



November 5, 2010

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

RE: Case#10-34, Complaint of Russell Reed

Cristina Beamud
Executive Director

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 Russell (*Russ*) Reed alleging that Officer Casey Johnson used abusive language towards him at Hartsfield Jackson Airport on April 23, 2010.

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Mr. Reed explained that he was at the airport to pick up a business associate and was parked in the passengers’ drop-off/pick up area when he was approached by Officer Johnson. He claims that Officer Johnson approached his car and said nothing. After a few seconds, Mr. Reed asked the officer what was the problem. The officer did not respond and stared at him. Mr. Reed apologized to Officer Johnson because he thought the officer did not hear him and then repeated his question. There was an awkward silence and soon thereafter, Officer Johnson began to yell in what Mr. Reed describes as a, “verbal tirade that lasted for 60 to 90 seconds.” He said that Officer Johnson told him that “you are not to speak to a police officer unless directed to do so.” He ordered him to surrender his license. Reed complied; however, Officer Johnson continued to yell at him in a berating and threatening manner at a distance of no more than two to three inches away from his face. Officer Johnson ultimately issued him a traffic citation and ordered him to leave the airport. Mr. Reed said that he had no idea as to what he had done wrong and that when he had asked for an explanation, Officer Johnson refused to provide one.

Officer Johnson said that he could not remember the incident. He was provided a copy of the citation that he issued, but he still could not recall the incident. He explained that during a typical day, he may interact with about 50 to 100 people.

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A review of Officer Johnson's disciplinary file revealed that he has had numerous complaints filed against him during his eleven year tenure at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport. In one of the complaints filed in 2007, the complainant stated that Officer Johnson seemed to be "baiting" him in an attempt to escalate the situation. Johnson asked another man at the airport whether or not he knew how to read. He responded to another citizen at the airport by stating that he, "didn't ask you all that," when the man tried to explain why he was stopped. These complaints were not sustained.

While Mr. Reed's version of the incident is not confirmed by any independent witnesses, Officer Johnson's inability to recall the incident, while feasible, does not amount to a denial that the incident occurred. Also, it is clear from an examination of the officer's complaint history, that other citizens have had similar interactions with Officer Johnson. For this reason, the Board voted unanimously to sustain the allegation of abusive language.

The Board further decided to recommend that you impose a one day suspension without pay, require the officer to attend training to assist him to communicate more courteously, and transfer him from his assignment at the airport. It appears that this officer has been assigned to the airport for six years. He and the citizens may benefit from a change of assignment.

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) of Ordinance 07-0-0141.

Sincerely,



Joy Morrissey
Board Chair

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