city of CINCINNATI

Interdepartmental Correspondence Sheet

Date: May 23, 2025

Case: #24229 **Investigator:** Dr. Arnie D. Slaughter

Complaint Received: October 28, 2024 **Complainant:** Demetrius Hill

CCA completed an investigation of CCA Complaint No. 24229 by Mr. Demetrius Hill. This report is intended to convey the conclusions reached as a consequence of the investigation, and the basis for those conclusions. This report does not intend to summarize all evidence uncovered during the investigation, nor is it intended to summarize the entirety of CCA's file on this matter.

Complaint Summary:

Date: Friday, October 4, 2024

Time: 10:46 pm

Location: Government Square

Mr. Demetrius Hill was engaged in a verbal dispute with a Cincinnati Metro supervisor regarding the status of the #20 Metro bus at Government Square. Mr. Hill maintained the Metro supervisor lied about the status of the bus, was hostile, threatened violence against him, and "then reached under his seat in a manner that suggested he might be retrieving a weapon." Mr. Hill stated that "this unexpected threat alarmed me, and fearing for my safety, I immediately called 911 to report the incident."

Mr. Hill also stated the following in his written complaint:

> When CPD officers arrived, rather than focusing on the threatening behavior of the Metro supervisor, the officers appeared to treat me as the primary suspect. The Metro supervisor also spoke to the officers, making counterclaims. The officers then indicated to me that the Metro supervisor alleged I had made the same threat toward him, and that they intended to allow us both to leave without issuing any citations or making any arrests. However, the officers informed me that the Metro supervisor claimed I was banned from using the Metro bus system.

Mr. Hill alleged that he experienced a lack of service by CPD, Lieutenant Patrick Caton abused his authority, and he was illegally seized and transported to the UC Health Psychiatric Emergency Department (PES). Mr. Hill stated that he was held at PES for four hours before being released by medical personnel without further action.

Allegations:

Lack of Service
Abuse of Authority
Improper Seizure

Collateral Allegation:

Discrimination

Persons Involved:

Lieutenant Patrick Caton, L0013, M/W/58, CPD Hire date: 1/5/1997 (Involved)
Officer Orion Covrett, #P0498, M/W/40, CPD Hire date: 12/1/2019 (Involved)
Officer Hunter Followell-Gibson, P0517, M/W/26, CPD Hire date: 12/1/2019 (Involved)
Officer Karen Taylor, P0902, F/B/52, CPD Hire date: 9/25/2005 (Involved)
Demetrius Hill, M/B/36 (Complainant)
Cincinnati Metro Supervisor, M/W/Unknown (Involved)
Unidentified Female Individual, M/F/Unknown (Witness)
Unidentified Male Individual, M/B/Unknown (Witness)

Evidence Reviewed:

Hamilton County Clerk of Courts
CPD Records Management System (Axon)
CPD Internal Investigation Section (IIS) Report
CPD Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)
Body-Worn Camera (BWC)
911 Service Call from Mr. Hill and a representative of Cincinnati Metro
Statements by officers, complainant, and relevant witnesses

Significant Discrepancies or Clarifications:

On Tuesday, December 3, 2024, CCA requested footage Metro-Government Square CCTV for the alleged altercation. Cincinnati Metro responded later that day and notified CCA that their cameras had a four-week retention period thus the requested footage was no longer available.

Authorities:

CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.06 *Failure of Good Behavior*
CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.21 *Failure of Good Behavior*
CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.22 *Failure of Good Behavior*
CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.23 *Failure of Good Behavior*
CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §2.02 *Neglect of Duty*
CPD Procedure Manual §12.110 *Handling Suspected Mentally Ill Individuals*
CPD Procedure Manual §15.101 *Bias Free Policing*
Ohio Revised Code 2903.22 *Menacing* (A)(1)

Analysis:

The information outlined in the “Summary of Facts” is the summation of all the evidence collected throughout the investigation. To thoroughly illustrate what transpired, the facts are presented chronologically below, followed by the analysis of all allegations.

Summary of Facts:

Initial Engagement between Officer Karen Taylor, Mr. Hill, and Cincinnati Metro supervisor

Mr. Hill alleged he experienced a "lack of service", "abuse of authority", and "improper seizure" when he requested CPD's assistance regarding a dispute with a Cincinnati Metro supervisor. He also stated that the supervisor threatened him and made a gesture in his vehicle that led Mr. Hill to believe that the supervisor may have had a firearm underneath his seat in his Metro vehicle. The dispute stemmed from a miscommunication about the departure of the #20 bus departing early from Government Square. Mr. Hill felt that the supervisor lied about the bus's departure and intentionally caused him to miss this bus. Mr. Hill and a Cincinnati Metro representative individually contacted 911 and requested the assistance of an officer to resolve the dispute and alleged threats of bodily harm. The Cincinnati Metro representative contacted 911 on behalf of the Metro supervisor.

Mr. Hill contacted 911 on two occasions. During the first call, Mr. Hill informed the dispatcher that the "Metro supervisor threatened to beat him up and shoot him." In the second phone call, Mr. Hill expressed frustration that he contacted 911 at 10:39 pm and as of 10:46 pm, CPD had not arrived on the scene. Via the second 911 phone call, Mr. Hill said that because of his race, there was an intentional delay in providing him with service. The 911 dispatcher stated that this was not the case and attempted to resolve Mr. Hill's concern. In the Cincinnati Metro representative's 911 call, the representative stated that "Mr. Hill was disgruntled and was blocking the supervisor's vehicle."

Officer Taylor arrived at 10:48 pm to speak with both Mr. Hill and the Metro supervisor. She briefly spoke with the Metro supervisor to get his perspective on the incident. Within a minute, Officer Taylor engaged Mr. Hill to listen to his concerns and to get a better gauge on the verbal encounter between him and the Metro supervisor. In the BWC footage, Mr. Hill stated that the Metro supervisor misled him about the bus's departure, dismissed his concerns about the bus, and proceeded to walk back to his vehicle without providing him with answers to his questions. He further explained to Officer Taylor that he approached the Metro supervisor at his vehicle, knocked on the vehicle's window, and questioned the bus's early departure. Mr. Hill told Officer Taylor that the Metro supervisor threatened to "beat his ass" and then proceeded to "reach under his seat". Mr. Hill maintained that the Metro supervisor lied.

Officer Taylor provided Mr. Hill with the Metro supervisor's statement regarding the incident. Officer Taylor explained to Mr. Hill that he (Mr. Hill) alleged that the Metro supervisor threatened him, and that the Metro supervisor alleged that Mr. Hill threatened him. She further stated that both individuals contacted 911, made the same allegation of threats, and told Mr. Hill that she was sending both individuals their separate ways. She further explained to Mr. Hill that the supervisor would not permit Mr. Hill to ride the Metro bus that evening because of the alleged threats.

Mr. Hill expressed his frustration with this decision and questioned the authority of the Metro supervisor and Cincinnati Metro's stance that they could deny bus services when he (Mr. Hill) pays his taxes for City services. Officer Taylor reiterated that she was sending both individuals their separate ways because of the conflicting reports she received. Mr. Hill disputed Officer Taylor's decision. He further expressed that both he and the Metro supervisor should go to jail for "menacing". Mr. Hill then requested the presence of a CPD supervisor and further questioned the Metro supervisor's ability to prohibit him from riding the bus that evening.

Mr. Hill proceeded to record this interaction, expressed his frustration regarding the incident, and provided descriptions of the individuals involved in the encounter.

The Metro supervisor approached Officer Taylor and informed her that there were cameras in the area that recorded video footage and audio of the encounter he had with Mr. Hill. The Metro supervisor also stated that his Metro vehicle has audio and video footage of the incident as well; however, he could not access the footage at that time. Mr. Hill consistently maintained throughout the interaction that he was treated differently because he is a Black man, and the Metro supervisor is a white man.

Lieutenant Patrick Caton arrives at Government Square

According to BWC footage, Lieutenant Caton arrived at Government Square at 11:04 pm (approximately five minutes after Mr. Hill's request). Officer Taylor informed Lieutenant Caton about the incident and the contradictory perspectives of Mr. Hill and the Metro supervisor. Lieutenant Caton engaged with Mr. Hill to hear his perspective of the incident. After presenting Lieutenant Caton with his version of the events, Mr. Hill informed Lieutenant Caton that if the Metro supervisor called the police on him, "his Black ass would be going to jail". Officer Taylor informed Lieutenant Caton that both individuals called 911 on each other. Lieutenant Caton asked Mr. Hill how he wanted to resolve the issue. Mr. Hill responded that he would like to see the Metro supervisor go to jail and he (Mr. Hill) would go right there with him. He further stated that after jail, he and the Metro supervisor "can both go to court and argue in front of a judge and jury."

Lieutenant Caton informed Mr. Hill that the Metro supervisor was within his jurisdiction not allowing him on the bus for the night. Lieutenant Caton and Mr. Hill continued to dispute the Metro supervisor's authority whether Cincinnati Metro is a private company, and why he could not ride a Metro bus based on the temporary trespass statement the Metro supervisor. Mr. Hill questioned Lieutenant Caton and asked, "so if I get on a bus right now, you're going to arrest me for trespassing?" Lieutenant Caton responded in the affirmative. Mr. Hill then stated, "well I am going to get on the bus, and you can arrest me right now." Mr. Hill continued to ask what crime he committed. Lieutenant Caton stated that Mr. Hill did not commit a crime and reiterated that both Mr. Hill and the Metro supervisor alleged threats against one another, and that if Mr. Hill were to get on a bus that night, he would go to jail. Mr. Hill continued, "then we can both go to jail."

BWC footage showed Mr. Hill walking approximately 50 feet away from the vicinity of the officers. As Mr. Hill returned to walk back to the vicinity of the officers, Officer Taylor requested that the Metro supervisor move to a different area away from the officers. Mr. Hill then asked Lieutenant Caton to arrest him now. As Lieutenant Caton and Mr. Hill disputed the legalities of the potential arrest, two citizen bystanders approached Mr. Hill and offered to provide him with a ride to get him home. An unidentified Black female expressed her concern for Mr. Hill and reiterated her offer to find a way to get him home. An unidentified Black male then encouraged Mr. Hill to accept the female's offer so that Mr. Hill could get home, and he could "let the officers attend to other matters and stop wasting the officers' time." The interaction with the bystanders occurred at 11:15 pm. Mr. Hill proceeded to walk away with the bystanders and from the officers a few minutes later. The unidentified female returned to speak with the officer and questioned why Mr. Hill wanted to go to jail and she told the officers it would cost her $30 to get Mr. Hill home.

At the 11:19 pm BWC mark, Mr. Hill and the unidentified male approached the unidentified female who was speaking with the officers. Mr. Hill declined the ride home and expressed his rationale for "standing his ground" as he and the bystanders walked away. At the 11:23 pm BWC mark, Lieutenant Caton expressed to the other officers on the scene that he suspected that Mr. Hill may be experiencing a Mental Health Response Team (MHRT) issue. Approximately 30 seconds later, Mr. Hill was seen walking back to the vicinity of the officers from approximately 50 feet. Mr. Hill stated he perceived the officers were mocking the situation based on his observations of them from a distance. Lieutenant Caton addressed Mr. Hill's concerns as Mr. Hill again stated he was going to get on the bus. He further elaborated that CPD "could arrest him now or arrest him in 20 minutes when the bus arrives."

Mr. Hill repeated his stance that he was treated differently because of his race. Lieutenant Caton disputed this allegation and asked Mr. Hill if he could ask him a question. Mr. Hill responded in the affirmative. Lieutenant Caton asked Mr. Hill if he had been treated with any issues related to mental health concerns. Mr. Hill denied this claim and reiterated his concerns with the Metro supervisor, the trespass from the bus, and that he did not commit a crime.

Mr. Hill further stated that he would be getting on the Metro bus and repeated that CPD could arrest him now or arrest him when he gets on the bus. At 11:31pm BWC mark, Mr. Hill was handcuffed and placed in the back of Officer Hunter Gibson's cruiser. As Officer Gibson searched Mr. Hill's person, Mr. Hill reiterated that he was treated differently because of his race.

While at the back of the CPD cruiser, Lieutenant Caton and other officers discussed the encounter they experienced with Mr. Hill. Lieutenant Caton told the officers that he had never seen this type of encounter before. He informed the officers that Mr. Hill may benefit from an assessment with PES. Per Lieutenant Caton's directive, Officer Gibson transported Mr. Hill to PES.

As a member of the Mental Health Response Team (MHRT), Lieutenant Caton served as the primary lead to assess the situation and to determine if transport to PES should be considered. CPD Procedure Manual §12.110 *Handling Suspected Mentally Ill Individuals*, "Mental Health Response Team (MHRT) officers will be the first responders, when available, on all runs involving suspected mentally ill individuals. An MHRT officer on the scene of a suspected mentally ill individual will be the primary officer handling the situation."

Allegation One: Lack of Service

In her CCA interview, Officer Taylor stated that Mr. Hill and the Metro supervisor made the same accusation of threats against one another and contacted 911 to report the other person. CCA reviewed the contents of both 911 complaint calls. In Mr. Hill's second call to 911 to express dissatisfaction he initially contacted 911 at 10:39 pm and that as of 10:46 pm an officer had not yet arrived at the scene. BWC footage confirmed Officer Taylor arrived at the scene at 10:48 pm. The two 911 dispatchers and Officer Taylor engaged with Mr. Hill to hear his concerns and attempted to provide him with a resolution. At Mr. Hill's request to speak with a supervisor at the 10:59 pm BWC mark, Lieutenant Caton, the supervisor on duty, arrived at the scene at 11:04 pm. Officer Taylor initially informed Mr. Hill that because there was an inability to determine who was the primary individual who threatened the other, she wanted to send both individuals on their way. She stated this same sentiment when Lieutenant Caton arrived. She also informed Lieutenant Caton that the Metro supervisor alleged that Mr. Hill punched his Metro vehicle's window and threatened him. She told the Lieutenant the Metro supervisor did not want to press charges but did not want Mr. Hill on a bus for the evening.

When CCA asked Lieutenant Caton during his interview about “cross complaints” from two individuals, he stated that in this case, he supported sending both individuals away from each other because there was an inability to determine which individual was at fault and there was not an imminent safety concern from either individual. He further stated that he did not want to take Mr. Hill and the Metro supervisor to jail at Mr. Hill’s request to send them both to jail.

CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §2.02 *Neglect of Duty* states that “members of the Department shall provide necessary advice and/or assistance to citizens in a prompt and courteous manner, whether the request is made by telephone or in person. Information from citizens relating to complaints or reports will be thoroughly documented in accordance with existing Department procedure.”

Lieutenant Caton stated in his CCA interview that the incident did not rise to the level of “menacing” as neither individual seemed intimidated by each other and Mr. Hill did not retreat from the scene to call 911 when he was allegedly threatened with being shot by the Metro supervisor. The Ohio Revised Code 2903.22 *Menacing* (A)(1) states that “No person shall knowingly cause another to believe that the offender will cause physical harm to the person or property of the other person, the other person's unborn, or a member of the other person's immediate family. In addition to any other basis for the other person's belief that the offender will cause physical harm to the person or property of the other person, the other person's unborn, or a member of the other person's immediate family, the other person's belief may be based on words or conduct of the offender that are directed at or identify a corporation, association, or other organization that employs the other person or to which the other person belongs.”

Although Mr. Hill did not receive the exact resolution he was seeking, CPD officers and the Lieutenant responded to the scene within ten minutes, obtained the testimony of both parties, remained professional, provided numerous attempts for Mr. Hill to leave the area, and complied with CPD policies, procedures, and training.

Allegation Two: Abuse of Authority

The officers involved were courteous and listened to the concerns expressed by Mr. Hill and the Metro supervisor. Lieutenant Caton arrived on scene and attempted to deescalate the situation and supported Officer Taylor’s discretion to send both individuals away from each other. He further stated in his CCA interview that based on training, service on CPD for 30 years, and his 20 years of service as a member of the Mental Health Response Team (MHRT), Mr. Hill’s behavior pinged the possibility that Mr. Hill may have been experiencing a mental health episode. Lieutenant Caton further elaborated that Mr. Hill possessed a manifesto and documentation of four or five potential lawsuits with the City of Cincinnati. He stressed that he was confused about why Mr. Hill wanted to go to jail and that he and the officers did everything they could to avoid taking Mr. Hill to jail. He stated that unfortunately CPD had to decide to act because of the duration of time the incident lasted and Mr. Hill’s refusal to leave the area.

CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.06 *Failure of Good Behavior* states that “members of the Department shall always be civil, orderly, and courteous in dealing with the public, subordinates, superiors and associates. Members of the Department shall avoid the use of coarse, violent, or profane language.” Further, CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.22 *Failure of Good Behavior* also states that “Members shall not verbally and/or physically mistreat persons who are in custody and shall protect them from mistreatment by others. Members shall handle such persons in accordance with law and Department procedure.”

After a review of CPD materials, BWC footage, and statements from all involved parties to CCA, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that there was an abuse of authority from Lieutenant Caton or any other involved officer.

Allegation Three: Improper Seizure

Mr. Hill maintained that he was improperly seized and taken to PES without his consent. In his CCA statement, Mr. Hill felt that he was inappropriately transported to PES. Lieutenant Caton stated in his CCA interview that because Mr. Hill decided not to leave the area, maintained that he would get on the bus despite being trespassed, requested to be arrested, and provided CPD with few options, CPD had to eventually act and conclude the situation. Lieutenant Caton also stated Mr. Hill's mannerisms triggered red flags and that once CPD saw the manifesto and City information, CPD collectively agreed that Mr. Hill could benefit from an observation from a medical professional.

CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.21 *Failure of Good Behavior* state that CPD "Members shall not make any arrest, search, or seizure not in accordance with law". CPD Procedure Manual §12.555 *Arrest/Citation* also maintain that "an Officer may arrest and charge for a misdemeanor in which he witnesses, but probable cause is still a requirement. Even pretextual arrests are permitted, but they are unlawful when not supported by probable cause."

Lieutenant Caton expressed concern with Mr. Hill's continuous walk away from CPD only to return minutes later, Mr. Hill's refusal to accept the assistance of an Uber/Lyft ride from one of two bystanders who intervened in the encounter. Lieutenant Caton stressed that it was not CPD's intention to assess criminal charges. After a review of CPD materials, BWC footage, and statements from all parties involved to CCA, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that there was an improper seizure of Mr. Hill by Lieutenant Caton, or any other officer involved.

CCA consulted with the City Solicitor's officer regarding Lieutenant Caton's directive to take Mr. Hill to PES. A representative from the office stated, "This is a fairly subjective determination, so it is important that the Officer was able to provide an adequate justification that meets this standard based on the conduct of the person, that person's history of mental illness if any, the Officer's training and experience with mentally ill subjects, and any other circumstances during the incident. In my opinion it is a close call, but the Officer's actions were likely justified based on the totality of the circumstances."

Based on Lieutenant Caton's over 20 years as a member of the Mental Health Response Team (MHRT), Lieutenant Caton served as the primary lead to assess the situation and to determine if transport to PES should be considered. CPD Procedure Manual §12.110 *Handling Suspected Mentally Ill Individuals*, "Mental Health Response Team (MHRT) officers will be the first responders, when available, on all runs involving suspected mentally ill individuals. An MHRT officer on the scene of a suspected mentally ill individual will be the primary officer handling the situation."

Collateral Allegation One: Discrimination

Mr. Hill referenced discriminatory actions by 911 dispatchers in his second call to them and in his interactions with the CPD officers via BWC footage reviews. In the beginning of the encounters between Officer Taylor, Mr. Hill, and the Metro supervisor, there were no indicators of discriminatory behavior or statements. When Mr. Hill alleged to Officer Taylor and Lieutenant

Caton that he was being treated differently because of his race, both CPD officers informed Mr. Hill that the encounter was not based on race and that both individuals requested CPD intervention via 911.

CPD Procedure Manual §15.101 *Bias Free Policing* states that "The Cincinnati Police Department will provide services and enforcement fairly and without discrimination toward any individual or group of people. Bias based profiling should not be used as the basis for providing law enforcement services or enforcement of laws." In addition, CPD Manual of Rules and Regulations §1.23 *Failure of Good Behavior* state that "members of the Department shall not express, verbally or in writing, any prejudice or offensive comments concerning age, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, marital status, disability, religion, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, Appalachian regional ancestry, veteran status, military status, genetic history, HIV status, or similar personal characteristics."

After thorough reviews of BWC footage, 911 phone calls, and materials provided to CCA. There is no evidence that CPD acted in a discriminatory way. BWC footage did not show any discriminatory statements or a bias towards Mr. Hill or the Metro supervisor.

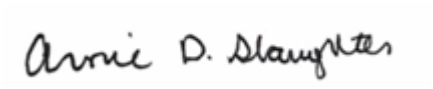
Findings:

Original Allegations

No.	Allegation	Involved Officer	Involved Citizen	Finding
1	Lack of Service	Orion Covrett	Demetrius Hill	Exonerated
2	Lack of Service	Hunter Followell-Gibson	Demetrius Hill	Exonerated
3	Lack of Service	Karen Taylor	Demetrius Hill	Exonerated
4	Lack of Service	Lt. Patrick Caton	Demetrius Hill	Exonerated
5	Abuse of Authority	Lt. Patrick Caton	Demetrius Hill	Unfounded
6	Improper Seizure	Lt. Patrick Caton	Demetrius Hill	Exonerated

Collateral Allegations

No.	Allegation	Involved Officer	Involved Citizen	Finding
1	Discrimination	Karen Taylor	Demetrius Hill	Unfounded
2	Discrimination	Lt. Patrick Caton	Demetrius Hill	Unfounded



Dr. Arnie D. Slaughter, Investigator



Dena Brown, Interim Director