

# TACOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

## Intra-Departmental Memorandum



**TO:** Police Patrol Officer Masyih Ford  
Operations Bureau

**DATE:** December 20, 2021

**FROM:** Michael A. Ake  
Interim Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** INTERNAL AFFAIRS INVESTIGATION - CASE# 21COM-0069

### INCIDENT:

On March 3, 2020, at approximately 2322 hours, Tacoma Police Officers Chris Burbank and Mathew Collins were working together in a fully marked patrol vehicle. The officers made contact with Mr. Manuel Ellis in the area of South 96<sup>th</sup> and Ainsworth and physically attempted to take him into custody.

You were working together with Officer Timothy Rankine and responded to the scene to assist after you heard Officer Burbank scream their location over the police radio. You and Officer Rankine arrived at 2324 hours. Numerous officers from various agencies also responded to assist, to include the Tacoma Police Department, the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, and the Washington State Patrol.

When you arrived on the scene, you observed Officers Burbank and Collins attempting to gain control of Mr. Ellis. Even though Mr. Ellis was already in handcuffs when you arrived, you observed Mr. Ellis pushing both officers off of him, so you quickly took control of one of Mr. Ellis' feet to avoid anyone getting kicked in the face. You maintained control of Mr. Ellis' feet as he was "thrashing around" to prevent him from breaking free. At some point, Officer Collins requested leg restraints, but you did not have one. Eventually, other law enforcement personnel arrived on scene, and a leg restraint was applied to Mr. Ellis. Once the leg restraint was on, you released Mr. Ellis' leg. You stated you did not strike Mr. Ellis while taking him into custody.

During your contact with Mr. Ellis, you repeatedly communicated with him in an attempt to calm him down and reassure him that it was going to be okay. You specifically told Mr. Ellis to relax and breathe since he was screaming incoherently. At one point, you heard Mr. Ellis say, "I can't breathe," in a calm fashion, and he was rolled over from his stomach to his side in a recovery position. Prior to the arrival of medical personnel, you asked Officer Rankine how warm Mr. Ellis was, and Officer Rankine replied he was "burning up" and had a low pulse. You suspected Mr. Ellis was suffering from excited delirium.

Upon the arrival of Tacoma Fire personnel, you first tried to use your flashlight to signal where they needed to be. When that did not work, you ran over to them to advise them that Mr. Ellis was unresponsive and possibly suffering from excited delirium. You also warned them that Mr. Ellis just fought with the officers and they had to be cautious prior to the restraints being removed. You stated that Mr. Ellis was still breathing since you could see his chest moving, but he became

unresponsive when TFD arrived. You believed TFD started CPR on Mr. Ellis within a few minutes of their arrival.

**EXPLANATION OF ACTION:**

I have reviewed the entire investigative packet and the complaint recommendations and findings by Assistant Chief Ed Wade. The Tacoma Police Department's Internal Affairs Section gathered materials from the Pierce County Sheriff's Department, the Washington State Patrol, the Pierce County Medical Examiner's Office, and the Washington State Attorney General's Office as part of their investigation.

The investigative packet included incident reports, transcripts of interviews, audio/video evidence, photographs, and various other reports. TPD's Internal Affairs Section interviewed and/or reviewed numerous witness statements including Tacoma Police Officers, Tacoma Fire Department personnel, and citizens.


You were alleged to have violated the policy:

**P3.1- Use of Force**

*Officers of the Tacoma Police Department may use force when necessary and shall use only that force which is reasonable.*

**FINDINGS:**

After a thorough review of the facts available, I am exonerating you for the actions you took during the incident with Mr. Manuel Ellis. While the investigation showed that you assisted other officers in restraining Mr. Ellis, I find your actions reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances and that you did not violate any Department Policies and Procedures.



Michael A. Ake  
Interim Chief of Police