



Log # 2023-5126

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 30, 2023, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) received a telephone call from the complainant, [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] alleging misconduct by several CPD members.² [REDACTED] alleged that Officer Dana Hillard (Officer Hillard) arrested his son, [REDACTED] without justification, and grabbed [REDACTED] by his neck while attempting to take him into custody without justification.³ Upon review of the evidence, COPA served additional allegations that Officer Hillard engaged in an unjustified verbal altercation and failed to utilize de-escalation tactics. Following the investigation, COPA reached sustained findings regarding the allegations of becoming involved in an unjustified verbal altercation and failing to utilize de-escalation tactics.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE⁴

On October 30, 2023, at approximately 12:19 pm, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] entered the 002nd District Police Station to obtain a traffic accident report. They were instructed to write their name on a sign-in sheet and wait to be called. [REDACTED] signed his name and exited the 002nd District Station for an unknown amount of time. When [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] re-entered the station at approximately 12:45 pm, they were told they would have to wait, as they missed their turn and the station was in the middle of a shift change. [REDACTED] became upset and began yelling profanities while inside the 002nd District Station.

Sgt. Lonnie Young (Sgt. Young) and Officer Hillard exited an office near the front desk area because they heard the commotion. Sgt. Young and Officer Hillard then entered the lobby area to speak with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] continued to yell profanities, and Sgt. Young directed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to leave the 002nd District Station. Sgt. Young placed his right hand near [REDACTED] back to escort him out of the station. [REDACTED] elbowed Sgt. Young, and the two men began to tussle. During the struggle, [REDACTED] and Sgt. Young fell to the floor with Sgt. Young on top of [REDACTED] Officers Terrence Roberts, Brian Whitaker, and Alonzo Roberts assisted Sgt. Young with detaining and handcuffing [REDACTED]

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 COPA did not submit an affidavit override regarding [REDACTED] allegations against Sgt. Lonnie Young because the available evidence did not support the allegations.

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, event queries, and CPD members' statements to COPA.

Simultaneously, Officer Hillard escorted ██████ out of the entry door of the 002nd District Station.⁵ ██████ then re-entered the station and struck Officer Hillard on his shoulder with an open hand.⁶ Officer Hillard and ██████ began to struggle. Officer Hillard related that he grabbed ██████ shirt collar and escorted him to the processing room. Once there, Officer Hillard engaged in a heated verbal exchange with ██████ and ██████ that included the repeated use of profanities. Officer Hillard's comments included words to the effect of, "I told you to walk out, you walk the fuck out," "I don't give a fuck what your address is," "You won't hurt shit," "You came here for our fucking help," "You should've called your motherfucking brother," "That's what the fuck you should've did," "Fucking mark, fucking mark," and "Fuck him and his son up again."⁷

██████ and ██████ were both charged with Criminal Trespass to State Land, Failing to Obey Police-Fire Department Orders, and Battery. According to CPD reports, neither ██████ nor ██████ alleged that they sustained any injuries. Officer Hillard and Sgt. Young also did not sustain injuries during the incident.

COPA made several attempts to interview both ██████ and ██████. On March 21, 2024, a COPA investigator contacted ██████ via telephone. ██████ related that he and his son no longer wanted to provide a statement to COPA, nor participate in the investigation.⁸

III. ALLEGATIONS⁹

Officer Dana Hillard:

1. Arresting ██████ without justification.
 - Exonerated.
2. Grabbing ██████ by his neck, while taking him into custody, without justification.
 - Not Sustained.
3. Engaging in an unjustified verbal altercation.
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.
4. Failing to utilize de-escalation tactics.
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.

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

⁵ Att. 10 at 1:20 to 1:52.

⁶ Att. 10 beginning at 1:56.

⁷ Att. 10 at 1:59 to 6:37.

⁸ CO-1383921.

⁹ COPA initially served eight additional allegations, each of which addressed a specific profane comment made by Officer Hillard. However, COPA has withdrawn these allegations as duplicative of the allegation that Officer Hillard engaged in an unjustified verbal altercation. Therefore, COPA will address all of Officer Hillard's comments within the analysis for that allegation.

of the individual making the statement, while the second factor speaks to their ability to accurately perceive the event at the time of the incident and then accurately recall the event from memory.

COPA interviewed seven CPD members as part of this investigation. All of the CPD members provided statements that were generally consistent with each other, the BWC footage, and the CPD reports. Therefore, COPA found their statements to be generally credible.

V. ANALYSIS¹⁰

COPA finds Allegation #1 against Officer Hillard, that he arrested [REDACTED] without justification, is **exonerated**. The evidence shows that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were directed to exit the 002nd District Station when [REDACTED] became irate and began yelling profanities at the CPD personnel. After Officer Hillard escorted [REDACTED] out of the 002nd District Station, [REDACTED] re-entered the building and struck Officer Hillard's right shoulder with an open hand. [REDACTED] later explained that he had merely tapped Officer Hillard on his shoulder.¹¹ Regardless of this explanation, the BWC footage and CPD reports demonstrate that Officer Hillard had probable cause to arrest [REDACTED] for battery, criminal trespass to land, and failing to obey a lawful police order. Therefore, COPA finds this allegation is exonerated by clear and convincing evidence.

COPA finds Allegation #2 against Officer Hillard, that he grabbed [REDACTED] by his neck while taking him into custody, without justification, is **not sustained**. CPD members are only authorized to use force that is objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional, under the totality of the circumstances, to ensure the safety of a member or a third person, stop an attack, make an arrest, control a person, or prevent escape.¹² This means that CPD members may use only the amount of force necessary to serve a lawful purpose. The amount and type of force used must be proportional to the threat, actions and level of resistance a person offers.¹³

In his statement to COPA, Officer Hillard did not deny grabbing [REDACTED] by his neck while taking him into custody, but stated that he did not do so intentionally.¹⁴ Officer Hillard related that he may have been attempting to push [REDACTED] back, near the chest/collar area, but he did not intend to make contact with his neck.¹⁵ The available BWC footage shows [REDACTED] walking directly toward Officer Hillard, who extended his left arm to stop [REDACTED]. While it is true that the officer's hand made contact with [REDACTED] neck area, COPA cannot determine whether it was intentional or inadvertent. Further, without a statement from [REDACTED] COPA lacks sufficient evidence that Officer Hillard's actions obstructed [REDACTED] airway or otherwise constituted excessive force. For these reasons, COPA finds this allegation is not sustained.

¹⁰ For a definition of COPA's findings and standards of proof, *see* Appendix B.

¹¹ Att. 10 at 5:23

¹² G03-02 (III)(B), De-escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (effective June 28, 2023, to present).

¹³ G03-02 (III)(B)(3).

¹⁴ Att. 30, pg. 22, ln. 10 – 12.

¹⁵ Att. 30, pg. 19, ln. 20 – 21.

COPA finds Allegation #3 against Officer Hillard, that he engaged in an unjustified verbal altercation, is **sustained**. CPD policy requires that its members “interact with all members of the public in an unbiased, fair, and respectful manner; treat all persons with the courtesy and dignity which is inherently due every person as a human being; [and] act, speak, and conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner.”¹⁶ Further, CPD members may not exhibit a condescending attitude or direct any derogatory terms towards any person in any manner, and they may not use language intended to taunt or denigrate an individual, including using racist or derogatory language.¹⁷

Officer Hillard was captured on BWC making comments that included words to the effect of, “I told you to walk out, you walk the fuck out,” “I don’t give a fuck what your address is,” “You won’t hurt shit,” “You came here for our fucking help,” “You should’ve called your motherfucking brother,” “That’s what the fuck you should’ve did,” “Fucking mark, fucking mark,” and “Fuck him and his son up again.” In his statement to COPA, Officer Hillard admitted to making the statements alleged. Officer Hillard could not provide a justification as to why he made most of the statements, though he acknowledged that he was upset during the incident and does not normally utilize profanities while interacting with civilians. Given the BWC footage and Officer Hillard’s admissions, COPA finds the preponderance of the evidence shows that Officer Hillard engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in violation of CPD policy and Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.

COPA finds Allegation #4 against Officer Hillard, that he failed to utilize de-escalation tactics, is **sustained**. CPD policy requires members to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place a person or a CPD member in immediate risk of harm, or de-escalation techniques would be clearly ineffective under the circumstances at the time.¹⁸ Examples of de-escalation techniques include but are not limited to: providing a warning and exercising persuasion and advice prior to the use of force; using time, distance, or positioning to isolate and contain a person; and requesting additional personnel or specialized units or equipment including Crisis Intervention Team officers.¹⁹

In his statement to COPA, Officer Hillard admitted that he failed to continuously utilize de-escalation tactics during the incident. Officer Hillard explained that he did give [REDACTED] multiple verbal commands to leave, which [REDACTED] disregarded. However, Officer Hillard acknowledged that he should have walked away from [REDACTED] when [REDACTED] became irate and threatened him. When asked what de-escalation techniques he used in interacting with [REDACTED] Officer Hillard responded, “Yeah, that one I could tell you I didn’t use any on that one.”²⁰ Officer Hillard’s admission is consistent with the BWC footage of the incident, which captured the officer engaging in a heated verbal exchange with [REDACTED]. The video also shows that another officer in the processing room had to physically intervene to keep Officer Hillard from getting any closer to [REDACTED].²¹ Finally, COPA notes that during the TRR

¹⁶ G02-01(III)(B)(1)-(3), Protection of Human Rights (effective June 30, 2022, to present).

¹⁷ G02-01(III)(B)(4).

¹⁸ G03-02 (II)(D).

¹⁹ G03-02 (II)(D)(2)(a)-(c).

²⁰ Att. 30, pg. 29, lns. 4 to 8.

²¹ Att. 10 at 5:43.

investigation, Lieutenant Sharon Huffman recommended that Officer Hillard receive refresher training on de-escalation, stating, “PO Hillard should have stopped interacting with [REDACTED],”²²

For these reasons, COPA finds the preponderance of the evidence shows that Officer Hillard failed to utilize de-escalation tactics in violation of CPD policy and Rules 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION

a. Officer Dana Hillard²³

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History

Officer Hillard has been with CPD since December 18, 2006. In that time, he has received 30 various awards, including 2 Department Commendations and 5 Complimentary Letters. In the past five years, Officer Hillard has not acquired any sustained complaints or SPARs.²⁴

ii. Recommended Discipline

COPA has found that Officer Hillard violated Rules 2, 3, 6, 8 and 9 when he engaged in an unjustified verbal altercation and failed to utilize de-escalation tactics. In mitigation, COPA notes that Officer Hillard admitted to both allegations and the use of profanities in interacting with [REDACTED]. However, Officer Hillard’s language and actions unnecessarily escalated the situation and reflected poorly on the Department. Therefore, COPA recommends Officer Hillard receive a **1-29 day suspension** and **retraining** on CPD’s use of force policy as well as the protection of human rights when interacting with members of the public.

Approved:

[REDACTED]

Steffany Hreno
Acting Deputy Chief Administrator

11/5/2025

Date

²² Att. 5, pg. 5.

²³ Att. 40.

²⁴ COPA notes that Officer Hillard is currently relieved of police powers pending the outcome of an investigation by the City of Chicago’s Office of Inspector General.

Appendix A**Case Details**

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	October 19, 2023/ 1:15 pm/ 5101 S. Wentworth, Chicago, IL 60609.
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	October 30, 2023 / 1:51 pm.
Involved Officer #1:	Officer Dana Hillard / Star #10880 / Employee ID # [REDACTED] / DOA: December 18, 2006 / Unit: 002/ DTL 376 / Male / Black.
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] / Male / Hispanic.
Involved Individual #2:	[REDACTED] / Male / Hispanic.

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

- G02-01: Protection of Human Rights (effective June 30, 2022, to present)
- G03-02: De-Escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (effective June 28, 2023, to present)

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.²⁵ For example, if the evidence gathered in an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the conduct complied with CPD 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.”²⁶

²⁵ 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).

²⁶ *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 Information

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