



October 18, 2010

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Chief George Turner
Atlanta Police Department
226 Peachtree Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

RE: #10-19 Complaint of Ransford Asamoah

Dear Chief Turner:

MAYOR of ATLANTA
KASIM REED

The Atlanta Citizen Review Board (“ACRB”) completed its investigation and adjudication of the complaint that was filed by Ransford Asamoah against Officer Sammie Hayslett. Mr. Asamoah alleged that Officer Hayslett falsely imprisoned him and used excessive force.

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Mr. Asamoah complained that on March 9, 2010, as he was walking on Peachtree Street with Anthony Chavarria at approximately 4 p.m., he was approached by several men who attempted to sell him marijuana. He said he tried to get away by stopping into a store located at 65 Peachtree Street. While in the store, he was approached by Officer Hayslett. Officer Hayslett searched him and Mr. Asamoah claims that he cooperated. The officer then told him he was under arrest and tried to handcuff him. Mr. Asamoah said that he knew the officer did not have any legal reason to arrest him, so he began to walk away. He claims that the officer hit him in the face approximately three times. He claims that he never hit the officer and that he managed to get away and walked towards the Marta station. As Asamoah walked, an unidentified male civilian approached him and punched him the face. Officer Hayslett was walking behind the civilian. An unidentified Caucasian officer in a patrol car approached and told him he was under arrest. He was taken to the police precinct where he remained for four and a half hours bleeding from his finger and nose as a result of the altercation with the officer. He was taken to Grady Hospital and remained overnight and was then taken to jail. He was charged with battery and felony obstruction. The charges were “dead docketed” on August 5, 2010.

Mr. Anthony Chavarria stated that he and Asamoah were walking on Peachtree Street when Officer Hayslett approached and accused them of buying marijuana and searched each of them by patting their clothing and going in their

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pockets; nothing was found. After the officer searched each of them, Asamoah told Officer Hayslett that he had done nothing wrong and he had no right to search him and Asamoah tried to walk away. The officer pulled him back and Asamoah tried to walk away again. The officer punched him in the face several times. Chavarria claims that Asamoah never resisted; he only put his hands up to protect his face. They managed to get away from the officer and walked down the street and the officer handcuffed Chavarria to his hand and began to pursue Asamoah. An unidentified civilian approached the officer and asked if he wanted help and the civilian chased Asamoah and began punching him in the face several times. Asamoah managed to get away and Mr. Chavarria lost sight of him. Mr. Chavarria was taken to the precinct but was not charged.

Mr. Asamoah claimed that the store where this occurred has surveillance cameras. However, a check with the owner of J & J Gold Teeth, Ms. Courtenay Nguyen, revealed that there are no surveillance cameras. Ms. Nguyen said that she recalled the incident, but she did not pay much attention and could not provide relevant information.

The police reports, including the Use of Force Report, indicated that, "Mr. Asamoah pushed Officer Hayslett in the chest and swung a punch at him. Officer Hayslett defended himself by punching Mr. Asamoah in the face and body multiple times in his attempts to arrest Asamoah."

Officer Hayslett was interviewed and stated that he observed Asamoah and another man talking to known drug dealers in the area of 82 Peachtree Street. They appeared to be engaged in a drug transaction. He explained that Asamoah and the known drug dealers went downstairs and he followed them and called out to them, but they ignored him. The men and Asamoah separated and Asamoah and his friend went upstairs and the known drug dealers walked towards the Martin Luther King side exit. He stopped Asamoah and Chavarria and Asamoah immediately got hostile and told him that he had no reason to stop him. Hayslett tried to calm Asamoah down and explained the reason for the stop. He decided to detain Mr. Asamoah and handcuff him. He said that Asamoah jumped back, got into a defensive position and appeared ready to punch him. Mr. Asamoah's hands were up and the officer punched him in the face twice. He noted that Mr. Asamoah was bleeding from his nose. He tried to grab Mr. Asamoah and they struggled. Asamoah got away from him and ran. Officers saw him and they apprehended Asamoah and brought him back to the precinct. They provided medical assistance and transported him to Grady Hospital where he was evaluated and treated.

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The officer's version of the incident with regard to the allegation of excessive force contradicts the statement of Mr. Asamoah. There were no independent witnesses and thus, the ACRB unanimously voted to assign a finding of **Not Sustained** to the allegation of excessive force. The Board further voted to assign a finding of **Unfounded** to the allegation of unlawful imprisonment. Officer Hayslett observed what appeared to be a drug transaction and was justified in detaining Mr. Asamoah.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns or if you would like to have a copy of the full investigation. The ordinance requires the Chief to respond in writing regarding which recommendations are accepted, rejected, or will be implemented with modifications within thirty (30) days of the submission of a recommendation for action by the Board to the Chief. See Sec. 2-2211(O).

Sincerely,



Joy Morrissey
Board Chair

cc: Mayor Kasim Reed
Council President Ceasar Mitchell
Members of Council
ACRB Board Members