

Video showing NYPD officer appearing to punch woman during arrest of acquaintance prompts calls for probe

By Dave Carlin, Lisa Rozner

Video of an arrest in Harlem has gone viral, gaining tens of thousands of views on social media, and residents are now calling for an investigation into the NYPD.

The incident happened on West 136th Street around 5 p.m. Tuesday.

The footage shows a chaotic arrest that gets even more chaotic after the woman in the frame, identified as 19-year-old Tamani Crum, confronts an officer as he is arresting a man Crum reportedly knows.

The woman engages the officer and appears to slap him, and he responds with what looks like a wallop of a punch, causing her to fall backwards on to pavement.

She is then seen getting picked up off the ground and taken into custody.

“The officer involved in this case was approximately three times her body weight and size,” Santana said. “This was unnecessary and it’s unacceptable. This has to stop.”

“He cold knocked her out. He’s no better than the people who is knocking people out in the street,” Crum’s grandmother told CBS2’s Dave Carlin.

Crum’s mother, who asked CBS2 not use her name and who did make public comments, sobbed as she stood next to the family’s lawyer, Jaime Santana Jr.

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weight and size,” Santana said. “This was unnecessary and it’s unacceptable. This has to stop.”

As CBS2’s Lisa Rozner reports, a criminal complaint states the detective told Crum to leave the area as they were making an arrest. He allegedly tried to grab her arm, and that’s when Crum allegedly slapped the detective’s arm away. The officer is then seen pushing her, and she falls backwards.

Wednesday night, Crum pleaded not guilty to obstructing governmental administration.

After she was released on her own recognizance, her attorney said he was pleased the District Attorney decided not to charge her with assaulting an officer or resisting arrest.

Her mother, who cried in court, was relieved.

“Thank God she’s out, and I’m happy that she’s home with her mom. I’m very happy,” she said.

The family says the detective should be held accountable and that Crum, who has no criminal record, is suffering from injuries.

“It’s bad. Her back, she’s very sore. She’s hurting. And her head, she has a big knot in

her head,” Crum’s mom said.

“He absolutely used excessive force. We’re talking about a 19-year-old young girl versus a grown man who is approximately three times her body weight and size,” Santana said.

NYPD sources tell CBS2 there will be an investigation, but added the officer’s actions appear justified. The initial arrest was in a case of attempted murder and police say the suspect, 22-year-old Elvin James, allegedly had a loaded gun at the time.

CBS2 had the video looked at by Keith Taylor, a professor in the Department of Law, Police Science and Criminal Justice Administration at John Jay College. When he was with the NYPD, he supervised Internal Affairs, Missing Persons, and more.

He called what was seen on the footage, “Awful but lawful,” adding, “She’s actively engaging, which in this case is assaulting the officer. He responds in kind. We need to let the investigators do their job and see all the additional information.”

“The actions of the woman that interfered and obstructed the arrest put not only the police lives in danger, but the public as well,” said Paul DiGiacomo, president of



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the Detectives Endowment Association.

He says the detective used “minimal force.”

Additional video, including officer body cameras, will be part of the investigation, Carlin reported.

The detective is still on active duty. Meanwhile, another woman was also arrested for spitting on an officer during the incident.

Crum is due back in court Oct. 11. ■