



Log # 2023-0002458

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 7, 2023, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) received an email complaint from [REDACTED] reporting alleged misconduct by a member of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). [REDACTED] alleged that on June 6, 2023, Officer Darren Grobner posted a video of a nude man having a mental health crisis on Twitter/X.² Upon review of the evidence, COPA served three allegations to Officer Grobner, one for posting a disparaging comment on Twitter/X and two allegations for bringing discredit upon the Department. Following its investigation, COPA reached Sustained findings regarding the allegations of bringing discredit upon the Department.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE³

Officer Grobner was interviewed by COPA on January 17, 2024, regarding his Twitter/X posts.⁴ During his interview, Officer Grobner admitted to having a Twitter/X account and that he has posted about being a Chicago Police Officer on his account.⁵ Officer Grobner also admitted to posting the video of the nude⁶ male.⁷ According to Officer Grobner, he was trying to be funny when he posted the video and thought the nude male was high on narcotics when he posted the video.⁸ After reading the case report, Officer Grobner discovered that the nude male was having a mental crisis, and he has since deleted the video.⁹ Officer Grobner stated that he regretted posting the video and that he could see how some people could construe the video as being offensive.¹⁰ However, Officer Grobner denied that this brought discredit upon the department because he was not operating in his official capacity as an officer.¹¹

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 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.

³ 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 officer's interview, police reports and social media posts.

⁴ Att. 30, Officer Grobner's statement.

⁵ Att. 30, pg. 5, lns. 17 – 19 and pg. 6, lns. 22 – 24.

⁶ Att. 7, Original Case Incident Report, the nude male was identified as [REDACTED]

⁷ Att. 30, pg. 9, lns. 12 – 23.

⁸ Att. 30, pg. 11, lns. 21 – 24.

⁹ Att. 30, pg. 11, lns. 22 – 24 and pg. 12, lns. 1 – 2.

¹⁰ Att. 30, pg. 24, lns. 10 – 12.

¹¹ Att. 30, pg. 24, lns. 12 – 15.



Officer Grobner in a CPD vehicle, identifying him as a CPD officer. Officer Grobner retweeted this photograph on his Twitter/X account.¹²



Officer Grobner with his star and firearm. Officer Grobner posted this picture on his Twitter/X account.¹³

¹² Att. 31.

¹³ Att. 31.



Screenshot of video of nude male that Officer Grobner posted to his Twitter/X account.¹⁴

Officer Grobner also admitted to replying to a post using the word “Oriental.”¹⁵ Officer Grobner stated that he was responding to a fake account and that he did not know that using the word “Oriental” to describe a Chinese American was wrong.¹⁶ Officer Grobner further stated that he was trying to be funny when he responded to the fake account and that he did not think that describing somebody as “Oriental” was racist.¹⁷ At the time of the post, Officer Grobner did not feel like the word “Oriental” was derogatory.¹⁸ Officer Grobner also stated that he deleted that post and can understand how somebody would be offended by that description.¹⁹



Officer Grobner’s response to a tweet.²⁰

¹⁴ Att. 28.

¹⁵ Att. 30, pg. 13, Ins. 11 – 21; Att. 28, Exhibit 2.

¹⁶ Att. 30, pg. 13, Ins. 16 – 24 and pg. 14, In. 1.

¹⁷ Att. 30, pg. 14, Ins. 7 – 17.

¹⁸ Att. 30, pg. 25, Ins. 3 – 4.

¹⁹ Att. 30, pg. 25, Ins. 3 – 7.

²⁰ Att. 28.

Officer Grobner further admitted to making a post that referred to him being sick of working overtime.²¹ Officer Grobner stated that he made the post because he was exhausted and was just venting in a public forum.²² Officer Grobner does, however, regret making the post.²³ Officer Grobner stated that overall, he does not feel that his posts brought discredit to the Department. Officer Grobner explained that his account was not an official police account, and he was not working in his official police capacity.²⁴



Tweet that Officer Grobner posted to his Twitter/X account.²⁵

III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer Darren Grobner:

1. Brought discredit upon the Department when you posted a video on Twitter/X of a nude male.
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2 and 3.
2. Posted a comment that disparaged a protected class by referring to another Twitter/X user as “Oriental.”
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3 & 8.
3. Brought discredit upon the Department regarding your social media posts.
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2 and 3.

IV. CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT

This investigation did not reveal any evidence that caused COPA to doubt the creditability of any of the individuals who provided statements.

²¹ Att. 30- pg. 16, Ins. 14 – 24 and pg. 17, Ins. 1 – 4.

²² Att. 30- pg. 17, Ins. 22 – 24 and pg. 18, Ins. 1 – 6.

²³ Att. 30- pg. 18, Ins. 2 – 6.

²⁴ Att. 30- pg. 26, Ins. 1 – 4.

²⁵ Att. 28.

V. ANALYSIS²⁶

COPA finds the two allegations against Officer Grobner, regarding bringing discredit upon the Department when he posted a video on Twitter/X of a nude male and regarding his social media posts, **Sustained**. Rule 2 prohibits any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department. This rule applies to both professional and private conduct of all members. It prohibits any and all conduct which is contrary to the letter and spirit of Departmental policy or goals, or which would reflect adversely upon the Department or its members. It includes not only all unlawful acts by members but also all acts, which although not unlawful in themselves, would degrade or bring disrespect upon the member or the Department.

Officer Grobner admitted to posting on Twitter/X that he was a Chicago Police Officer. He further admitted that he posted the video of the nude man but stated that he was trying to be funny and that he thought the man was high on narcotics. Officer Grobner also admitted that he posted about being sick of working overtime, and he stated he did this because he was venting in a public forum. Officer Grobner stated that he made these posts while off duty and did not bring discredit to the Department. However, COPA finds these posts did bring discredit upon the Department. The posts were public, and both posts dealt with a Department issue and situation. The nude male depicted in the video was experiencing a mental crisis and had to be transported to the hospital by Department members. The post regarding working overtime also dealt with the Department. While these posts were made off duty, Officer Grobner was still responsible for his conduct off duty because his conduct was a reflection of the CPD. As such, COPA finds these two allegations **Sustained**.

COPA finds the allegation against Officer Grobner regarding him making a disparaging comment, **Sustained**. Rule 8 of the Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department prohibits disrespect to or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty. Officer Grobner admitted that he did post the comment. However, he did not think that describing a Chinese American as "Oriental" was racist, derogatory, or wrong. COPA finds Officer Grobner's use of the word "Oriental" was disparaging toward Chinese Americans. When the Twitter/X user told Officer Grobner she was a Chinese American, and the comment was racist,²⁷ Officer Grobner replied, "How is that reply racist?? Lol." Officer Grobner could have apologized for his comment or taken the opportunity to correct or clarify the comment. Officer Grobner stated that he understood now how someone could be offended by the comment, as such, COPA finds this allegation **Sustained**.

²⁶ For a definition of COPA's findings and standards of proof, *see* Appendix B.

²⁷ Att. 28.

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION

a. Officer Darren Grobner

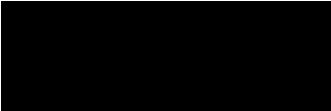
i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History²⁸

Officer Grobner has received 122 various awards.

ii. Recommended Discipline

Here, COPA has found that Officer Grobner brought discredit to the CPD and made a disparaging comment. Officer Grobner has pictures of him as a CPD officer on his Twitter/X account, which associated him with the Department. Officer Grobner’s tweets and posts on Twitter/X can be perceived as the opinions and views of the CPD. Officer Grobner took accountability and stated that he deleted the video and related tweets. Therefore, based on this, combined with Officer Grobner’s complimentary and lack of disciplinary history, COPA recommends Officer Grobner be suspended for **1-3-days**.

Approved:



2-28-24

LaKenya White
Director of Investigations

Date

²⁸ Att. 32.

Appendix A**Case Details**

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	June 6, 2023/ 5:17 pm/ 700 N. Clark
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	June 7, 2023/ 1:21 pm
Involved Member #1:	Darren Grobner, star# 8024, employee# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: March 25, 2002, 016, Male, White
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED]

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]*

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.²⁹ 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.”³⁰

²⁹ 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).

³⁰ *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