



Log # 2023-0003189

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 19, 2023, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) received a CPD initiated complaint from Sgt. Rizzi of the 11th District,² on behalf of ██████████ alleging misconduct by a member of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). Ms. ██████████ alleged that on July 19, 2023, Officer Antonio Whitfield pushed her down causing her to hit the back of her head on a tree.³ Upon review of the evidence, COPA served additional allegations that Officer Whitfield also used profanity during the altercation and failed to identify himself when asked to do so. COPA also served an additional allegation to Officer Michael Ambrose for using profanity during this incident as well. Following its investigation, COPA reached sustained findings regarding the allegations of profanity used by Officer Ambrose.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE⁴

On the evening of July 19, 2023, Officer Whitfield and Officer Ambrose observed a vehicle with a cracked windshield fail to fully stop at a stop sign in the area of S Kildare Ave. and W Monroe St. Officers briefly followed the vehicle down an alley into a vacant lot where Officer Whitfield and Officer Ambrose initiated a traffic stop by activating their emergency equipment.⁵ As Officer Ambrose approached the vehicle to speak to the driver, he was immediately met with agitation and yelling.⁶

Officer Ambrose attempted to explain the reason for the stop and calm the situation down through speaking with the driver who continued to remain agitated and adamant the officers had no right to stop him on private property.⁷ Officer Ambrose then asked the driver to step out of the vehicle due to his aggressive behavior to which he complied but remained agitated.⁸ From the beginning of the stop, onlookers began approaching the vehicle and escalated the situation through screaming while Officer Ambrose and Officer Whitfield conducted their investigation.⁹

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 Att. 6

³ 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.

⁴ 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, and officer interviews.

⁵ Att. 3, Case Report

⁶ Att. 8, at 2:00

⁷ Att. 8, at 2:00 to 3:15

⁸ Att. 8, Officer Ambrose BWC at 2:05 to 3:00

⁹ Att. 7, Officer Whitfield BWC at 2:05 to 3:10

Officer Ambrose remained with the driver after he stepped out of the vehicle and eventually asked him, “Why are you being so fucking extra?”¹⁰ While Officer Ambrose remained with the driver, Officer Whitfield attempted to keep a growing crowd of people away from the vehicle so they could safely conduct their investigation. This crowd remained hostile and uncooperative despite Officer Whitfield giving several verbal commands to leave or face possible arrest for interfering with their investigation.¹¹ Mr. [REDACTED] was a member of this crowd who was ordered to leave several times.

Officer Whitfield told Mr. [REDACTED] he was under arrest for interfering with the investigation, but Mr. [REDACTED] fled on foot.¹² Shortly after Officer Whitfield returned to assist Officer Ambrose, Mr. [REDACTED] returned as well. Officer Whitfield gave one more order for Mr. [REDACTED] to leave, to which he did not comply, so Officer Whitfield attempted to place Mr. [REDACTED] in handcuffs. Mr. [REDACTED] pushed Officer Whitfield’s hands away and attempted to flee on foot once more.¹³ Officer Whitfield briefly ran after Mr. [REDACTED] who also removed and threw his shirt hitting Officer Whitfield in the face.¹⁴ Officer Whitfield continued to run after Mr. [REDACTED] until Ms. [REDACTED] stepped in front of Officer Whitfield and attempted to keep him away from Mr. [REDACTED] with her hands.¹⁵ Officer Whitfield gave her a short push from the shoulders and attempted to catch up to Mr. [REDACTED]. Mr. [REDACTED] eventually stopped running and was taken down to the ground by Officer Whitfield and handcuffed without incident.¹⁶

Officer Whitfield was asked by another citizen for his badge number, but he did not provide it to the citizen.¹⁷ Officer Whitfield and Officer Ambrose advised the driver of the traffic violations and left the scene to complete their arrest at the 11th District and complete their tactical response reports (TRRs).¹⁸ While at the 11th District, Ms. [REDACTED] arrived to make a complaint about Officer Whitfield pushing her and injuring her during Mr. [REDACTED] arrest.¹⁹ After taking her complaint, Officer Whitfield also placed her under arrest for interfering with a police investigation and assaulting him during the foot chase.²⁰

III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer Antonio Whitfield:

1. Pushing [REDACTED] to the ground without justification.
 - Exonerated

¹⁰ Att. 8, at 3:7-3:10

¹¹ Att. 7, at 3:00 to 4:00

¹² Att. 7, at 4:00 to 4:30

¹³ Att. 7, at 4:10-4:30

¹⁴ Att. 7, at 4:40-4:45

¹⁵ Att. 7, at 5:25 to 5:30

¹⁶ Att. 7, at 5:25-5:35; and Att. 7 at 5:40 – 5:55

¹⁷ Att. 7, at 7:45-8:00

¹⁸ Atts. 4 and 5

¹⁹ Att. 6

²⁰ Sgt. Joseph Rizzi; and Att. 2 and Att. 18 (2:10 – 2:40)

2. Failing to identify himself by providing his name, rank, and star number.
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10.
3. Stating words to the effect of “that’s my fucking building”.
 - Not Sustained.

Officer Michael Ambrose:

1. Stating words to the effect of “why are you being so fucking extra?”.
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10

IV. CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT

This investigation did not reveal any evidence that caused COPA to question the credibility of any of the individuals (sworn or unsworn) who provided statements.

V. ANALYSIS²¹

a. Profanity Allegations

COPA finds that the allegation that Officer Whitfield stated words to the effect of “that’s my fucking building,” is **Not Sustained**. However, COPA finds the allegation Officer Ambrose stated words to the effect of “why are you being so fucking extra?” is **Sustained**. During Officer Whitfield’s statement, his BWC footage was reviewed, and Officer Whitfield clarified his exact wording. According to Officer Whitfield, what he said was something to the effect of, “it’s for my comfortability”. It should be noted that the point at which he made this comment was when he was giving verbal direction to the crowd to disperse and back away. COPA found the officer’s explanation, in addition to the context of the statement, a reasonable clarification and therefore the allegation is **Not Sustained**.

However, in his statement to COPA, Officer Ambrose explained that he believes using profanity can sometimes be used to de-escalate with agitated individuals at times and that was why he used it during this incident.²² COPA does not find this explanation falls within CPD’s General Orders, Rules and Regulations, nor training for civilian interactions. Therefore, COPA finds the allegation for profanity is **Sustained**.

b. Excessive Force Allegation

COPA finds the allegation that Officer Whitfield pushed ██████████ to the ground without justification is **Exonerated**. CPD members are permitted to use force to overcome resistance.²³ When members encounter a citizen who attempts to create distance from a member

²¹ For a definition of COPA’s findings and standards of proof, *see* Appendix B.

²² Att. 32, PO Ambrose COPA Statement

²³ *See* G03-02-01 generally.

with an intent to avoid physical control and/or defeat arrest, that citizen is an active resister.²⁴ Members are permitted to respond to active resistance with presence; verbal directions; holding and compliance techniques; control instruments; deployment of oleoresin capsicum; stunning; takedowns; canine use; and taser deployment.²⁵ Officer Whitfield gave Mr. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED] several orders to leave the location, or they would be arrested for interfering to which they both did not comply. Mr. [REDACTED] was, at the least, an active resister and Ms. [REDACTED] actively and physically impeded Officer Whitfield's attempts to place Mr. [REDACTED] under arrest. Officer Whitfield explained in his statement that he was not trying to cause her injury but create distance from her so he could apprehend Mr. [REDACTED].²⁶ Based on the evidence, COPA finds the force used against Ms. [REDACTED] to be reasonable for the level of resistance and accurately documented in his TRR. Therefore, COPA finds the allegation is **Exonerated**.

c. Failing to Identify Allegation

COPA finds that the allegation that Officer Whitfield failed to identify himself is **Not Sustained**. Officers are required to provide their name, rank, and star number when so requested.²⁷ In this case, it is clear on BWC that Officer Whitfield failed to properly identify himself on the record when he was asked.²⁸ In his statement to COPA, Officer Whitfield explained that his adrenaline was running high and he did not recall being asked for his information but would have had no issue providing it.²⁹ While COPA finds Officer Whitfield's explanation believable, it is also clear on the record he failed to provide the information when clearly asked. Therefore, COPA finds the allegation is **Sustained**.

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION

a. Officer Michael Ambrose

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History³⁰

Officer Michael Ambrose has received 53 total complimentary awards, including 45 honorable mentions, and four Department commendations. Officer Ambrose has received three reprimands for: inattention to duty, preventable accident, and parking vehicles. He has no record of any sustained cases against him.

ii. Recommended Discipline

²⁴ G03-02-01 IV(B)(2), Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective June 28, 2023 to current).

²⁵ G03-02-01 IV(B)(2)(c), Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective June 28, 2023 to current).

²⁶ Att. 33, PO Whitfield COPA Statement

²⁷ Rules and Regulations, Rule 37

²⁸ Att. 7, at 7:44-8:05

²⁹ BWC footage show a hostile crowd of people, Officer Whitfield claimed that some individuals (including Mr. [REDACTED]) were threatening him, BWC footage also shows Officer Whitfield's foot chase, a police vehicle almost striking him on their approach, and his use of force all were examples of what Officer Whitfield stated raised his adrenaline and affected his judgement.

³⁰ Atts. 38 and 40.

COPA reviewed Officer Ambrose’s complimentary and disciplinary record. COPA also acknowledges that while it sustained the profanity allegation, the incident occurred in a stressful time with an agitated subject and building crowd around the officers. Therefore, COPA recommends a reprimand and additional training for Officer Ambrose to help him in future encounters with the public.

b. Officer Antonio Whitfield

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History³¹

Officer Antonio Whitfield has received 88 total complimentary awards, including 80 honorable mentions, and three Department commendations. Officer Whitfield has received five SPARs for incidents that occurred in 2023 and 2024. In 2024, he received a three-day suspension and a separate one-day suspension for preventable accidents. He also received a reprimand for a court appearance violation. In 2023, he received a reprimand and no disciplinary action taken for two separate preventable accidents.

ii. Recommended Discipline

COPA reviewed Officer Whitfield’s complimentary and disciplinary record. COPA also acknowledges that while it sustained the failure to identify allegation, the Officer’s explanation added important context to the situation. Therefore, COPA recommends a suspension of up to 30 days and additional training for Officer Ambrose to help him in future encounters with the public.

Approved:



Starday Jackson
Deputy Chief Administrator – Chief Investigator

March 5, 2025

Date

³¹ Atts. 39, 41, and 42.

Appendix ACase Details

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	July 19, 2023 / 7:05 PM / 4233 W Monroe St.
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	July 19, 2023 / 7:15 PM
Involved Officer #1:	Antonio Whitfield, Star# 19651, Employee# [REDACTED] Date of Appointment: December 19, 2019, Unit of Assignment: 11 th District, Male, Black
Involved Officer #2:	Michael Ambrose, Star# 19607, Employee# [REDACTED] Date of Appointment: November 18, 2019, Unit of Assignment: 11 th District, Male, White
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] Male, 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, De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Uses of Force (effective June 28, 2023 to current)..

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.³² For example, if the evidence gathered in an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the conduct complied with Department 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.”³³

³² 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).

³³ *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 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