



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

Log #2023-0004747

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September 30, 2025

Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC) § 2-56-230(c)(ii), the Public Safety section of the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts reviews of individual closed disciplinary investigations conducted by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) and the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA). Based on those reviews, OIG may make a recommendation to reopen the investigation to address a deficiency materially affecting its outcome.¹

COPA investigated allegations that CPD member Clifford Martin Jr., Star #18859, pointed their firearm at a subject without justification and placed their knee on the subject's chest without justification. COPA administratively closed the investigation, citing insufficient evidence of misconduct.

During its review, OIG identified that Officers Martin and Alejandro Velez, Star #7857, may have performed an improper strip search of the subject, in violation of CPD General Order G06-01-03, "Conducting Strip Searches." Officers Martin and Velez had the subject remove their pants and expose their underwear, searched up the leg holes of the subject's underwear, conducted the strip search in a non-private room with a window, failed to obtain a supervisor's authorization for the strip search, and did not complete the required strip search report.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen the investigation to complete an analysis of whether the CPD members improperly performed a strip search of the subject.

In response to OIG's recommendation, COPA declined to reopen the investigation. COPA stated, "If this case were to be reopened and the strip search allegation investigated by COPA, due to the fact that the 18-month deadline has well been exceeded, the penalty recommended for the officers would merely be retraining related to the procedures surrounding strip searches." COPA stated it will recommend retraining for Officers Martin and Velez regarding CPD's strip search policies.

OIG's letter to COPA containing its recommendations is attached in Appendix A. COPA's response is attached as Appendix B.

¹ Once BIA or COPA has responded to an OIG recommendation to reopen an investigation, and once the underlying investigation has reached a final disciplinary decision, OIG's recommendation letters and the agencies' responses will be published on OIG's website. In these procedural postures, OIG's recommendations to reopen and the agencies' responses have been available and, from time to time, released pursuant to MCC § 2-56-250 and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. These recommendations to reopen, issued pursuant to MCC § 2-56-230(c), are separate from OIG's own confidential investigative work, which is governed by the confidentiality provisions set out in MCC § 2-56-110.

Appendix A | OIG Letter



Deborah Witzburg | Inspector General
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Phone: (773) 478-7799

Via Electronic Mail

May 22, 2025

LAKENYA WHITE
INTERIM CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR
CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY
1615 WEST CHICAGO AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60622

Re: Log #2023-0004747

Dear Chief Administrator White:

Pursuant to § 2-56-230(c)(ii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC), the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Public Safety section has conducted a preliminary review of the investigation conducted by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) in Log #2023-0004747. OIG recommends that the investigation be reopened to investigate all potential misconduct. Log #2023-0004747 is currently in a Closed/No Finding status.

Log #2023-0004747 concerns allegations that Chicago Police Department (CPD) Officer Clifford Martin Jr., Star #18859, pointed their firearm at the subject without justification and placed their knee on the subject's chest without justification. COPA determined that there was insufficient evidence of misconduct and administratively closed the investigation.

According to the Arrest Report, officers conducted an anti-violence mission and observed the subject, whom they knew to be a felon, in possession of a firearm.¹ Officer Martin's body worn camera (BWC) footage shows Officers Martin and Alejandro Velez, Star #7857, attempt to conduct an investigatory stop of the subject. The subject actively resists Officer Martin's and Velez's commands and efforts to detain them.²

At the 2:45 marker of Officer Martin's BWC footage, the subject falls to the ground while Officers Martin and Velez attempt to control the subject's movements.³ At the 3:19 marker, Officer Martin points their firearm at the subject's chest while telling them to give officers their hands. Officers Martin and Velez handcuff the subject, lift the subject off the ground and escort them to a CPD marked vehicle. The subject was transported to the 11th District station.⁴

¹ Attachment 1.

² Attachment 42 at 2:40 marker.

³ Attachment 42.

⁴ Ibid.

While at CPD's 11th District station, BWC footage of Officer Christopher Parker, Star #6035, shows them perform a strip search of the subject in a room with a partially covered window and not isolated from others. At the 2:30 marker of Officer Parker's BWC footage, Officer Velez tells the subject, "stand up, drop just your pants to your knees, go around the outer layer of your underwear and shake the bottoms too."⁵ Officer Parker then manipulates the subject's underwear by stretching out the underwear's elastic waistband and leg holes and sticking their hand up the underwear's leg holes.⁶

General Order G06-01-03, "Conducting Strip Searches," defines a "strip search" as "having an arrested person remove or arrange some or all of his or her clothing so as to permit a visual inspection of the genitals, buttocks, anus, female breasts or undergarments of such person."⁷ The order also states that all strip searches shall be conducted in a private room and isolated from the view of anyone not physically conducting the search. In addition, members conducting a strip search shall "obtain the written permission of the police commander" and "prepare a report of the strip search."⁸ Officers Parker and Velez conducted a strip search when they had the arrestee expose their undergarment during their search, however nothing in BIA's file indicates that they received authorization to perform the strip search and whether the strip search was reported.

Based on OIG's preliminary review, and without taking any position on any other aspect of the investigation or its findings, OIG recommends that COPA reopen Log #2023-0004747 to complete an analysis of whether Officers Parker and Velez improperly performed a strip search of the subject.

Please contact Chief Investigative Analyst LaDonna Candia-Flanagan at lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org or (773) 478-5614 with any questions. Please send your response to this recommendation within the time allowed by MCC § 2-56-245. OIG will consider a failure to respond in the time permitted by ordinance to be a declination of our recommendation. OIG looks forward to COPA's response, and recommends that COPA incorporate this letter and its response into the electronic case file to provide for a complete record.

Respectfully,



Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General

cc: Deborah Witzburg, Inspector General, OIG
Samuel Chae, Associate General Counsel for Public Safety, OIG
LaDonna Candia-Flanagan, Chief Investigative Analyst for Public Safety, OIG
Robin Murphy, General Counsel, COPA
Angela Snell, Assistant General Counsel, COPA
Timothy Moore, Deputy Director, Bureau of Internal Affairs, CPD

⁵ Attachment 40.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chicago Police Department, "General Order G06-01-03: Conducting Strip Searches," December 8, 2017, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6448>.

⁸ Ibid.

Appendix B | Department Response



July 17, 2025

Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General
740 North Sedgwick Street, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Re-Open Recommendation Log No. 2023-0004747

Dear Deputy Inspector General Richardson:

I am in receipt of your May 22, 2025, letter recommending that COPA re-open and conduct additional investigation in Log No. 2023-0004747. We understand the Office of the Inspector General - Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety (PSIG) recommends re-opening this case to analyze whether Police Officers Christopher Parker¹ and Alejandro Velez² conducted an improper strip search of a subject.

Unfortunately, re-opening this case at this time to analyze that issue would be ineffectual for several reasons. The officer's collective bargaining agreement requires that COPA's investigation be completed within 18 months after a case is opened.³ In the event COPA does not conclude an investigation within 18 months, an arbitrator must find that there was a reasonable cause for any delay. This log number was opened and assigned to an investigator in early October 2023. COPA administratively closed this case based on a lack of sufficient objective verifiable evidence of misconduct supporting the complainant's allegations shortly before the 18-month deadline in early April 2025. Reopening the case at this time would be futile not only because of its age and previous administrative closure status, but also due to the nature of the proposed allegation for reopening. If this case were to be reopened and the strip search allegation investigated by COPA, due to the fact that the 18-month deadline has well been exceeded, the penalty recommended for the officers would merely be retraining related to the procedures surrounding strip searches. Instead, COPA will recommend retraining regarding strip search policies for Officers Parker and Velez without having to reopen this investigation.

Under COPA's ordinance, the Chief Administrator may, in her discretion, re-open any closed investigation upon PSIG's recommendation. While we respectfully decline to re-open the investigation for the reasons stated above, we appreciate your continued diligent and careful review of closed COPA investigations.⁴

¹ Star #6035.

² Star #7857.

³ *Term Sheet for the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Chicago John Dineen Lodge No. 7 (formerly known as the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #7 or FOP) and the City of Chicago*, Sec. 8.10 (Dec. 7, 2023) (hereinafter "Term Sheet"), available at <https://chicago.councilmatic.org/legislation/o2023-0006332/> (last visited June 13, 2025).

⁴ MCC § 2-78-120(x)(iii).



Respectfully,

LaKenya White
Interim Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability

cc: Deborah Witzburg (OIG)
Samuel Chae (OIG)
LaDonna Candia-Flanagan (OIG)
Timothy Moore (CPD)
Angie Snell (COPA)



LaDonna Candia-Flanagan
Chief Investigative Analyst for Public Safety

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For further information about this report, please contact the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, 231 S. LaSalle Street, 12th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, or visit our website at igchicago.org.

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