

**SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	April 5-7, 2019 and Various dates and times between 2017-2019 at the location of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	April 11, 2019/April 15, 2019
Involved Officer #1: (Accused)	Larry Tello Star #19177, Employee ID # [REDACTED] Date of Appointment: 4/6/2015, Rank: Officer Unit of Assignment: 008/376, Age: 38 Gender: Male, Race: White
Involved Individual:	[REDACTED] (Father), DOB: [REDACTED] 1986 Gender: Male, Race: White:  Minors: [REDACTED] DOB [REDACTED], 2011 Gender: Male, Race: White  [REDACTED], DOB: [REDACTED] 2013 Gender: Female, Race:
Case type:	Criminal Sexual Abuse/Child Abuse

**I. ALLEGATIONS**

Officer	Allegation	Finding
Officer Larry Tello	1. It is alleged that on unknown date and time between December 17, 2017 and April 10, 2019, at or near the location of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the accused inappropriately touched [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (a minor) genital area with his finger.	Not Sustained
	2. It is alleged that on or about an unknown date and time between 2019-2019, at or near the location of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the accused inappropriately touched [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (a minor) genital area.	Unfounded
	3. It is alleged that on an unknown date and time between April 5, 2019 and April 10, 2019, at or near the location of [REDACTED] the	

accused struck [REDACTED] [REDACTED] a minor, on his face with an open hand without justification.	Unfounded
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**II. APPLICABLE RULES AND LAWS**

**Rules**

Rule 1- Violation of any law or ordinance.

Rule 2- Any action or conduct which impeded the Department’s efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.

Rule 8- Disrespect or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.

Rule 9- Engaging in an unjustified verbal or physical altercation with any person, while on or off duty.

**III. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE<sup>1</sup>**

This investigation was launched based upon Criminal Sexual Abuse allegations reported to the Oak Forest Police Department (OFPD) against Chicago Police Officer, Larry Tello. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]<sup>2</sup> is the father and custodial parent of minors, 7-year-old [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and 5- year-old [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is the biological mother of the children and [REDACTED] of Officer Tello. [REDACTED] has court ordered visitation and overnights visits with the children. It should be noted, she and Officer Tello share a residence and have two small children together. Officer Tello also has a son from a previous relationship, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who also frequents the shared residence. For the purposes of this investigation, Officer Tello may also be referred to as “Big Larry.”

According to the OFPD case report, on April 10, 2019, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reported that [REDACTED] returned home from a visit with his mom on April 8, 2019, with a visible bruise on his face. [REDACTED] told him “[REDACTED]” slapped him twice with an open hand. A few days later, as he bathed [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] observed redness to her vaginal area. He relayed, [REDACTED] told him [REDACTED] touched her private parts” and that “it hurt.” [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is how the children refer to Officer Tello. Based on the allegations received, OFPD contacted the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and notified the Chicago Police Department (CPD) of the officer’s involvement. Subsequently on April 15, 2019, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] father of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and grandfather both children, reported to the OFPD that his grand-son, [REDACTED] had also been sexually abused by Officer Tello. However, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reportedly learned of the allegation through his son, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who told him that [REDACTED] had just recently disclosed it to him. As such, CPD were notified of the additional allegations, and conducted a parallel criminal investigation (Case Report # JC225495) against Officer Tello for Criminal Sexual Assault against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Records retrieved by

<sup>1</sup>COPA 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.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. [REDACTED] is the custodial parent of both involved minors

COPA from the Bureau of Detectives Division<sup>3</sup> revealed, Officer Tello was interviewed on November 26, 2019, by CPD Detective Izabela Figus #21172<sup>4</sup> and again on December 1, 2019, at which time he also submitted to a Polygraph test.<sup>5</sup> However, the criminal investigation was suspended, with no further charges pending. Officer Tello's Polygraph results revealed "no deception indicated."

Forensic Interviews of both children were conducted by the Chicago Children Advocacy Center (CCAC) and the allegations investigated by DCFS under SCR# [REDACTED] were unfounded.<sup>6</sup>

#### IV. Interviews

[REDACTED] provided a statement to COPA on May 9, 2019. [REDACTED] has full custody of both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. However, [REDACTED] has had court ordered visitation every Monday and every other weekend since 2016. On the weekend of April 5-8, 2019, both children went to their routine visit with [REDACTED]. However, when they returned that Tuesday after school, they reported to [REDACTED] that they were abused by [REDACTED]'s live-in boyfriend, Officer Larry Tello.

[REDACTED] relayed, after returning home on April 9, 2019, he observed a bruise/discoloration on [REDACTED] cheek area the size of a coin. When he asked [REDACTED] about it, he said that "Big Larry" hit him in the face with his hand. [REDACTED] took no further action at that time, but subsequently on April 10, 2019, while bathing [REDACTED] she told him that her "O-spot" hurt, while pointing in the direction of her private area. [REDACTED] relayed that this was the first time [REDACTED] referenced her private area in this manner. She further relayed, "It hurts, Big Larry touches my O-spot, and it hurts." It should be noted, he did not recollect observing any redness in that area. After learning of this, [REDACTED] reported both incidents to the Oak Forest Police Department and took [REDACTED] to Christ Hospital for examination. It should be noted, the doctors reported no signs on sexual abuse regarding [REDACTED].

A few days later, [REDACTED] told him when she visits with mom, she locks the door behind her because she is afraid of "Big Larry." She further relayed, Officer Tello enters the bathroom with a key, laughs, comes inside and touches her private area. Subsequently, [REDACTED] also shared additional information with him about visits with his mother and Officer Tello. After noticing [REDACTED] touching and/or grabbing his private area, [REDACTED] asked him if "Big Larry" touches him at which time [REDACTED] replied, "yes." However, [REDACTED] now realizes he asked [REDACTED] a leading question and that [REDACTED] may have been referring to Officer Tello touching him as in "hitting him." Based on the events [REDACTED] described to him, [REDACTED] believed their interpretations of the word "touch" differed. [REDACTED] further relayed, both children were interviewed by Department of Children and Family Services, Chicago Children's Advocacy Center, and their Guardian Ad Litem

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<sup>3</sup> Att. 22, 23

<sup>4</sup> Att. 17, 19

<sup>5</sup> Att. 18, 20

<sup>6</sup> Att. 15

<sup>7</sup> Att. 6

and although ██████ essentially gave the same account, ██████ never mentioned being sexually abused during either interview.

Moreover, ██████ added that he already had concerns about the kids visiting mom prior to these alleged events. On occasion, the children have returned home from visits without wearing underwear, appearing disheveled, and fatigued. ██████ mentioned previously that “Big Larry” struck him on occasion, but ██████ never observed signs until this reporting. However, in January 2019 he noticed a shift in their attitudes when it was time to for visits or if he told them that mom would be picking them up from school. He provided no additional information as it relates to the allegations.

On May 9, 2019, ██████<sup>8</sup> also provided a statement to COPA. He is the father of ██████ and grandfather of ██████ and ██████. He and his wife spend a significant amount of time with both children. ██████ relayed he learned of the alleged events through his son and grandchildren and was not present when the children reported the incidents to their dad. ██████ relayed to him that during bath time, ██████ asked him not to touch her privates because it hurts and proceeded to say Officer Tello touches her there. At that time, he recommended ██████ make an immediate report to the police.

He further explained, after the allegations were revealed, both children told him that Officer Tello hit them. However, ██████ provided no additional details and only learned of the sexual abuse allegation through ██████<sup>9</sup>

████████ specifically told him that “Larry” hit her near the head/neck area, her buttocks, and pushed her with his hand in the chest. Subsequently, during his interview with COPA he shared emails<sup>10</sup> regarding updates to the family attorney regarding their concerns including a photo of ██████ legs taken a year prior reflecting scratches and/or abrasions. ██████ later learned through ██████ that when he confronted ██████ about it, she told him the marks were from the children playing around the fireplace. In addition to that, ██████ voluntarily shared that she didn’t like being around “Larry” because he “touches her privates and it hurts.” On another occasion, she described an incident in the bathroom of her mom’s residence. She blurted this information out after ██████ opened the bathroom door while she was using the toilet. At that time, she shared she usually lock the bathroom door while at her mom’s house, but “Larry” comes in with a key and touches her private.<sup>11</sup> She shared no further details.

████████ further explained that sometime in December 2018, he noticed a change in ██████ and ██████ behavior. During this time, he noticed ██████ touching himself and placing his hands in his pants a lot. Both children began to lack enthusiasm to visit their mom initially complaining of boredom and their mom spending more time with their 2-yr old baby sister. This later evolved to becoming disinterested during calls with their mom and crying and begging dad to pick them up when they were at her house.

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<sup>8</sup> Att. 8

<sup>9</sup> Att. 3- The additional allegation was documented under 2019-0000988. However, it was incorporated under this log number.

<sup>10</sup> Att. 26

<sup>11</sup> Att. 8 @ 17:55-26:00

Although COPA made several attempts to interview ██████████ ██████████<sup>12</sup> COPA was unable to obtain a formal statement. However, during a telephone call with COPA on April 6, 2020, ██████████ relayed she is the ex-girlfriend of ██████████ ██████████ and mother of ██████████ and ██████████. She is also the current ██████████ of Officer Tello, with whom she ██████████. ██████████ further relayed, both children continue to visit with her and Officer Tello every Monday and other weekend.

██████████ was unaware of COPA's pending investigation and under the impression that Officer Tello had been cleared of any wrongdoing since the Chicago Police Department's investigation was suspended and the Department of Children and Family Services investigation was "Unfounded." However, she committed to cooperate with COPA's investigation but wanted to confer with her attorney prior to making any statements.

### Forensic Interview<sup>13</sup> of ██████████ ██████████

During her interview, ██████████ appeared distracted and reluctant when certain topics were broached. With respect to bath time, ██████████ stated, when home with dad he assists her with baths, while her brother takes showers and does not require assistance. However, when she's with mom, mom helps her and she sometimes bathes with her baby-sister, ██████████. This led to visits with mom at which time ██████████ mood appeared to shift from upbeat to more of a pouty or somber mood. Subsequently, she blurted out, "I really don't like "Big Larry" cause he puts me in my room and gets really mad." When the interviewer asked her to share more about "Big Larry", she said, "when I'm in the bathroom he touches me here." and pointed to her private area which she referred to the area as "little circles where you can go pee down."

She proceeded to describe an incident when Larry entered the bathroom after she asked him to wipe her butt when she was "going poo." She related, he refused to do so. At that time, ██████████ appeared to shy away from the conversation and requested to go back and play with toys in another room. However, the interviewer re-directed her back to the topic of conversation. ██████████ elaborated that Larry "uses one finger when he touches her private while she's sitting on the toilet." She further explained, her mom shouted at Larry and told him to get out of the bathroom and that her mom then entered and wiped her buttocks instead. Subsequently, she stated it occurred "a long time ago" and believed she was 4-years old at the time of incident. It should be noted, she appeared very uncomfortable and distracted while speaking of the topic. When pressed, she stated that she forgets everything and did not want to talk about it. Nevertheless, she continued and said that Larry used his finger to touch her on the outside of her private area and did not have tissue at the time. She continued to explain that one time she locked the door of the bathroom and Big Larry standing on the other side banging and threatening to come inside. Although she asked him not to come in, ██████████ stated he lied and came in with a key. But during the same incident, when he entered, she asked him to wipe her butt, and he declined. It was unclear if this was additional

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<sup>12</sup> Att. 25

<sup>13</sup> Over the course of the investigation, COPA observed the pre-recorded forensic interviews of ██████████ and ██████████ ██████████ conducted by CCAC. On April 19, 2019, Investigator Veronica Pierce conducted separate interviews with ██████████ and ██████████. The following are summaries of the interviews and not a verbatim account.

<sup>14</sup> Att. 10

information regarding the same incident she previously described or if these were multiple incidents.

Subsequently, [REDACTED] was asked if she remembered anything else. At that time, she said “It didn’t feel good. Really made me cry.” The interviewer then asked her how her private felt when Big Larry touched her. [REDACTED] relayed, that “It really hurt. It really, really hurt. It made me cry. I said stop it Big Larry. Stop it, that hurts.” At that time, mom entered and said, “Get out of here.” and wiped her. [REDACTED] attempted to describe a verbal altercation between mom and Larry about him being in the bathroom with her. She stated that mom initially saw the bathroom door open and when she saw Larry inside, she yelled for him to get out while she was “going poo.” She further relayed that mom gave Big Larry the middle-finger because he was being bad. At that time, Larry exited the bathroom; mom entered and stood there until she was done. [REDACTED] said, she told mom that Big Larry touched her private. Mom replied, “Ok, I know. I’ll just come in here next time.” However, she later told the interviewer she did not tell mom because she was able to see for herself since the bathroom door was open. [REDACTED] eventually became disassociated, and the interview ended.

### **Forensic Interview of [REDACTED]**

During [REDACTED] interview with the CCAC interviewer, he explained that he has visits with his mom and Officer Tello. He added, he has a 1-year-old baby sister, [REDACTED] and his mom is currently pregnant with a second child. When probed about his family life, [REDACTED] stated [REDACTED] brought him to CCAC and relayed that something happened to him that wasn’t supposed to. He shared an incident regarding a time that he was about to hit [REDACTED] but his dad caught him and put him in a timeout. When asked if anyone does something at mom or dad’s house or does anything he doesn’t like, he replied, “No.” When asked if he knew of anything happening to someone else in the house, he replied, “No.”

The interviewer went on to explain the differences between a truth, an assumption, and a lie. [REDACTED] appeared to understand the differences. He was able to explain and/or identify his body parts, the importance of keeping his hands to himself, and denied been touched inappropriately by anyone or photographed. He further added that if any of that was to happen, he would tell his mom, dad, or school personnel.

### **Officer Larry Tello**

Over the course of this investigation, Officer Tello was interviewed several times by different entities. As previously mentioned, CPD conducted a parallel investigation regarding the allegations of abuse against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. During an interview with Detective Figus on November 26, 2019.<sup>16</sup> Officer Tello reported he is the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] the mother of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They have been together for four years. He described himself as having a “[REDACTED]” with the children and does not interact with them without their mom. Officer Tello denied ever inappropriately touching, bathing, providing bathroom assistance, or issuing discipline to either child. He further relayed he had no contact with either child on the

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<sup>15</sup> Att. 11

<sup>16</sup> Att. 17, 19

weekend of April 5-7, 2019, because he was at a Lake House in Alto, Michigan with friends. Officer Tello stated that he believed [REDACTED] was coached to make the allegations against him.

On December 1, 2019, Officer Tello submitted to a Polygraph<sup>17</sup> with CPD. The questions were centered around his whereabouts on the weekend in question and interactions with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (past and present). Ultimately, Officer Tello denied all allegations and the polygraph determined there was “no deception indicated.”

In a statement to COPA on August 19, 2022, Officer Larry Tello<sup>18</sup> essentially reiterated the same as he did in previous statements with CPD and DCFS. Officer Tello described having limited, if any one-on-one contact with John and Carmela but expressed having a great and loving relationship. Although he confirmed participating in family activities with [REDACTED] present, he denied ever assisting either child in the bathroom or at bath time. He elaborated, he is not comfortable doing so and that it was not his place as “the boyfriend.”<sup>19</sup> When asked if he recalled ever speaking with [REDACTED] outside of a bathroom door, he stated he would have only done so if he was walking by, and she asked him to get [REDACTED] to assist her in the bathroom. However, he could not recall if the door had a lock on it.<sup>20</sup> Regarding any physical activities with [REDACTED] he denied rough housing/wrestling, or any other activities that cause injury or bodily harm.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, he denied any use of corporal punishment with any of the children in the household. Instead, he elects to send the children to their rooms, take away privileges, and/or talk things out.

On the weekend of April 5-7, 2019, Officer Tello reported that he was at a Bachelor Party in Michigan and had no interaction with [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. He further relayed he only saw the children in passing after his return on Sunday when they were on their way out with mom. He later learned through [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was making allegations of abuse against him. At some point he recalled receiving a text message from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] confronting him about the allegations, which Officer Tello denied. He denied all allegations with COPA.

When asked of a possible motive, he explained that he has known of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] since high school age as they grew up in the same area. However, they were never friends or associates and had no discord with one another. He recalled sometime during the relationship, [REDACTED] asking his mom if she cheated on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with Officer Tello.<sup>22</sup>

## V. Documentary Evidence

Records obtained from the **Oak Forest Police Department (OFPD)** documents the allegations set forth by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Case and Supplemental Reports.<sup>23</sup> Records reflect, reports of sexual and physical abuse against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] by Officer Larry Tello. The reports indicate these incidents occurred between April 5-7, 2019, at the residence of Officer Tello and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] located at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] during a weekend visit.

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<sup>17</sup> Att. 18, 20

<sup>18</sup> Att. 27

<sup>19</sup> Id. @ 23:00

<sup>20</sup> The family has since moved from the location of incident

<sup>21</sup> Id. @ 26:30-27:08

<sup>22</sup> Id. @ 31:40-33:35

<sup>23</sup> Att. 2-4

OFPD made notifications to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Chicago Police Department.

The **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** also investigated Officer Tello regarding the allegations stemming from this incident. The investigation concluded with a Unfounded finding.<sup>24</sup>

Records revealed a Child Protective Investigator (CPI) met with 7-year-old [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on April 15, 2019. The investigator observed no visible bruises. [REDACTED] denied that Officer Tello ever hit him, gave him a bad touch, or that he told anyone he did so. However, in the past mom and dad has spanked him on his face.<sup>25</sup>

During her interview with DCFS on April 12, 2019, without asking 5-year-old [REDACTED] [REDACTED] disclosed to the worker that “Big Larry” is mean and touches her private parts. She further relayed Larry touched her a year ago when she was in the bathroom at her mom’s house. The CPI noted, she was concerned [REDACTED] had been coached. She denied being physically disciplined by Officer Tello.<sup>26</sup>

School personnel from [REDACTED] Elementary School reported to DCFS they received a call from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] during the week of April 9, 2019. He reported to them that [REDACTED] had a bruise on his face caused by his mom’s boyfriend. Moreover, he wanted them to report the incident to DCFS. However, neither staff member observed any bruises or injuries on [REDACTED] face and declined his request.<sup>27</sup>

During his interview with DCFS, Officer Tello denied ever inappropriately touching [REDACTED] the use of corporal punishment with either child or offering them bathroom or bathing assistance. He denied all allegations.<sup>28</sup> It should be noted, [REDACTED] reiterated the same as Officer Tello.<sup>29</sup>

## A. 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;

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<sup>24</sup> Att. 15

<sup>25</sup> Id. @ Pg. 51

<sup>26</sup> Id. @pg. 46

<sup>27</sup> Id. @ pg. 52

<sup>28</sup> Id. @ pg. 58

<sup>29</sup> Id. @ pg. 58-59



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 the conduct occurred and violated Department policy. 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 found to be more probably true than not). 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.

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. See e.g., *People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036 (2016). 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." *Id.* at ¶ 28

## B. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

COPA finds that **Allegations #1** that Officer Tello inappropriately touched ██████████ ██████████ genital area is **Not Sustained**. During both his interviews with COPA and CPD, Officer Tello reported he was in Michigan on the weekend in question and provided bank records reflecting purchases made in Alto, MI between April 5-8, 2019.<sup>30</sup> When questioned about being in a bathroom or aiding ██████████ at any time, he denied it. In fact, he relayed that he never interacts with either child without ██████████ present. In his words, these were "outlandish allegations"<sup>31</sup> and denied committing the acts.

During ██████████ forensic interview with CCAC, she described an incident with Officer Tello in the bathroom at his shared residence with her mom. Very specifically, she relayed "when I'm in the bathroom he touches me here," and pointed to her private area which she referred to the area as "little circles where you can go pee down." She further relayed, after closing and locking the door, he laughed and entered with a key. She later described a time Officer Tello entered the bathroom after she called him in to wipe her butt when she was "going poo." However, he refused. When further probed, ██████████ appeared to withdraw. This made it difficult to determine if she was describing the same incident or multiple. COPA notes that ██████████ is only 5 years old, which can present challenges in obtaining certain information.

Records revealed CPD pursued a follow-up interview with ██████████ but was unable to obtain parental approval. COPA found ██████████ comments and body language surrounding the topic concerning. However, it is unclear if she was simply nervous/uncomfortable or distracted. Nonetheless, additional information is necessary to clarify and obtain additional details to substantiate the nature and validity of the information ██████████ provided. Additionally, medical

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<sup>30</sup> Att. 22, Pgs. 102-107

<sup>31</sup> Att. 27 @ 37:05

