



**CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY**  
INTEGRITY • TRANSPARENCY • INDEPENDENCE • TIMELINESS

Log # 2025-0003873

## **FINAL SUMMARY REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

### **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On August 3, 2025, at approximately 6:42 am, the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Crime Prevention and Information Center (CPIC) notified the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) of an officer-involved shooting that occurred at [REDACTED] S. Bishop St. at approximately 6:12 am. COPA learned that four unknown subjects discharged their firearms at off-duty Officer Cecilia Mercado as she parked her personal vehicle in her garage. Officer Mercado returned fire at the unknown subjects, who fled the scene in a stolen vehicle.<sup>2</sup> Following its investigation, COPA determined that Officer Mercado's use of deadly force complied with CPD policy, and no allegations of misconduct related to this incident were served.

### **II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE<sup>3</sup>**

On Sunday, August 3, 2025, at approximately 6:12 am, Officer Mercado was driving home from work as a beat officer in the 002<sup>nd</sup> District. Officer Mercado drove northbound into the alley behind her home at [REDACTED] S. Bishop St.<sup>4</sup> As Officer Mercado was reversing her black Jeep SUV into her garage, a white Lexus sedan drove past the alley while traveling east on W. 49<sup>th</sup> St. The white Lexus then backed up and turned northbound in the alley.<sup>5</sup> Officer Mercado noticed the white Lexus reversing quickly on W. 49<sup>th</sup> St., which made her suspect that the people in the vehicle might try to rob or carjack her.<sup>6</sup> Officer Mercado explained that, based on her experience as a police officer, she knew that her Jeep was a type of vehicle that is frequently stolen.<sup>7</sup>

As the white Lexus drove by her garage, Officer Mercado saw the front seat passenger, whom she described as wearing either orange or red gloves, point a firearm at her.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to § 2-78-120 of the Chicago Municipal Code, COPA has a duty to investigate all incidents in which a CPD member discharges their firearm. Therefore, COPA determined it would be the primary administrative investigative agency in this matter.

<sup>3</sup> The following is a summary of what COPA finds most likely occurred during this incident. This summary utilized information from several different sources, including an officer interview, third-party videos, 911 audio calls, CPD and CFD radio transmissions, CPD reports, and Evidence Technician photos.

<sup>4</sup> Att. 41 at 6:11:21 to 6:11:40.

<sup>5</sup> Att. 38 at 0:10 to 0:26 and Att. 41 at 6:11:56 to 6:12:08.

<sup>6</sup> Att. 64, pg. 7, lns. 7 to 14.

<sup>7</sup> Att. 64, pg. 7, lns. 14 to 16.

<sup>8</sup> Att. 64, pg. 7, ln. 22 to pg. 8, ln. 3. Note: An unidentified, backseat passenger also pointed a firearm at Officer Mercado. See Att. 38 at 0:31 to 0:32; Att. 39 at 0:27.

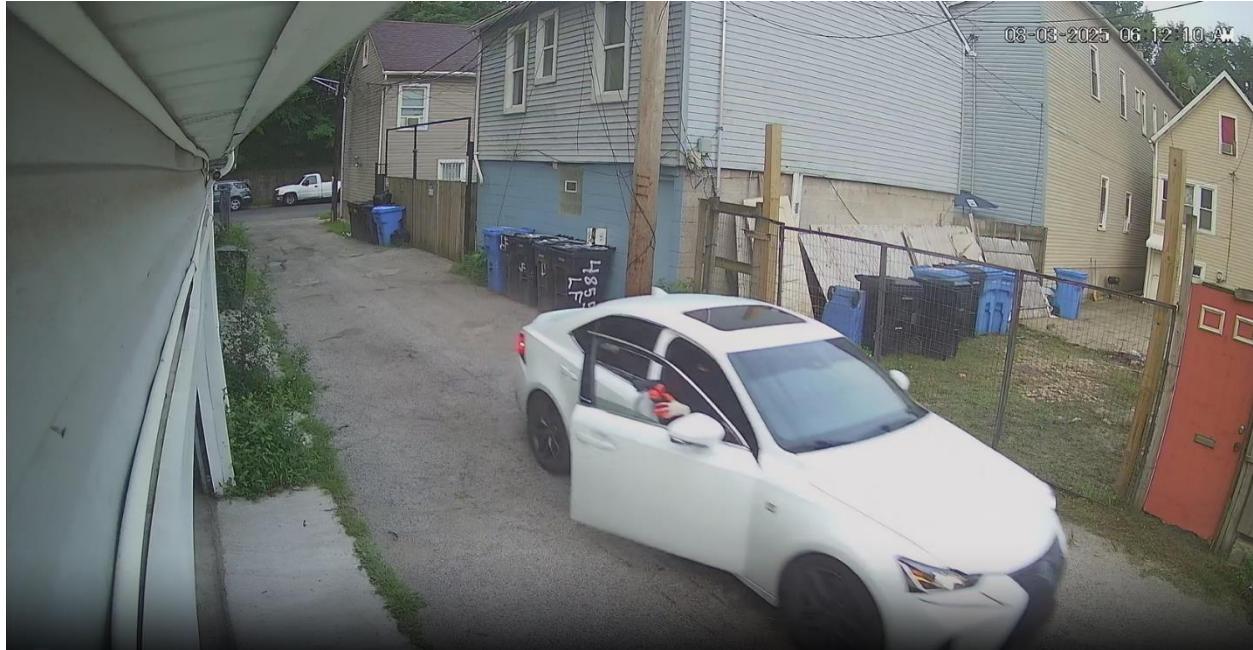


Figure 1: The front seat passenger of the white Lexus pointing a firearm at Officer Mercado.<sup>9</sup>

Officer Mercado then saw the unknown subject who was wearing orange or red gloves discharge a firearm at her, before the white Lexus drove forward a short distance.<sup>10</sup> Officer Mercado further clarified that the white Lexus may have driven a short distance and then the unknown subject discharged his firearm.<sup>11</sup> Either way, the white Lexus stopped north of Officer Mercado's garage, and the driver and three passengers exited the vehicle.<sup>12</sup> The unknown subjects then exchanged gunfire with Officer Mercado, who feared for her life and told COPA she did not believe she would survive the incident.<sup>13</sup>

*(This space intentionally left blank)*

<sup>9</sup> Att. 38 at 0:31.

<sup>10</sup> Att. 64, pg. 7, ln. 22 to pg. 8, ln. 10 and pg. 10, ln. 18 to pg. 11, ln. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 4 to 8.

<sup>12</sup> Att. 39 at 0:27 to 0:35; Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 5 to 12 and pg. 11, lns. 14 to 19.

<sup>13</sup> Att. 39 at 0:33 to 0:45; Att. 40 at 0:08 to 0:35; and Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 16 to 17, lns. 22 to 24, and pg. 9, ln. 1.



Figure 2: The four unknown subjects discharging their firearms at Officer Mercado.<sup>14</sup>

Officer Mercado explained that she stopped shooting when her windshield was shattered, which obstructed her view of the subjects; instead, she remained in her vehicle and hid behind the engine block until she was able to close her garage door.<sup>15</sup> The unknown subjects then returned to the white Lexus and drove north through the alley.<sup>16</sup> Officer Mercado, her fiancé (who was inside their home when this incident occurred), and a neighbor each called 911 to report the shooting.<sup>17</sup> During her call to 911, Officer Mercado reported that she was an off-duty police officer, someone had shot at her, and she had fired back at them.<sup>18</sup> CPD and Chicago Fire Department (CFD) Ambulance 68 responded to the scene.<sup>19</sup> Officer Mercado was not shot but sustained lacerations to her arm, caused by broken glass.<sup>20</sup> Later that morning, Officer Mercado went to Northwestern Memorial Hospital for observation.<sup>21</sup>

At approximately 6:30 am, a 911 caller reported that there was a vehicle on fire in a vacant lot at 4516 S. Wolcott Ave., approximately one and a half miles from Officer Mercado's home.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Att. 39 at 0:40.

<sup>15</sup> Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 17 to 22, and pg. 9, lns. 2 to 4.

<sup>16</sup> Att. 39 at 0:41 to 1:00 and Att. 40 at 0:25 to 0:30.

<sup>17</sup> Atts. 26, 27, 28, and 53.

<sup>18</sup> Att. 26 at 00:09 to 00:36.

<sup>19</sup> Atts. 42, 43, and 65.

<sup>20</sup> Att. 50, pg. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Att. 4, pg. 2. Note: In accordance with CPD policy, Officer Mercado submitted to mandatory alcohol and drug testing after discharging her firearm during this incident. All tests were negative for alcohol and/or illicit substances. See Att. 60.

<sup>22</sup> Att. 31 at 00:08 to 01:25, and Att. 32 at 0:10 to 1:27.

CFD Engine 49 arrived and extinguished the fire.<sup>23</sup> CPD also responded and discovered that the burnt vehicle was a white 2019 Lexus IS300 that was previously reported stolen.<sup>24</sup> The vehicle's make, model, and license plate number matched the white Lexus from the earlier shooting incident with Officer Mercado.<sup>25</sup>

CPD Evidence Technicians (ETs) recovered 51 cartridge cases and one metal fragment, which were dispersed throughout the alley at and near [REDACTED] S. Bishop St.<sup>26</sup> Twelve of the recovered cartridge cases were marked with a Win 9mm Luger +P headstamp.<sup>27</sup> CPD ETs photographed Officer Mercado's Jeep, a white Subaru which was parked in the garage, and the exterior of the garage overhead door – all sustained damage from multiple bullet strikes.<sup>28</sup>

### III. ALLEGATIONS

In accordance with section 2-78-120 (c) of the Municipal Code of Chicago, COPA has a duty to investigate all incidents in which a CPD member discharges their firearm in a manner that could potentially strike another individual. During its investigation of this incident, COPA did not find evidence to support allegations related to Officer Mercado's firearm discharge.

### IV. CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT

The credibility of an individual relies primarily on two factors: 1) the individual's truthfulness and 2) the reliability of the individual's account. The first factor addresses the honesty of the individual making the statement, while the second factor speaks to the individual's ability to accurately perceive the event at the time of the incident and then accurately recall the event from memory.

This investigation did not reveal any evidence that caused COPA to question Officer Mercado's credibility. Officer Mercado's account of this incident was materially consistent with the available evidence, including third-party video, 911 audio, and physical evidence. Overall, COPA found Officer Mercado to be credible.

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<sup>23</sup> Atts. 19 and 22 to 25.

<sup>24</sup> Atts. 6 to 9, 11, and 13.

<sup>25</sup> Att. 6, pg. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Note: CPD inventoried a substantial amount of ballistics evidence that is being forensically tested in an effort to identify the unknown subjects. COPA is proceeding with its administrative investigation, including completing this use of force analysis, without the pending forensic test results. *See* Atts. 54 and 70.

<sup>27</sup> During this incident, Officer Mercado discharged her duty weapon. CPD ETs recovered one Win 9mm +P cartridge from the chamber and three Win 9mm Luger +P cartridges from the magazine. The ballistics evidence recovered on scene and the remaining ammunition in Officer Mercado's firearm were consistent with her being fully loaded (in accordance with CPD policy) prior to discharging her firearm 12 times. *See* Att. 54, pgs. 6 to 7, and Att. 64, pg. 14, lns. 16 to 20.

<sup>28</sup> Att. 57, pgs. 102 to 222, 226, and 231 to 266. Note: To date, CPD has not yet arrested any of the subjects. Their investigation is ongoing. *See* Atts. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 58, 59, 68 and 69.

## V. ANALYSIS<sup>29</sup>

### a. Officer Mercado's Use of Deadly Force Complied with CPD Policy

COPA finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the use of deadly force by Officer Mercado was objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to the circumstances she faced. COPA further finds the totality of the circumstances prevented Officer Mercado from utilizing de-escalation tactics as required by CPD policy prior to using deadly force.<sup>30</sup> COPA also finds that Officer Mercado used deadly force as an option of last resort, necessary to protect herself against an imminent threat to life. COPA thus concludes by a preponderance of the evidence that Officer Mercado's use of deadly force complied with CPD policy.

CPD's stated highest priority is the sanctity of human life. In all aspects of their conduct, CPD expects that its members act with the foremost regard for the preservation of human life and the safety of all persons involved.<sup>31</sup> CPD members are only authorized to use force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional, under the totality of the circumstances, in order to provide for the safety of any person or CPD member, stop an attack, make an arrest, bring a person or situation safely under control, or prevent escape.<sup>32</sup> This means that CPD members will only resort to the use of force when required under the circumstances to serve a lawful purpose.<sup>33</sup> CPD members will use only the force that is proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance offered by a person.<sup>34</sup>

The use of deadly force is permitted only as a last resort when necessary to protect against an imminent threat to life or to prevent great bodily harm to a CPD member or another person.<sup>35</sup> A CPD member may use deadly force in only two situations: (1) to prevent "death or great bodily harm from an imminent threat posed to the sworn member or to another person;" or (2) to prevent "an arrest from being defeated by resistance or escape, where the person to be arrested poses an imminent threat of death or great bodily harm to a sworn member or another person unless arrested without delay."<sup>36</sup>

A threat is imminent "when it is objectively reasonable to believe that: (1) the person's actions are immediately likely to cause death or great bodily harm to the member or others unless action is taken; **and** (2) the person has the means or instruments to cause death or great bodily harm; **and** (3) the person has the opportunity and ability to cause death or great bodily harm."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For a definition of COPA's findings and standards of proof, *see* Appendix B.

<sup>30</sup> *See* Att. 67, G03-02-01(III), Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective June 28, 2023 to present).

<sup>31</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(II)(A), De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (effective June 28, 2023 to present).

<sup>32</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(III)(B).

<sup>33</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(II)(C).

<sup>34</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(III)(B)(3).

<sup>35</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(IV)(C).

<sup>36</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(IV)(C)(1-2).

<sup>37</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(IV)(B)(1-3) (emphasis added).

Officers are expected to modify their use of force as circumstances change and in ways that are consistent with officer safety, including stopping the use of force when it is no longer necessary.<sup>38</sup>

Based on its review of the evidence, COPA finds that it is more likely than not that Officer Mercado's use of deadly force was objectively reasonable in light of the imminent threat she faced. Officer Mercado reported discharging her firearm after the unknown subjects pointed and discharged their firearms at her.<sup>39</sup> Third-party video corroborates Officer Mercado's account of the incident. The evidence shows that there were at least four unknown masked subjects who posed an imminent threat. Specifically, the unknown subjects were in possession of firearms that they repeatedly discharged at Officer Mercado.<sup>40</sup> COPA finds Officer Mercado's belief that the unknown subjects' actions were immediately likely to cause death or great bodily harm was objectively reasonable.<sup>41</sup> The evidence further shows that the unknown subjects had the means or instruments, and the opportunity and ability, to cause death or great bodily harm. The unknown subjects discharged their firearms at Officer Mercado, showing that their weapons were functional and that they were willing to use them against Officer Mercado.<sup>42</sup>

The evidence further indicates that Officer Mercado used only the amount of force necessary based on the circumstances she faced. Due to the unknown subjects' unprovoked attack against Officer Mercado, she was unable to employ de-escalation tactics in accordance with CPD policy. Further, Officer Mercado's use of deadly force was proportional to the threat she faced. Officer Mercado fired her weapon only after the unknown subjects pointed at least one firearm at her. In addition, it was only when the unknown subjects fired their weapons that Officer Mercado resorted to the use of deadly force. Finally, Officer Mercado reported that she discontinued firing at the unknown subjects because she could no longer see through her shattered windshield and because she was able to close her garage door.<sup>43</sup>

Based on the totality of these circumstances, COPA finds by a preponderance of the evidence that Officer Mercado's use of deadly force complied with CPD policy.

Approved:

10/28/2025

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Steffany Hreno  
*Acting Deputy Chief Administrator*

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Date

<sup>38</sup> Att. 66, G03-02(II)(D)(2).

<sup>39</sup> Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 5 to 12.

<sup>40</sup> Att. 39 at 0:27 to 0:42.

<sup>41</sup> By their actions, the unknown subjects met the definition of an "assailant" under CPD policy. See Att. 67, G03-02-01(IV)(C) and Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 16 to 17, lns. 22 to 24, and pg. 9, ln. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Att. 38 at 0:31 to 0:51 and Att. 39 at 0:27 to 0:42.

<sup>43</sup> Att. 64, pg. 8, lns. 17 to 22.



10/28/2025

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Lakenya White  
*Interim Chief Administrator*

Date

**Appendix A****Case Details**

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	August 3, 2025 / 6:12 am / [REDACTED] S. Bishop St., Chicago IL
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	August 3, 2025 / 6:42 am
Involved Member #1:	Officer Cecilia Mercado / Star #18403 / Employee ID # [REDACTED] / Date of Appointment June 17, 2019 / Unit of Assignment 002 / Female / Hispanic
Involved Individual #1:	Unknown
Involved Individual #2	Unknown
Involved Individual #3	Unknown
Involved Individual #4	Unknown

**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.

**Applicable Policies and Laws**

- G03-02, De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (effective June 28, 2023 to present).
- G03-02-01, Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective June 28, 2023 to present).

## **Appendix B**

### **Definition of COPA's Standard of Proof**

COPA applies a preponderance of the evidence standard to determine whether allegations of excessive force are warranted or well-founded.<sup>44</sup> A **preponderance of evidence** is evidence indicating that it is more likely than not that a proposition is proved.<sup>45</sup> For example, if the evidence COPA gathers in an investigation establishes that it is more likely than not that misconduct occurred, even if by a narrow margin, then the preponderance of the evidence standard is met.

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<sup>44</sup> See Municipal Code of Chicago, Ch. 2-78-110

<sup>45</sup> *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 been found to be more probably true than not.”).

**Appendix C**  
**Transparency and Publication Categories**

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