



Log # 2023-1565

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COPA received an Initiation Report from the Chicago Police Department (CPD) on April 11, 2023, for Facebook posts attributed to Officer Orlando Sanchez which were reposted on Twitter by @JinxPress. The @JinxPress account named Officer Sanchez, and claimed the posts were transphobic. Upon review of the evidence, COPA served allegations against Officer Sanchez for the social media posts. Following its investigation, COPA reached sustained findings for the posts.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE²

On April 11, 2023, COPA received an Initiation report from CPD which stated that Tiernan Gordon, who works in the mayor's office at City Hall, notified Don Terry, the Director of News Affairs at CPD, about the social media posts in question.³ The social media posts were published to Twitter (the social media platform now known as X) by @JinxPress⁴ on April 11, 2023, and are shown below as Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3.

¹Appendix 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 BWC footage, CPD reports, and officer interviews.

³ Att. 7, pg. 2 (Initiation Report).

⁴ COPA was unable to identify the user operating this account.



Figure 1.

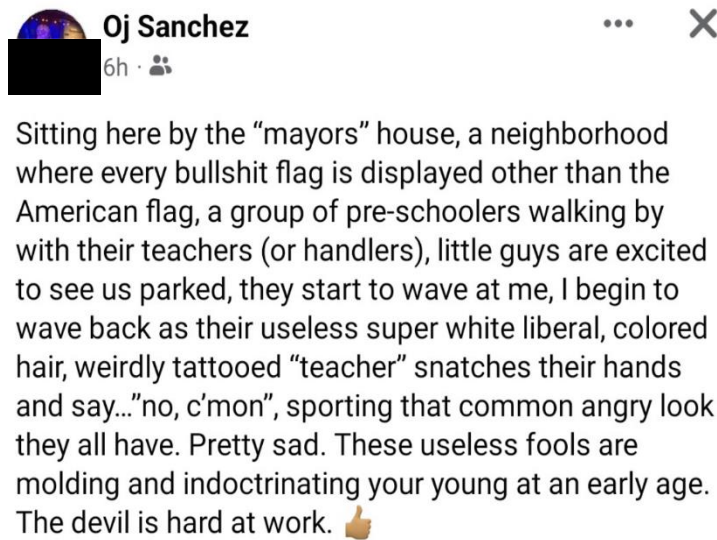


Figure 2



Figure 3

Figures 2 and 3 were isolated views of Officer Sanchez’s Facebook posts. Figure 1 was a combination of a post from Officer Sanchez’s Facebook account (on the left side), a comment about the post made by @JinxPress (on top), and a photo of Officer Sanchez in his SWAT uniform (on the right side).

COPA interviewed Officer Sanchez on April 9, 2024.⁵ In his statement, Officer Sanchez confirmed that he made the post depicted on the left side of Figure 1, and the two posts depicted in Figures 2 and 3, to his Facebook page in June of 2022.⁶ Officer Sanchez explained that at the time he made the posts, his Facebook account was private; it was only accessible to his family members and friends.⁷ Officer Sanchez said he did not have a Twitter account, and was not aware that these Facebook posts had been reposted on Twitter.⁸ He was not familiar with the Twitter account @JinxPress.⁹ He assumed his Facebook account must have been hacked in order for his Facebook posts to be have been reposted on Twitter.¹⁰ Officer Sanchez also clarified that he did

⁵ Att. 12 (Officer Sanchez Transcribed Statement).

⁶ Att. 12, pgs. 5-6.

⁷ Att. 12, pg. 5.

⁸ Att. 12, pg. 5.

⁹ Att. 12, pg. 5.

¹⁰ Att. 12, pg. 8.

not include with his post in Figure 1, the picture of himself in his SWAT uniform.¹¹ He did not recall where that picture was taken, nor if he ever posted that picture on his Facebook page.¹² He further noted that the posts were reposts from material his cousin had posted on line.

Officer Sanchez explained that all of the posts were based on his Christian faith and his belief in the Bible. He was disturbed by material that his 8-year-old granddaughter brought home from her Chicago Public School, and by his cousin telling him that her Church said that Christian and Catholic family values were being attacked.¹³ He believed that a husband and wife creating children is “good.”¹⁴

Officer Sanchez denied that his posts were targeting anyone in particular, or attacking any particular group.¹⁵ He understood that the rainbow depicted in Figure 3 may represent the LGBTQ+ community, and admitted that the posts could be considered offensive because “certain folks can find things offensive with pretty much anything these days.”¹⁶ He believed that the use of “they/them” pronouns is a “new society thing,” but not specific to any group.¹⁷ He denied that the dark colored hand in Figure 3 represented a racial group.¹⁸ In general, Officer Sanchez related that he believed adults can live however they want, but children should not be exposed to “certain things” in society right now.¹⁹ He recounted that he accepted that his step-daughter is gay, and that she and her partner were welcome in his home.²⁰

III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer Orlando Sanchez Jr:

1. Posting words to the effect of “In the Bible, demons refer to themselves as they/them/we/us.”
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 6 and 8.
2. Posting words to the effect of “...useless super white liberal, colored hair, weirdly tattooed ‘teacher’...”
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 6 and 8.

¹¹ Att. 12, pgs. 5-6.

¹² Att. 12, pg. 6.

¹³ Att. 12, pgs. 6, 8 and 12.

¹⁴ Att. 12, pg. 12.

¹⁵ At. 12, pgs. 8-9.

¹⁶ Att. 12, pg. 9.

¹⁷ Att. 12, pg. 13.

¹⁸ Att. 12, pg. 13.

¹⁹ At. 12, pg. 13.

²⁰ Att. 12, pgs. 8 and 10.

3. Posting an image of a hand with a rainbow-colored arm reaching for a silhouette of a family which contained words to the effect of “I respect how you want to live your life, but I do not accept that you impose your ideas by manipulating the little ones.”
 - Sustained, Violation of Rules 2, 3, 6 and 8.

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.

While Officer Sanchez was forthcoming in his statement to COPA, there were some factors that impacted his overall credibility. Officer Sanchez stated the usage of they/them/we/us in a non-traditional way, which was foreign to him, was not specific to any group. However, it is commonly understood that the movement to use pronouns in a non-traditional way was initiated by the LGBTQ+, and more specifically, the transgender community. Further, in conjunction with his other posts, it is clear that Officer Sanchez was taking aim broadly at either the LGBTQ+ community or the transgender community more specifically. Either way, it is not believable that Officer Sanchez was completely unaware that the use of they/them/we/us pronouns is commonly associated with a protected class of individuals, especially given the other concerns he voiced.

V. ANALYSIS²¹

General Order G09-01-06, Social Media Outlets, governs the use of social media outlets by Department members. The directive advises that when using social media, Department members should be aware that anything posted online becomes part of the “worldwide electronic public domain” and should never assume what they post is secure, regardless of their privacy settings.²² The directive states that Department members have a right to express their views under the First Amendment. However, they are still subject to the guidelines of the directive when using social media. Specifically, when using social media while on or off duty, Department members are prohibited from posting “any communications that discredit or reflect poorly on the Department, its vision, mission, values, or goals.” Additionally, Department members are prohibited from posting “content that is disparaging to a person or group based on race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military status, source of income, credit history, criminal record, criminal history, or any other protected class...”²³ The Directive also advises that on their personal social media

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

²² G09-01-06, Social Media Outlets, III.A. (Effective 12-22-20 to present).

²³ G09-01-06, II.C.1 & 2.

accounts, Department members are prohibited from representing themselves as an official spokesperson of CPD or the City.²⁴

In this case, Officer Sanchez was not acting in an official capacity on his personal Facebook account. The account photos displayed on his Facebook page were images of him in regular civilian clothing, with no mention of his vocation as a police officer with CPD.²⁵ However, while Officer Sanchez said his Facebook account was set to private so only his connections could see what he posted,²⁶ and that he had never given anyone else access to his account or password,²⁷ his posts nevertheless found their way onto Twitter., G0-09-01-06 III. A. specifically warned that CPD members must anticipate such exposure to the public domain in choosing to engage on social media.

Based on the foregoing, COPA finds **Allegation 1** based on Figure 1 – posting words to the effect of “In the Bible, demons refer to themselves as they/them/we/us” – **Sustained**. The original re-post referenced the Bible with specific verses, stating “demons refer to themselves as “they/them/we/us,” and then Officer Sanchez himself added the words “[e]vil is clever, sinister, and uses the weak-minded.”²⁸ Officer Sanchez said he reshared the post and made the comment because of his religious beliefs and because he disagrees with the unconventional use of pronouns which are in use today.²⁹ He also expressed concern over objectionable material that was distributed to his granddaughter in a public school.³⁰ Officer Sanchez said he found it interesting that something in the Bible might be relevant to the current trend of pronoun usage which was unfamiliar to him. According to Officer Sanchez, “they/them pronouns is a “new society thing,” but not specific to any group.³¹

As seen by @JinxPress’s comment regarding this post, “they/them” pronouns are commonly understood in society as referencing the transgender, and more broadly, the LGBTQ+ community, both protected classes. As noted above, Officer Sanchez’s claim that he thought the pronouns did not apply to any particular group is simply not credible. As such, COPA finds by a preponderance of the evidence that Officer Sanchez violated CPD General Orders, and **Allegation 1** against Officer Orlando Sanchez is **Sustained**.

Likewise, **Allegation 2** based on Figure 2 – posting words to the effect of “...useless super white liberal, colored hair, weirdly tattooed ‘teacher’...” is also **Sustained**.

This post was somewhat of a rant which Officer Sanchez explained was the result of his perception the adult accompanying a group of young children on the street, admonished the kids

²⁴ G09-01-06, III.D.4.

²⁵ Figures 1-3.

²⁶ Att. 12, pgs. 5 and 10 (PO Sanchez transcribed statement).

²⁷ Att. 12, pg. 5.

²⁸ Att. 12, pg. 6.

²⁹ Att. 12, pg. 6.

³⁰ Att. 12, pg. 6.

³¹ Att. 12, pg. 13.

for waving at him in his police car.³² He said the specific language of “useless, super white liberal, colored hair, weirdly-tattooed teacher” was merely a physical description of the individual. Officer Sanchez Jr. said he doesn’t approve of gender nonconformity being pushed on young children who are not old enough to make those decisions, and apparently saw this adult as a teacher who must have been complicit in this. However, the description of the “teacher” was not merely a physical description. It revealed Officer Sanchez’s underlying frustration and painted the teacher in a negative light by the tone of the entire post, and suggested a perceived political persuasion – liberal, race – white, and employment – teacher, whom he thought was “useless.” Whatever the motivation behind it, the resulting post in its entirety is clearly contrary to the General Order regarding social media outlets because it is disparaging on account of race, a protected class, and reflects poorly on the Department and implementation of their values and goals to treat all people with respect and dignity. Thus, COPA finds by a preponderance of the evidence that Officer Sanchez violated CPD General Orders, and **Allegation 2** against Officer Sanchez is **Sustained**.

Finally, COPA finds **Allegation 3** based on Figure 3 – posting an image of a hand with a rainbow-colored arm reaching for a silhouette of a family which contained words to the effect of “I respect how you want to live your life, but I do not accept that you impose your ideas by manipulating the little ones,” to be **Sustained**.

In this instance, Officer Sanchez said the reason behind the post was essentially the same as the earlier post, that he believes there should not be undue influence into the developing minds of young children regarding their sexuality, especially in public schools. He also mentioned the deterioration of the traditional nuclear family, which he related to Christian family ideals.³³ Notwithstanding the merit of any such arguments, the post in question contains an image of a shriveled hand reminiscent of a claw with dark skin color and a rainbow sleeve, reaching for a family, and being pulled back by a hand with light skin color with a cuff suggesting the red and white stripes of the American flag. The rainbow is widely recognized as a symbol for the LGBTQ+ community. As such, the image implies something nefarious in the way the dark-colored hand representing the LGBTQ+ community is reaching for the silhouette of the family and being held back by the light-colored hand representing America. Although the image is open to interpretation, the words accompanying the post provide context by stating “I respect how you want to live your life,” which indicates some lifestyle in connection to the rainbow sleeve. Seeing as how the rainbow is associated with the LGBTQ+ community and the indication of a lifestyle involved, the logical conclusion is the post refers to the LGBTQ+ community, a protected class, and states they are manipulating young kids.

Officer Sanchez elaborated that he believes there is an attack on the traditional Christian family, although he specified this is due to general outside influences and not necessarily any group of people.³⁴ However, Officer Sanchez agreed that some members of the public might find this

³² Att. 12, pgs. 7-8.

³³ Att. 12, pgs. 8 and 12.

³⁴ Att. 12, pgs. 12-13.

post offensive.³⁵ Further, the depiction of the dark-colored hand doing the nefarious action while the light-colored hand is holding the dark-colored hand back implicates race, another protected class, as well.

Therefore, the post is portraying two protected classes of people in a negative light, which is in opposition to the Department's stated goals of treating all persons with respect and dignity.³⁶ As such, the post violates the General Order. Based on the foregoing, COPA by a preponderance of the evidence finds that Officer Sanchez violated CPD General Orders and finds **Allegation 3** against Officer Sanchez is **Sustained**.

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Officer Orlando Sanchez Jr.

Officer Sanchez has received a total of 207 awards, including 12 Department Commendations, 2 Superintendent's Awards of Merit, and 3 Superintendent's Awards of Tactical Excellence. He has no sustained complaints in the last five years and no SPARs.

ii. Recommended Discipline

COPA found that Officer Sanchez violates CPD's vision, mission, values, and goals by posting disparaging perceptions of several protected classes of people on social media.

In mitigation, COPA will consider Officer Sanchez's complimentary history and he was forthcoming in his interview with COPA in that he acknowledged making the Facebook posts and discussed his views with candor.

In aggravation, COPA will consider that Officer Sanchez took no responsibility for his offensive posts, and did not seem to recognize the harm they could cause to the reputation of CPD, or the people in the groups he disparaged. First, Officer Sanchez failed to recognize what CPD found evident – that “privacy settings and social media sites are subject to constant modifications” it can never be assumed “that personal information posted on such sites is protected or secure.”³⁷ Instead, Officer Sanchez squarely placed the blame for his posts becoming public on “hack[ers]” who stole his “private information,” and then “create[ed] their own narrative.”³⁸ His purported apology – “if” anyone was offended – was directed at those who “misinterpreted” his posts “based on what this individual put out to the public.”³⁹ So, while COPA acknowledges Officer Sanchez's First Amendment Rights, these statements clearly show that Officer Sanchez fails to appreciate

³⁵ Att. 12, pg. 9.

³⁶ G02-01 III.B., Human Rights and Human Resources (effective 10-5-17 – 6-30-22).

³⁷ Att. 12, pgs. 8-9.

³⁸ Att. 12, pg. 8.

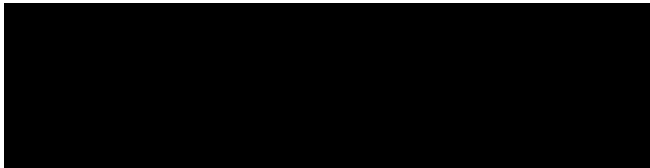
³⁹ Att. 12, pg. 10.

the public nature of his speech on social media regardless of his settings. They further show Officer Sanchez’s failure to recognize the possibility that one of his own family or friends caused his post to become public. As such, COPA has no confidence that Officer Sanchez would not repeat these transgressions in the future.

Second, Officer Sanchez’s professed “apology” not only placed the blame on someone else for his posts becoming public, it also revealed his inherent disdain for those who might be offended by his posts. Indeed, in admitting his posts might be seen as offensive, rather than exhibiting introspection or empathy in the pain he may have caused those in the marginalized groups he disparaged, he dismissively stated, “certain folks can find things offensive with pretty much anything these days.”⁴⁰ He then blamed the victims of his disparagement for “misinterpreting” his posts. But again, the rainbow flag, the “they/them” pronouns, the reference to the “white” teacher, and the representation of differing skin colors in the post about allegedly attacking traditional families, are blatant and obvious attempts to cast aspersions on protected groups, regardless of what Officer Sanchez claims were his true intentions. In fact, based on his statements to COPA, Officer Sanchez’s true intentions actually were to show disdain for those who would, in his view, indoctrinate children with exposure to transgender and LGBTQ+ values.

These groups are protected for a reason, and CPD recognizes this protection. It is incompatible for members to carelessly show such disdain for these groups on public platforms. The harm to the community and CPD’s reputation is immeasurable.

As such, COPA recommends a Reprimand



6-26-2024

Angela Hearts-Glass
Deputy Chief Administrator – Chief Investigator

Date

⁴⁰ Att. 12, pg. 9.

Appendix A

Case Details

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Date/Time/Location of Incident: | June 15, 2022 / via Facebook |
| Date/Time of COPA Notification: | April 11, 2023 / 4:50 pm |
| Involved Member #1: | Orlando Sanchez Jr. / Star #19244 / Employee ID [REDACTED] / Date of Appointment: December 2, 1996 / Unit 353 / Hispanic male |

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 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.

Applicable Policies and Laws

First Amendment to the United States Constitution
 G02-01, Human Rights and Human Resources, *effective 10-05-17 to 6-30-22*
 G09-01-06, Use of Social Media Outlets, *effective 10-22-20 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.⁴¹ 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.”⁴²

⁴¹ 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).

⁴² *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