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July 2, 2012

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

RE: Complaint of Edwina Blount,  
Case No. 11-90

Dear Chief Turner:

The Atlanta Citizen Review Board (“ACRB”) completed its investigation and adjudication of the complaint filed by Edwina Blount alleging false imprisonment and excessive force against Sergeant Edgar Irish, Officers Brandon Puetz, Brian Ernest, Andrea Webster, Tyrone Diggs, Gregory Smith, and Tony Jones, all of whom, are members of the Atlanta Police Department’s (“APD”) Narcotics Unit. The complaint was investigated by Sheena Robertson.

Ms. Blount alleges that on December 13, 2011, at approximately 8:00 p.m., the aforementioned officers knocked down her front door, entered with their firearms drawn and ordered her to get down on the floor without legal justification.

The testimonial and documentary evidence obtained during the course of the investigation indicate that the officers had an active search warrant to enter Ms. Blount’s residence and search for her son, Jeffrey Shack. The search warrant also indicated that there were two outstanding warrants for Mr. Shack’s arrest for possession of marijuana and crack cocaine.

Interviews were conducted with all of the involved officers. All of the officers stated that they knocked and announced their presence prior to making a forcible entry into Ms. Blount’s residence. Ms. Blount claims the officers did not knock; however, there was no one present to corroborate her claim. Pursuant to APD.SOP 3020, §4.2.8(6), it is permissible for an officer to use reasonable and

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necessary force to affect entry into any building or property...to execute a search warrant if, after verbal notice, the person in the residence refuses to acknowledge and answer the verbal notice.

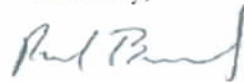
As it relates to the officers having their weapons drawn when they entered Ms. Blount's residence, this issue is not disputed. The issue is whether or not the amount of force used was excessive and unnecessary. The Board contends that the level of force used in this situation is permissible in accordance with the aforementioned SOP because the officers were searching for a wanted person accused of committing a felony (*distribution of illegal narcotics*).

Ms. Blount further alleges that they improperly detained her for no justifiable reason. There is no dispute between Ms. Blount and the subject officers that she was ordered to get down on the floor when they encountered her in the residence. As indicated previously, the officers had a valid search warrant to enter the residence to search for her son. Ms. Blount was only briefly detained as a safety measure while the home was being searched; she was not handcuffed. Once the officers searched the residence and determined that the residence was safe, Ms. Blount was no longer detained.

Therefore, based upon the aforementioned facts, the Board voted to recommend a finding of **Exonerated** applied to the allegations of excessive force and false imprisonment against Sergeant Edgar Irish, Officers Andrea Webster, Tony Jones, Tyrone Diggs, Gregory Smith, Brian Ernest and Brandon Puetz.

Please let me know if you will need any further information or would like a copy of the investigation. The ordinance requires that the Chief 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 the Ordinance 07-0-0141.

Sincerely,



Paul Bartels,  
Board Chair

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