



Log # 2025-0004644

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 15, 2025, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) was notified of a complaint filed by ██████ against an unidentified off-duty Chicago Police Department (CPD) officer. ██████ alleged that during a traffic dispute on September 15, 2025, the off-duty officer pointed his firearm at her, flashed his badge, and stated words to the effect of, “Bitch I’ll kill you.” COPA identified Officer Joseph Rasso as potentially being involved in this incident. Following its investigation, however, COPA reached Not Sustained findings for all the allegations against Officer Rasso.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE²

On September 15, 2025, ██████ was crossing the street at 6200 North Sheridan Road when a dark colored Ford SUV, bearing Illinois license plate ██████, almost hit her.⁴ ██████ immediately got into her blue Jeep Grand Cherokee to follow the vehicle northbound. Both vehicles came to a complete stop at a red light, at which point ██████ yelled to the driver of the Ford, “Fuck nigga, learn how to drive.”⁵

According to ██████ the driver of the Ford pointed a black handgun in ██████ direction and said, “Bitch, I’ll kill you.”⁶ He then completed a U-turn, and proceeded westbound on Clark Street.⁷ ██████ continued to pursue the Ford as she called 911. As ██████ connected with a 911 call taker, she observed the driver of the Ford display a silver star that resembled a badge.⁸ The Ford continued westbound toward Ravenswood Avenue before ██████ lost sight of it. ██████

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 The following is a summary of what COPA finds most likely occurred during this incident. This summary utilized information from several different sources, including the police reports, the complainant’s interview, and Officer Rasso’s interview.

³ Att. 4, Event Query Report from Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC); Att. 15, Photos taken by ██████ of the dark colored Ford SUV.

⁴ Att. 4, Event Query (shows the license plate and vehicle are registered to ██████ Att. 8, Number Plate Search; Att. 6, Statement of ██████ at 2:13.

⁵ Att. 2, Case Report, pg. 2.

⁶ Att. 2, pg. 2; Att. 6 at 7:56 to 8:02.

⁷ Att. 6, at 7:09 to 8:03. ██████ stated that the officer pointed his weapon through his front passenger window towards ██████ driver side and made a verbal threat.

⁸ Att 6, at 3:15.

then went to the 024th District station to file an official police report.⁹ She later told COPA that the driver of the Ford was a White male, approximately 5'9," slender, with a dark beard, a low haircut, and no distinguishing marks such as tattoos.¹⁰ [REDACTED] stated she did not sustain any injuries during this incident but was emotionally damaged.¹¹

[REDACTED] provided the license plate number of the Ford, which OEMC records showed was registered to [REDACTED] at [REDACTED].¹² COPA conducted a personnel search of the last name "Rasso" in the Watch application within the CLEAR database.¹³ The results revealed that Officer Joseph Rasso was also listed as residing at the address on [REDACTED], where the Ford was registered.¹⁴ COPA searched for any reports authored by Officer Rasso regarding this incident, with negative results.¹⁵ COPA also conducted multiple canvasses of the area of the incident, searched for any nearby PODs, and attempted to retrieve third-party videos, but these efforts were also unsuccessful.¹⁶

Officer Joseph Rasso told COPA that on the date of the incident, he was not on active duty but was on medical leave.¹⁷ He denied that he was involved in the traffic dispute with [REDACTED] or that he had any knowledge of what occurred.¹⁸ When shown the plate number search from OEMC, Officer Rasso admitted that [REDACTED] is his sister, but he stated that he has never driven her vehicle and does not know what type of vehicle she drives.¹⁹ When asked about the address on W. Pratt Blvd., Officer Rasso said it is his mother's address, and he no longer resides there.²⁰ Officer Rasso denied all of the allegations brought against him related to this incident.²¹

III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer Joseph Rasso:

1. Pointing your firearm at [REDACTED] during a traffic dispute.
 - Not Sustained
2. Involved in an altercation with [REDACTED] after being involved in a traffic dispute.
 - Not Sustained

⁹ Att. 2. [REDACTED] described the officer as a White male, 30-40 yrs old, with black hair.

¹⁰ Att. 6 at 12:00 to 13:04.

¹¹ Att. 6 at 21:00 to 21:15.

¹² Atts. 4 and 8.

¹³ Att. 12, CLEAR database results showing three CPD personnel with the last name of Rasso.

¹⁴ The Ford was registered to [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]; however, a search of the CLEAR and Thomson Reuters databases revealed that this was also the address listed for Officer Joseph Rasso, #4983. See Atts. 8, 12 to 14, and 23.

¹⁵ See CMS Notes; see also Att. 2 and Att. 11, Firearm pointing notifications on September 15, 2025.

¹⁶ See CMS Notes; see also Atts. 9 and 10, POD search results.

¹⁷ Att. 24, Statement transcript of Officer Rasso, pg. 5, lns. 4 to 6.

¹⁸ Att. 24, pg. 8, lns. 3 to 11.

¹⁹ Att. 24, pg. 8, ln. 18 to pg. 9, ln. 24, and pg. 12, lns. 9 to 14.

²⁰ Att. 24, pg. 12, ln. 9 to pg. 13, ln. 15.

²¹ Att. 24, pg. 14, ln. 11 to pg. 15, ln. 16.

3. Verbally abused, in stating words to the effect of “Bitch I’ll kill you” at [REDACTED] during a traffic incident.
 - Not Sustained

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.

In this case, [REDACTED] account of the incident is corroborated by the photos she took of the Ford, her call to 911, and the police report she filed immediately after the incident. Her evidence is sufficient to show that the traffic dispute occurred; however, COPA’s ability to assess the credibility of [REDACTED] and Officer Rasso is limited by the lack of proof regarding who was driving the Ford on the date of the incident. Officer Rasso denied that he had any involvement in this incident, which is plausible given that the vehicle was not registered to him, but his sister. It is also possible that Officer Rasso was the driver of the Ford, as he matched the general description provided by [REDACTED]. In an effort to resolve these discrepancies, COPA attempted to obtain additional evidence by conducting multiple canvasses in the vicinity of where [REDACTED] stated the incident started and ended, and by searching for all possible PODs and third-party videos in the area.²² However, this investigation did not produce enough independent evidence for COPA to reach a credibility determination regarding either Officer Rasso’s or [REDACTED] accounts.

V. ANALYSIS²³

a. Firearm pointing allegation

COPA finds Allegation #1, that Officer Rasso pointed his firearm at [REDACTED] during a traffic dispute, is **Not Sustained**. The Seventh Circuit has held that “gun pointing when an individual presents no danger is unreasonable and violates the Fourth Amendment.”²⁴ The reasonableness of an officer’s firearm pointing depends on the facts of the case.²⁵ “While police are not entitled to point their guns at citizens when there is no hint of danger, they are allowed to do so when there is reason to fear danger.”²⁶ CPD policy notes that pointing a firearm at a person

²² See CMS Notes; Atts. 9 and 10.

²³ For a definition of COPA’s findings and standards of proof, see Appendix B.

²⁴ *Baird v. Renbarger*, 576 F.3d 340, 344-45 (7th Cir. 2009).

²⁵ *Cruz v. City of Chi.*, No. 20-cv-250, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 119965, at *15 (N.D. Ill. June 28, 2021) (“The reasonableness of brandishing a weapon depends on the unique facts of each case, from a boots-on-the-ground perspective.”)

²⁶ *Baird*, 576 F.3d at 346.

constitutes a seizure and must be documented as such.²⁷ The policy further states that CPD members “may only point a firearm at a person when it is objectively reasonable to do so under the totality of the circumstances faced by the member on the scene. While reasonableness is not capable of precise definition, Department members may consider factors that include, but are not limited to, the nature of the incident, the risk of harm to the member or others, and the level of threat or resistance presented or maintained by the person (e.g., possession or access to weapons).”²⁸ Subject to certain exceptions, officers who point a firearm at a person must “notify OEMC promptly after the incident has concluded,” including their beat number/radio identification number.²⁹

Here, ██████ asserted that the incident occurred and provided a picture of the Ford with the license plate depicted. However, there is no video footage or independent witness testimony to support or refute the allegation that Officer Rasso pointed his firearm at ██████. Although the vehicle involved in the incident was registered to Officer Rasso’s sister, ██████ there is no evidence to show whether Officer Rasso was driving the vehicle on the date of the incident. COPA searched for a Firearm Pointing Incident report and canvassed the area for video footage, but both yielded negative results.³⁰ Additionally, Officer Rasso denied the allegation against him. COPA finds that the totality of the evidence is insufficient to prove or disprove the allegation against Officer Rasso; therefore, it is **Not Sustained**.

b. Involvement in a traffic altercation and verbal abuse towards ██████

COPA finds Allegations #2 and #3, that Officer Rasso was involved in a traffic altercation with ██████ and verbally abused ██████ by stating words to the effect of, “Bitch I’ll kill you,” are both **Not Sustained**. CPD policy requires its members to “interact with all members of the public in an unbiased, fair, and respectful manner,”³¹ “treat all persons with the courtesy and dignity which is inherently due to every person as a human being,”³² and “act, speak, and conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner.”³³ The policy also mandates that officers will “not exhibit a condescending attitude or direct any derogatory terms towards any person in any manner and will not use language or take action intended to taunt or denigrate an individual, including racist or derogatory language.”³⁴

Officer Rasso told COPA that he had no knowledge of or involvement in this incident. As previously stated, the vehicle involved belonged to his sister, but he denied ever driving it. The

²⁷ Att. 25, S03-22 (II)(C), Firearm Pointing Incidents (effective April 15, 2025 to present).

²⁸ Att. 25, S03-22 (II)(E).

²⁹ Att. 25 S03-22 (III)(A).

³⁰ See CMS Notes; Att. 11. COPA conducted a search of Data Warehouse for all firearm pointing notifications made on September 15, 2025, in the City of Chicago. A review of the search results revealed that no CPD members made a firearm pointing notification which matched the time and area of occurrence alleged in this complaint.

³¹ Att. 26, G02-01(III)(B)(1), Protection of Human Rights (effective June 30, 2022, to April 30, 2026).

³² Att. 26, G02-01(III)(B)(2).

³³ Att. 26, G02-01(III)(B)(3).

³⁴ Att. 26, G02-01(III)(B)(4).

vehicle was also registered to an address where Officer Rasso once lived. However, there is no evidence placing Officer Rasso in the vehicle at the time of the incident. Given the lack of video evidence or witness testimony, COPA cannot determine whether Officer Rasso was the individual who allegedly engaged in the altercation with [REDACTED] and/or threatened [REDACTED] COPA has determined that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegations; accordingly, they are both **Not Sustained**.

Approved:

[REDACTED]

Steffany Hreno
Deputy Chief Administrator

8/25/2026

Date

Appendix A**Case Details**

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	September 15, 2025 / 1:21 PM / 600 N Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	September 15, 2025 / 1:59 PM
Involved Member #1:	Joseph Rasso, Star #4983, Employee ID# [REDACTED] Date of Appointment: October 29, 2007, Unit of Assignment: 016, Male, White
Involved Individual:	[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.

Applicable Policies and Laws

- G02-01: Protection of Human Rights (effective June 30, 2022 to April 30, 2026)
- S03-22: Firearm Pointing Incidents (effective April 15, 2025 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.³⁵ 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.”³⁶

³⁵ 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).

³⁶ *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