that ██████████ would often look as if she had a flustered morning when she arrived at school and would need assistance calming down. ██████████ noticed that ██████████ would often display behavior as if she was always “on edge.”⁹ ██████████ expressed her concerns with the ██████████, ██████████¹⁰ ██████████ ██████████ reported that ██████████ would come to school crying sometimes. ██████████ believed that she had a lot of responsibilities at home including taking care of her ██████████. ██████████ had confided in ██████████ and told her that sometimes she is too tired to do her homework because she had to give ██████████ baths and help them with their homework. ██████████ also revealed that she would often get in trouble for ██████████ mischief.

██████████ stated that, on previous occasions, she observed a handprint on ██████████ face, a black eye, and scratches on her necks. ██████████ referred ██████████ to ██████████ and she believes that DCFs was contacted. ██████████ stated that, on the date in question, she observed marks on ██████████ face or neck. When she asked ██████████ about the bruises, ██████████ responded that she was left home alone with ██████████, and they were playing with fingernail polish. Somehow the nail polish spilled on the wall or rug of their new home. When ██████████

⁷ Att. 7.

⁸ Att. 19, 20

⁹ Att. 20, Pg. 6, Ln. 21

¹⁰ ██████████ ██████████ failed to cooperate with the COPA Investigation. See Attachments 29, 30

came home and discovered it, she struck [REDACTED] with her hand. When [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] “We cannot let this go any further,”¹¹ [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] apologized and showed [REDACTED] a text message from [REDACTED] that stated words to the effect of, “I’m sorry for beating you.”¹² [REDACTED] reported the incident to [REDACTED] who reported the incident to the police and DCFS. When the ambulance responded to the school, [REDACTED] was extremely apprehensive about going to the hospital, but [REDACTED] calmed her down and explained the importance of being checked out by a doctor. [REDACTED] stated that she had no further contact with [REDACTED] after that date because [REDACTED] transferred her [REDACTED] from the school immediately thereafter. [REDACTED] related that she never had any conversation with [REDACTED] about the suspected abuse because she did not want to put [REDACTED] in jeopardy.

[REDACTED] stated that she took a picture of the text message but did not know if she still had it in her possession. [REDACTED] stated that while she did not do any paperwork regarding the injuries that she observed on [REDACTED] she directed [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] who documented the incidents and ultimately reported it to DCFS. [REDACTED] who has been [REDACTED], related that this was not the first time she reported suspicions of abuse [REDACTED].

According to DCFS records,¹³ [REDACTED] related that she resides in a home with [REDACTED] Tennell Coleman, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and her [REDACTED]. During her interview with Child Protection Specialist (CPS) Bogan on May 30, 2019, [REDACTED] related that she sustained the scar on her forehead when [REDACTED] “knocked”¹⁴ her into a wall. She explained that [REDACTED] attempted to muffle her and, when she dodged it, [REDACTED] pushed her head into the wall. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] knew about the incident, but as instructed by [REDACTED] she told them that she hit her head on the wall. Ms. Bogan documented that she observed text messages from Tennell Coleman’s cell phone whereas Civ. Coleman was apologizing for the incident. One text message read, “I am sorry for putting that knot on your head.”¹⁵

[REDACTED] reported that when [REDACTED] get in trouble, they get a whooping with a belt, but they are never bruised. [REDACTED] expressed that she was fearful as it pertains to discipline because she did not want [REDACTED] to severely hit her like she usually does. [REDACTED] stated that when [REDACTED] gets angry, she takes it out on her and [REDACTED] is sometimes scared to go home. When asked about an incident in which she sustained a black eye, [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] would tell people that she got hurt playing basketball or as a result of a fall. She reported that [REDACTED] is smart and will cover things up. When CPS asked [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] contact information, she became fearful and expressed concerns about [REDACTED] finding out. [REDACTED] was fearful for CPS to contact [REDACTED] and stated words to the effect of, “I just have to make it to 18... [REDACTED] won’t kill me.”¹⁶

The report documents that [REDACTED], who was explaining to [REDACTED] the importance of getting medical treatment, stated that she was tired of seeing bruises on her and a black eye was unacceptable. [REDACTED] related [REDACTED] reported that Civ. Coleman

¹¹ Att. 20, Pg. 15, Ln. 19-20

¹² Att. 20, Pg. 14, Ln. 24 and Pg. 15, Ln. 1

¹³ Att. 28

¹⁴ Att. 28, Pg. 46

¹⁵ Att. 28, Pg. 5

¹⁶ Att. 28, Pg. 46

slapped her across the face and her head struck the wall. [REDACTED] reported that she got the scar from [REDACTED] fingernail when she hit her.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

Civ. Coleman told DCFS that both she and [REDACTED] are responsible for disciplining their children, [REDACTED] more so with the boys while she disciplines [REDACTED]. She stated that [REDACTED] also makes them do squats or he would pop them with his hand or a belt. Civ. Coleman stated that sometimes [REDACTED] would turn red as a result of disciplining but she has never had any bruises. Civ. Coleman reported that [REDACTED] sustained the scar on her forehead when she struck her head on the wall. Civ. Coleman denied physically disciplining [REDACTED] on the date of the incident. Furthermore, she stated that [REDACTED] has never had a black eye.

DCFS implemented a safety plan on May 30, 2019, requiring supervision during all contact with Civ. Coleman and her children. Civ. Coleman was instructed to relocate to [REDACTED] residence and attend parenting classes.

In a subsequent interview on June 10, 2019, [REDACTED] stated that she wasn't afraid of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] denied being left alone at home, and stated that things are good. She related that things are currently not the same at home because [REDACTED] is not there. She explained that [REDACTED] is the "glue of the house."¹⁸ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

A previous DCFS report, logged under Intake #13737054, was registered but not investigated. It was reported that [REDACTED] was dragged, choked, and she had a "hand print and scratches."¹⁹ It was revealed that [REDACTED] sustained a black eye on a previous incident, and she stated that [REDACTED] would tell her to tell other people that she was injured playing basketball or during a fall.

On August 27, 2019, DCFS entered an Indicated finding against Civ. Coleman.

According to [REDACTED]²⁰, on May 30, 2019, at 2:59 pm, [REDACTED] arrived at the hospital, via ambulance, with a wound to the right side of her forehead. It was reported that [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] reported to ER personnel that [REDACTED] attempted to strike her and when [REDACTED] dodged the strike, she fell down the stairs. A visual exam of [REDACTED] revealed a 3-4cm linear abrasion to the right frontal scalp that appeared well healed and a small and round 2cm abrasion on the left arm. It was noted [REDACTED] was

¹⁷ Att. 28, Pg. 48
¹⁸ Att. 28, Pg. 59
¹⁹ Att. 28, Pg. 45
²⁰ Att. 4

tearful and stated words to the effect of, "I don't want [REDACTED] to be in trouble."²¹ [REDACTED] reported that [REDACTED] occasionally loses her temper and has hit her in the past. [REDACTED] was diagnosed with Head Abrasion and discharged.

In a statement to COPA on October 20, 2021, [REDACTED] Coleman²² explained that she was at home when one of her children told her that [REDACTED] spilled nail polish on the carpet. Civ. Coleman went upstairs and saw the polish splattered on [REDACTED] bedroom wall. After she left [REDACTED] room and proceeded down the stairs, Civ. Coleman noticed the polish was also splattered on the stairs and carpet. Civ. Coleman called [REDACTED] out of her room and told her to come downstairs. While still on the stairs, Civ. Coleman scolded [REDACTED] because she was supposed to be unpacking her belongings, not playing with nail polish. Civ. Coleman explained that [REDACTED] was standing two steps above her when she attempted to strike [REDACTED] with her hand. [REDACTED] ducked and hit the side of her head on the wall. Civ. Coleman instructed [REDACTED] to clean up the hallway. Minutes later, Civ. Coleman observed a knot on [REDACTED] forehead, and it was red. She applied ice to her head to reduce the swelling. Civ. Coleman stated that [REDACTED] did not complain of pain and she was not bleeding so she did not take [REDACTED] to the hospital. The following day, Civ. Coleman sent [REDACTED] a text message explaining to her that [REDACTED] was wrong for being disobedient. Civ. Coleman also sent [REDACTED] a text²³ stating words to the effect of, "I'm sorry for putting a knot on your head."²⁴ In hindsight, Civ. Coleman stated that her choice of words used in the text were incorrect. Civ. Coleman stated that although she did not physically put the knot on [REDACTED] head, [REDACTED] struck her head on the wall while dodging Civ. Coleman's strike.

Civ. Coleman related that DCFS completed the investigation with a finding of "Indicated" for one of the allegations. She was required to attend parenting classes and family counseling. She stated that she had no prior contact with DCFS. Civ. Coleman reported that she has had conversations with [REDACTED] about the incident and, on one occasion, told [REDACTED] that Civ. Coleman's job was in jeopardy. Civ. Coleman stated that she is not sure know why [REDACTED] reported that she struck her. She explained that [REDACTED] was going through a "fibbing" stage and always doing things to fit in. Civ. Coleman reported that [REDACTED] told her that she informed [REDACTED] it was an accident, [REDACTED] apologized, and then showed her the text that Civ. Coleman sent her. Civ. Coleman stated that, more likely than not, [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] what she thought [REDACTED] wanted to hear.

Coleman related that when [REDACTED] need disciplining, she normally takes their phone and video games and restricts them from participating in extracurricular activities. Civ. Coleman stated that sometimes they get spankings which consist of her striking them on the buttock with a belt or her hand. Civ. Coleman stated that she has never hit her children with a fist.

III. LEGAL STANDARD

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

²¹ Att. 4, Pg. 38

²² Att. 26, 27

²³ Civ. Coleman stated that she does not have the text that she sent to [REDACTED] because she purchased a new phone.

²⁴ Att. 27, Pg. 13, Ln. 15-18

1. Sustained - where it is determined, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the allegation in fact occurred;²⁵
2. Unfounded - where it is determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that an allegation is not supported by the facts;²⁶
3. Exonerated - where it is determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that the conduct described in the allegation occurred, but it is lawful and proper; or
4. Not Sustained - where there is insufficient evidence to sustain, unfound or exonerate the allegations.

IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

COPA finds that Allegation #1, that Civ. Coleman slapped ██████████ about the face with an open hand and/or pushed ██████████ about the head causing her head to strike the wall, is **Sustained**. ██████████ initially reported to ██████████ and responding officers that Civ. Coleman struck her on the face with an open hand. ██████████ told DCFS that Civ. Coleman knocked her into a wall. She explained that ██████████ attempted to muffle her and, when she dodged it, ██████████ pushed her head into the wall. After arriving at the hospital and fearing that ██████████ would get in trouble, she told hospital staff that ██████████ attempted to hit her and when she ducked, she fell down the stairs. ██████████ did not mention falling down the stairs to the responding officers or ██████████. During her interview with COPA, ██████████ reported that ██████████ raised her hand and she ducked, causing her to strike her head on the wall.

Although ██████████ provided different accounts of the incident to multiple parties during the investigation, based on the preponderance of the evidence, the incident occurred as initially alleged. Contemporaneous reports and independent direct evidence including the ET photos of ██████████ injury, Civ. Coleman's text message, and ██████████ initial outcry to ██████████ support the allegation. While ██████████ related that she did not tell ██████████ that ██████████ struck her, ██████████ has no motive to misrepresent the truth and has nothing to gain as a result of the investigation. ██████████ who is an experienced ██████████ and has reported abuse ██████████ in the past, suspected that ██████████ was being abused and referred her to ██████████. ██████████ recantation to COPA could be a result of Civ. Coleman being removed from the home after the incident was reported and both parents explaining to ██████████ the possible consequences/outcome the investigation could have on Civ. Coleman's employment. As ██████████ told detectives, Civ. Coleman is the "glue" of the house. This investigation revealed that Civ. Coleman was responsible

²⁵ **Preponderance of evidence** is described as evidence indicating 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. *See Avery v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 216 Ill. 2d 100, 191 (2005).

²⁶ **Clear and convincing evidence** is described as more than preponderance of the evidence but lower than beyond-a-reasonable doubt required to convict a person of a criminal offense. Clear and Convincing is described as a "degree of proof, which, considering all the evidence in the case, produces the firm and abiding belief that it is highly probable" there was no misconduct. *See People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036 (2016).

for [REDACTED] injury. Thus, COPA finds the allegation is sustained by a preponderance of the evidence.

V. RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE FOR SUSTAINED ALLEGATIONS

a. Civilian Tennell Coleman

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History

Civ. Coleman has received 1 award and has no disciplinary history.

ii. Recommended Penalty

COPA has considered Civ. Coleman’s complimentary and disciplinary histories. COPA has also considered the sustained allegation against Coleman and the totality of circumstances surrounding this incident. Department members are prohibited from unjustified physical altercations. This incident involved a minor and resulted in an injury. COPA recommends a 25-day Suspension and Anger Management.

Approved:

[REDACTED]

Sharday Jackson
Deputy Chief Administrator

October 30, 2023

Date