



Log # 2023-0001582

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 12, 2023, the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) received an Initiation Report from Lieutenant Yvette Wooten reporting alleged misconduct by a member of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). ██████████ alleged that on April 12, 2023, Officer Alexander Chorak forcibly took her to the ground without justification.² Upon review of the evidence, COPA served additional allegations that Officer Chorak failed to use de-escalation techniques prior to using force, as well as, engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with ██████████ while she was in custody. Following its investigation, COPA reached **Sustained** findings regarding all allegations made against Officer Chorak.

II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE³

On April 12, 2023, Officer Chorak and Probationary Police Officer (PPO) Nicholas Wright were on routine patrol in CPD District 004.⁴ At 5:18 pm, Officer Chorak and PPO Wright observed ██████████ vehicle fail to stop at a stop sign at the intersection of Avenue O and 107th Street. Officer Chorak turned on his lights and sirens and initiated a traffic stop.⁵ ██████████ stopped her vehicle on the west side of the street, near 10740 S. Avenue O.⁶ Officer Chorak stopped his marked, CPD vehicle behind ██████████ vehicle. Both officers exited their vehicle, Officer Chorak proceeded to the driver's side of the vehicle and PPO Wright walked to the passenger side.⁷ When Officer Chorak approached the driver's side of the vehicle, he first knocked on the rear window and then knocked on the driver's window.⁸ Initially, ██████████ rolled down the rear window a few inches and then opened her door to speak to Officer Chorak.⁹ He then informed ██████████ that she failed to stop at a stop sign and her license plate sticker was expired; Officer Chorak asked for ██████████

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: body worn camera; CPD reports; and involved party statements.

⁴ Att. 37, pg. 12, lns. 7 to 9.

⁵ Att. 37, pg. 12, lns. 9 to 10.

⁶ Att. 4, pg. 2.

⁷ Att. 25 at 2:00 and Att. 28 at 2:00.

⁸ Att. 25 at 2:15 to 2:28.

⁹ Att. 25 at 2:15 to 2:35.

driver's license.¹⁰ At that point, ██████ began to pull her door closed.¹¹ Officer Chorak prevented her from closing the door and told ██████ to roll down her window if she was going to close her door.¹² ██████ acknowledged Officer Chorak's command, closed the door, rolled the rear driver's side window down, but did not open the front driver's side window.¹³ She then reclined her seat in order to lean back and talk to Officer Chorak through the rear window.¹⁴ Officer Chorak ordered ██████ to exit the vehicle.¹⁵

██████ immediately opened her door and spoke to Officer Chorak; however, he repeated his order for her to step out of her vehicle and stated that he smelled marijuana.¹⁶ Officer Chorak proceeded to speak rapidly, alternating commands and justifications for his orders.¹⁷ In response, ██████ told Officer Chorak to calm down before exiting her vehicle.¹⁸ Officer Chorak ordered ██████ to relocate to the back of her vehicle.¹⁹ ██████ walked towards the rear of the vehicle while Officer Chorak followed on her right.²⁰ As Officer Chorak approached the back of the vehicle, he commanded PPO Wright to get the passenger out of the vehicle before turning towards ██████.²¹ At that point, ██████ stated words to the effect of, "You're not gonna search my car."²² In addition, body worn footage (BWC) from Officer Chorak's camera showed ██████ adjacent to the rear driver's side of her vehicle, walking toward the open, driver's side door.²³ Officer Chorak ran towards ██████ and seized her left arm with both of his hands.²⁴ He then pulled ██████ who grabbed the open door with her right hand.²⁵ ██████ released her right hand and fell to the ground.²⁶ Officer Chorak continued to grip ██████ left arm as she fell.²⁷ After ██████ was on the ground, Officer Chorak secured a handcuff to her left wrist.²⁸ However, as Officer Chorak attempted to secure ██████ right wrist, ██████ resisted.²⁹

While Officer Chorak struggled to secure ██████ right wrist, PPO Wright relocated to the driver's side of the vehicle and assisted Officer Chorak with ██████ detention.³⁰ Officer

¹⁰ Att. 25 at 2:32.

¹¹ Att. 25 at 2:35.

¹² Att. 25 at 2:39.

¹³ Att. 25 at 2:48.

¹⁴ Att. 25 at 2:52.

¹⁵ Att. 25 at 2:54.

¹⁶ Att. 25 at 2:57 to 3:02.

¹⁷ Att. 25 at 3:03 to 3:10.

¹⁸ Att. 25 at 3:12.

¹⁹ Att. 25 at 3:25.

²⁰ Att. 25 at 3:34 to 3:41.

²¹ Att. 25 at 3:42.

²² Att. 25 at 3:44 to 3:46.

²³ Att. 25 at 3:45 to 3:48.

²⁴ Att. 25 at 3:45 to 3:50.

²⁵ Att. 25 at 3:50.

²⁶ Att. 25 at 3:51.

²⁷ Att. 25 at 3:50 to 3:52.

²⁸ Att. 25 at 3:52 to 3:57.

²⁹ Att. 25 at 3:52 to 4:00.

³⁰ Att. 25 at 4:00 to 4:05.

Chorak ordered [REDACTED] to “step up” and stop resisting.³¹ PPO Wright assisted [REDACTED] to her feet as she struggled to stand up.³² In the meantime, [REDACTED] children and partner, [REDACTED] watched Officer Chorak and PPO Wright gain control of [REDACTED] (see Figure 1).³³



Figure 1: Att. 25, Officer Chorak’s BWC, passengers in [REDACTED] vehicle watch her and officers struggle.

After assisting [REDACTED] to her feet, Officer Chorak and PPO Wright escorted her to the back of the vehicle and positioned her, face forward, against the vehicle as they handcuffed her right wrist.³⁴ Officer Chorak and PPO Wright continued to detain [REDACTED] while they secured the second handcuff on [REDACTED] right wrist. While struggling, Officer Chorak yelled, “taser, taser.”³⁵ Officer Chorak yelled, “give me your fucking hand,” as he attempted to gain control of [REDACTED] right arm.³⁶ Once handcuffed, Officer Chorak seated [REDACTED] on the curb behind her vehicle.³⁷ At that time Officer Chorak and [REDACTED] continued to verbally interact as Officer Chorak searched [REDACTED] vehicle and explained the circumstances of the incident to assisting CPD members.³⁸

³¹ Att. 25 at 4:00 to 4:15.

³² Att. 25 at 4:15.

³³ Att. 25 at 4:20.

³⁴ Att. 25 at 4:25 to 5:20.

³⁵ Att. 25 at 4:42.

³⁶ Att. 25 at 5:05 to 5:10.

³⁷ Att. 25 at 5:20 to 6:20.

³⁸ Att. 25 at 5:20 to 7:30.

As Officer Chorak searched, [REDACTED] children hid behind the front seats of the vehicle (see Figure 2).³⁹



Figure 2: From Att. 25, Officer Chorak's BWC, while he searched the front, passenger side of [REDACTED] vehicle.⁴⁰

After searching [REDACTED] vehicle, Officer Chorak and PPO Wright secured her in the backseat of their vehicle and transported her to the CPD 4th District Station where she was processed.⁴¹

III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer Alexander Chorak:

1. Failure to de-escalate prior to using force during the arrest of [REDACTED]
 - **Sustained**, in violation of **CPD Rules 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10.**
2. Forcibly brought [REDACTED] to the ground without justification.
 - **Sustained**, in violation of **CPD Rules 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10.**
3. Engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with [REDACTED] while she was in custody and compliant.
 - **Sustained**, in violation of **CPD Rules 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10.**

³⁹ Att. 25 at 5:55.

⁴⁰ Att. 25 at 6:05.

⁴¹ Att. 5.

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, COPA finds there is sufficient evidence to question the credibility of Officer Chorak's account of the incident under investigation for the following reasons:

COPA believes Officer Chorak was not forthcoming in his responses to COPA's questions during his statement. Officer Chorak repeatedly completed his responses indicating he would need to review his BWC before committing to details regarding the incident. In fact, prior to seeing his BWC, Officer Chorak qualified his statements in this way nine times when asked to address issues directly related to the allegations of misconduct made against him.⁴² Officer Chorak claimed limited recollection even though COPA provided a Tactical Response Report (TRR) and Arrest Report (AR), both authored by Officer Chorak, prior to initiating the investigation. Moreover, Officer Chorak's responses to COPA's questions rarely, if at all, veered from the information contained in the documents he was presented prior to statement initiation. Although it is possible that an officer might not recall details of a routine traffic stop eight months after the incident, there are aspects unique to this incident that would have, more likely than not, helped to concretize the officer's memories. Namely, the fact that Lieutenant Wooten conducted a post-incident debrief with the arresting officers. In fact, Lieutenant Wooten memorialized both her objections to Officer Chorak's behavior and the conversation she had with Officer Chorak and PPO Wright in the TRR completed for this incident.⁴³

In the TRR mentioned above, Lieutenant Wooten indicated that "P.O. Chorak's actions were not appropriate and not objectively reasonabl[e]."⁴⁴ Lieutenant Wooten went on to explain that she addressed her concerns regarding the use of force, as well as the lack of concern paid to the presence of minors with Officer Chorak and PPO Wright in a debrief session.⁴⁵ Therefore, given the particularities of this case, as well as Officer Chorak's post-incident debrief with Lieutenant Wooten regarding her concerns about Officer Chorak's conduct, it is reasonable to believe that Officer Chorak would have recalled the encounter with [REDACTED] without reviewing his BWC.

Whether Officer Chorak's inability to recall details was due to the passage of time or intentional evasiveness, his ability to accurately recall the event from memory calls into question his level of credibility.

⁴² Att. 37: pg. 15, lns. 4 to 6; pg. 16, lns. 10 to 11; pg. 17, ln. 4 and lns. 13 to 14; pg. 20, lns. 21 to 22; pg. 21, ln. 6; pg. 22, lns. 14 to 15 and lns. 22 to 23; pg. 23, lns. 3 to 4; pg. 25, ln. 24 to pg. 26, ln. 1; and pg. 26, lns. 6 to 7.

⁴³ Att. 6, pgs. 8 to 9.

⁴⁴ Att. 6, pg. 8.

⁴⁵ Att. 6, pg. 9. In addition, see Figures 1 and 2 in the summary section above.

V. ANALYSIS⁴⁶

a. Failure to de-escalate prior to using force during the arrest of [REDACTED]

COPA finds **Allegation 1** that Officer Chorak failed to de-escalate prior to using force during the arrest of [REDACTED] is **Sustained**. According to CPD policy, members are “required to use de-escalation techniques to prevent or reduce the need for force, unless doing so would place...[a] member in immediate risk of harm.”⁴⁷ When employing de-escalation techniques during an encounter with an individual, members “will use the principles of Force Mitigation to ensure effective police-public encounters.”⁴⁸ This includes using continual communication, tactical positioning, and time as tactic to diminish the need to use force.⁴⁹

In this case, Officer Chorak’s demeanor while interacting with [REDACTED] complicated and escalated tensions. Throughout the encounter, Officer Chorak’s reactions were disproportionately heightened in relation to [REDACTED] actions. In fact, Officer Chorak mentioned that he had a “heightened” sense of awareness six times throughout his statement to COPA.⁵⁰ Although Officer Chorak maintained communication with [REDACTED] the rapidity of his commands, as well as the justification for those commands was communicated in a manner that was both difficult to follow and confusing.⁵¹ [REDACTED] seemingly confused by Officer Chorak’s statements and demeanor told Officer Chorak to calm down.⁵² Additionally, the phrasing of Officer Chorak’s commands further complicated the situation. For instance, while [REDACTED] was on the ground, Officer Chorak ordered [REDACTED] to “step up” and to “stop resisting” numerous times while he continued to attempt to handcuff her right arm rather than assist [REDACTED] to her feet.⁵³ In fact, Lieutenant Wooten commented in the TRR, “[t]he subject also looked confused when the officer continued to state ‘Step Up’ while she was on the ground.”⁵⁴ In other words, Officer Chorak’s attempt to communicate throughout the encounter escalated rather than de-escalated tensions. He was incapable of modulating his heightened emotions and temper his responses to [REDACTED] actions as she oscillated between compliance and non-compliance. In fact, COPA believes Officer Chorak’s demeanor escalated tensions in a situation that would have otherwise been a relatively routine traffic stop. Therefore, COPA finds there is sufficient evidence to support a **Sustained** finding for the allegation made against him.

⁴⁶ For a definition of COPA’s findings and standards of proof, *see* Appendix B.

⁴⁷ Att. 41, G03-02: De-Escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (III)(C)(effective April 15, 2021 to June 28, 2023).

⁴⁸ Att. 42, G03-02-01: Response to Resistance and Force Options (III)(effective April 15, 2021 to June 28, 2023).

⁴⁹ Att. 42, G03-02-01(III)(A-C).

⁵⁰ Att. 37, pg. 14, ln. 23; pg. 25, ln. 10; pg. 38, lns. 18 & 24; and pg. 41, ln. 7.

⁵¹ Att. 25 at 2:55 to 3:15.

⁵² Att. 25 at 3:12.

⁵³ Att. 25 at 3:45 to 4:20.

⁵⁴ Att. 6, pg. 9.

b. Forcibly brought ██████████ to the ground without justification.

COPA finds Allegation 2 that Officer Chorak forcibly brought ██████████ to the ground without justification, is **Sustained**. According to CPD policy, members may only use force that is “objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional to the threat, actions, and level of resistance presented by a person.”⁵⁵ In addition, members are obligated to continually assess interactions with civilians and determine: if force is necessary; if the severity of the interaction requires an immediate response; and/or “if the level of force employed should be modified based upon the person’s actions or other changes in circumstances.”⁵⁶ Therefore, a member’s decision to use force in a dynamic, rapidly evolving encounter requires members to respond to civilian behavior in a contemporaneously proportionate manner.

Officer Chorak’s decision to go hands on and use force when ██████████ turned and started walking toward the driver’s side of the vehicle was unreasonable and unnecessary. In his TRR, Officer Chorak described a situation whereby ██████████ rapidly and without warning attempted to flee.⁵⁷ Officer Chorak reiterated his characterization of ██████████ behavior in his statement to COPA.⁵⁸ However, Officer Chorak’s description of ██████████ actions is contradicted by the events captured on his BWC. Although ██████████ did state opposition to the search of her vehicle, it is clear from the footage that ██████████ did not move at a rapid pace when she walked toward the driver’s side door of the vehicle.⁵⁹ Additionally, despite momentary resistance, ██████████ did comply with Officer Chorak’s commands prior to her turning away from Officer Chorak. When Officer Chorak told ██████████ to exit her vehicle, she exited the vehicle. Moreover, as discussed above, Officer Chorak failed to de-escalate the situation prior to putting his hands on ██████████. In fact, Lieutenant Wooten indicated that Officer Chorak’s actions were not reasonable or appropriate. COPA agrees with Lieutenant Wooten’s assessment of the situation. Given that ██████████ sauntered rather than rapidly fled towards the open door of the vehicle as well as her prior compliance, it is reasonable to believe that Officer Chorak could have resorted to verbal commands to regain control of the encounter. In other words, had Officer Chorak modulated his response to the actual conditions of ██████████ noncompliance, he could have avoided the forcible take down of ██████████. Therefore, COPA believes there is sufficient evidence to support a **Sustained** finding for the allegation made against him.

c. Engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with ██████████ while she was in custody and compliant.

COPA finds Allegation 3 that Officer Chorak engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with ██████████ while she was in custody and compliant, is **Sustained**. According to CPD policy, every member has an obligation to respect and protect the rights of everyone with whom they have

⁵⁵ Att. 42, G03-02-01(ID)(D).

⁵⁶ Att. 42, G03-02-01(ID)(E).

⁵⁷ Att. 6, pg. 5.

⁵⁸ Att. 37, pg.13, lns. 2 to 8.

⁵⁹ Att. 25 at 3:35 to 3:48.

contact.⁶⁰ In addition, it is incumbent upon all members to interact with the public in a respectful manner and to treat all individuals with courtesy and dignity.⁶¹ Moreover, CPD policy requires members to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to refrain from using language or taking actions “intended to taunt or denigrate an individual.”⁶²

For reasons outlined in Section V.a. above, COPA believes Officer Chorak’s demeanor escalated tensions. In addition to an unjustified use of force, Officer Chorak engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with ██████████. Although ██████████ actions required Officer Chorak to vary his force mitigation techniques throughout the encounter, he was incapable of modulating his emotional response in a manner that was proportionate to ██████████ resistance. ██████████ ultimately complied, was handcuffed and seated on the curb.⁶³ Although she continued to plead with Officer Chorak, ██████████ remained seated and did not make any attempts to defeat her arrest.⁶⁴ Regardless, Officer Chorak continued to castigate and berate ██████████ for her previous behavior.⁶⁵ Officer Chorak claimed that his admonishments resulted from his feelings of bewilderment and confusion in regards to ██████████ actions.⁶⁶ However, bewilderment and confusion certainly do not justify berating a civilian who is in restraints, in custody, and in compliance. In addition to his bewilderment and confusion, Officer Chorak claimed that he felt it was necessary to, “explain,” to ██████████ the gravity and consequence of her actions, as well as the danger posed to her children.⁶⁷ Yet, Officer Chorak’s concern for the children’s welfare during the encounter with ██████████ is not witnessed on any available video evidence. In fact, Officer Chorak seemed blind to the presence of ██████████ children as he frantically searched her vehicle and denigrated their mother.⁶⁸ Moreover, Officer Chorak’s demeanor was erratic, unfocused, and out of proportion with ██████████ actions throughout the encounter. It is reasonable to believe that Officer Chorak’s choices and behavior not only exacerbated tensions and led to an unjustified use of force but are reflective of his inability to regulate his emotional responses during relatively mundane interactions with civilians. Therefore, COPA believes there is sufficient evidence to support a **Sustained** finding for the allegation made against him.

⁶⁰ Att. 43, G02-01: Protection of Human Rights (III)(A) (effective June 30, 2024 to present).

⁶¹ Att. 43, G02-01(III)(B)(1-2).

⁶² Att. 43, G02-01(III)(B)(3-4).

⁶³ Att. 25 at 5:15.

⁶⁴ Att. 25 at 5:15 to 10:30.

⁶⁵ Att. 25 at 5:22 to 6:45.

⁶⁶ Att. 37, pg. 37, lns. 7 to 20.

⁶⁷ Att. 37, pg.38, lns. 8 to 23.

⁶⁸ See Figures 1 and 2 in the summary section of this report.

VI. DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATION

a. Officer Alexander Chorak

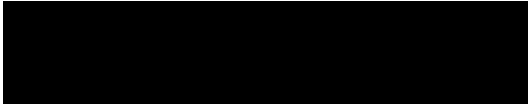
i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History⁶⁹

Officer Alexander Chorak has received 81 complimentary awards, including 65 honorable mentions, five unit meritorious performance awards, and three Department commendations. Officer Chorak does not have a record of discipline.

ii. Recommended Discipline

COPA has considered Officer Chorak’s complimentary history and lack of disciplinary history. COPA has also considered the totality of the facts in this case and the allegations sustained against Officer Chorak. Thus, COPA recommends a suspension of up to 30 days and De-escalation Training.

Approved:



Shirley Jackson
Deputy Chief Administrator – Chief Investigator

August 29, 2024

Date

⁶⁹ Att. 45.

Appendix ACase Details

Date/Time/Location of Incident:	April 12, 2023 / 5:14 pm / 10710 S. Avenue O
Date/Time of COPA Notification:	April 12, 2023 / 8:30 am
Involved Member #1:	Alexander Chorak, star # 14867, employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: October 27, 2014, Unit of Assignment: 192, Male, White
Involved Member #2:	Nicholas Wright, star # 3138, employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: August 31, 2022, Unit of Assignment: 005, Male, White
Involved Individual #1:	[REDACTED] Female, Black
Involved Individual #2:	[REDACTED] Male, 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

- General Order 03-02: De-Escalation, Response to Resistance, and Use of Force (effective: April 15, 2021 to June 28, 2023)
- General Order 03-02-01: Response to Resistance and Force Options (effective: April 15, 2021 to June 28, 2023)
- G02-01: Protection of Human Rights (effective: June 30, 2022 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.⁷⁰ 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.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ 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).

⁷¹ *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