

Date: October 24, 2025
To: John Kennedy, CCA Director
From: Joseph Vesper, CCA Investigator
Subject: **CCA Case No. 25094 – Review of Improper Pointing of Firearm and Excessive Force Allegations by Rasbem Wofford**

CCA completed an investigation of CCA Complaint No. 25094 by Rasbem Wofford, M/B/36, alleging Improper Pointing of a Firearm and Excessive Force against Officers Seth Caudell, P0200, M/W/30, hire date: 8/7/2022, and Johanna Smith, P0477, F/W/30, hire date: 1/13/2001. This memorandum is intended to convey the conclusions resulting from that investigation and the basis for those conclusions. This memorandum 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 of Incident: May 19, 2025

Date Complaint Received: May 27, 2025

Time: 7:58 p.m.

Date Records Requested: May 27, 2025

Location: 5412 Winneste Avenue

Date Records Received: July 30, 2025

Per CPD EVT database: Mr. Wofford alleged that on Monday, May 19, 2025, Officer Smith improperly "pointed her firearm at a juvenile" and Officer Caudell improperly pushed Mr. Wofford.

Fact Summary:

According to Body-Worn Camera (BWC) footage and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) records, Officers Smith and Caudell responded to a dispatch call regarding a juvenile (Witness A, F/B/Age Unknown) who allegedly broke an apartment window and pointed a firearm at the 911 caller. Upon arrival, Officer Smith drew her service weapon and confronted Witness A. Witness A fled on foot but was subsequently taken into custody.

During the arrest, Mr. Wofford approached the scene in close proximity despite Officer Caudell's repeated commands to "get back." Officer Caudell then physically guided Mr. Wofford backwards, and Mr. Wofford complied.

Investigation Summary:

CCA attempted via phone and USPS mail to interview Mr. Wofford but received no response. CCA did interview Officers Caudell and Smith with information about the incident. CCA also reviewed relevant body worn camera (BWC) recordings, relevant police records, CCA interview statements, and CAD report. The evidence supports the following findings:

- Under CPD Procedure, § 12.550 Discharging of Firearms by police personnel, “At such time as a police officer perceives what he interprets to be a threat of loss of life or serious physical harm to himself or others at the hands of another, he has the authority to display a firearm, with finger outside the trigger guard and have it ready for self-defense ...”
- BWC footage at timestamp 19:58:48 and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) report confirm that Officer Smith was told there was a potentially armed suspect. Officer Smith withdrew her firearm as she exited her cruiser and raised her firearm but did not directly point it at Witness A. Officer Smith’s CCA interview and BWC further confirmed that she maintained her trigger finger outside the trigger guard throughout the incident.
- In her interview, Officer Smith stated: “I had a possibly armed suspect, to my knowledge had a firearm, not following my commands ... a person with a gun can do anything with a gun ...” She further explained that she feared for her own safety and that of others in the area.

Given these facts, Officer Smith reasonably perceived a threat sufficient to justify withdrawing her firearm. Accordingly, under CPD Procedure Manual §12.550, her actions were consistent with department policy, procedure, and training. ¹

Regarding the allegation of excessive force involving Mr. Wofford, BWC footage supports Officer Caudell’s account of events. At timestamps 20:01:04, 20:01:13, 20:01:15, and 20:01:16, Officer Caudell repeatedly directed Mr. Wofford to back away from the ongoing arrest to maintain scene security and allow fire department personnel access to Witness A. When Mr. Wofford failed to comply and continued to remain in close proximity, BWC footage at 20:01:17 showed Officer Caudell lightly placed his right hand on Mr. Wofford’s upper right chest and using minimal pressure, guided him backward several steps. This action is properly characterized as an escort maneuver rather than a forceful push. No evidence suggests that Officer Caudell used excessive or unreasonable force as alleged.

Findings:

Based on my investigation and review of the evidence uncovered, I recommend the following findings for your endorsement (findings are defined in the attachment to this memorandum):

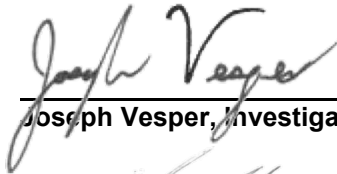
Allegations

No.	Allegation	Involved Officer	Involved Citizen	Finding
1	Improper Pointing of Firearm	Johanna Smith	Witness A	Exonerated
2	Excessive Force	Seth Caudell	Rasbem Wofford	Unfounded

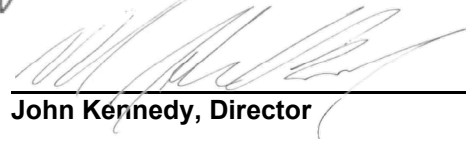
¹ See also *Wright v. City of Euclid*, 962 F.3d 852 (6th Cir. 2020); *Radvansky v. City of Olmsted Falls*, 395 F.3d 291, 309 (6th Cir. 2005) (quoting *Houston v. Clark County Sheriff Dep’y John Does 1–5*, 174 F.3d 809, 815 (6th Cir. 1999)) (“During a Terry stop, officers may draw their weapons or use handcuffs so long as circumstances warrant that precaution.”).

Recommendation/Observation:

There were none.



Joseph Vesper, Investigator



John Kennedy, Director