

Danbury police chief could decide fate of cops in viral library video this week

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DANBURY — The police chief could decide as early as this week what should happen to the officers in a viral video of an incident at Danbury Library.

The department launched an internal investigation in June after YouTuber SeanPaul Reyes posted a video showing his interactions with five officers when he tried to film in the public library.

Body camera footage released to Hearst Connecticut Media in July showed an exchange between two officers where one cop said five years ago the YouTuber would have been “on the f***** ground” and “would be dead” 20 years ago.

Danbury police’s internal affairs completed its part of the investigation and found policy violations, the police chief has said.

The department held hearings over the past week or so, where officers had representation from the union.

“We have had hearings so now I have to review everything and make a decision on what action to take,” Police Chief Patrick Ridenhour said in an email Tuesday. “I hope to get that done this week if time permits.”

The mayor has said he hopes additional training sessions would be part of the department’s response.

It’s not clear which officers or how many faced hearings. Part of the violations were the “dead” comments shown in the body camera footage, Ridenhour said.

The YouTuber filed an intent to sue a city sergeant over the incident. He posted another video on Sunday where he delivered complaints to the FBI office in New York against the officer who made the “dead” comment.

Reyes also submitted complaints against the Danbury officer who arrested him during a July 15 incident at City Hall, which is not part of the internal investigation. Two other complaints were delivered against two state police troopers, one who Reyes claims unlawfully detained him and another who he alleges assaulted him.

The YouTuber is part of a group of First Amendment auditors who film in public buildings to see how well officials abide by what they say are their constitutional rights. The auditors then share the videos on social media.

Experts have said it’s fair for municipalities to limit filming in public buildings in certain circumstances. These auditors often try to instigate negative interactions with officials, experts have said.