



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

Log #2024-0007236

Published September 30, 2025

DEBORAH WITZBURG | INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO
TOBARA RICHARDSON | DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

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.

COPA investigated allegations that CPD members Kevyn Velazco, Star #14783, and Jonathan Tovar, Star #15007, verbally aggravated and physically assaulted the complainant, causing injuries during the complainant's arrest. COPA administratively closed this investigation stating, "COPA reviewed all the available evidence and determined there is insufficient evidence of misconduct to justify proceeding further with this investigation."

During its review, OIG identified that COPA did not conduct a thorough preliminary investigation and failed to include evidence in their investigative file, including photographs of the complainant's injuries taken by CPD's Evidence Technician (ET) and the final approved versions of Officers Velazco and Tovar's Tactical Response Reports (TRRs). COPA also did not include within its investigative file any follow up on the status of the complainant's interview with COPA, nor their statement to COPA that they had obtained third-party video footage of the incident. Further, COPA did not conduct an analysis of the complainant's visible injuries.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen the investigation to complete its preliminary investigation and to gather all available evidence.

In response to OIG's recommendations, COPA agreed to reopen the investigation. COPA included CPD's ET photographs of the complainant's injuries, the final approved TRRs for Officers Velazco and Tovar, and the complainant's medical records in its investigative file. COPA also documented its attempts to contact the complainant and noted their attempts were unsuccessful. COPA administratively closed the investigation without serving allegations to Officers Velazco and Tovar, stating, "COPA's investigation did not result in sufficient objective verifiable evidence of misconduct."

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
City of Chicago
Office of Inspector General
231 S. LaSalle Street, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (773) 478-7799

Via Electronic Mail

May 1, 2025

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

Re: Log #2024-0007236

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 #2024-0007236. OIG recommends that COPA reopen the investigation to fully account for all available evidence. Log #2024-0007236 is currently in a Closed/No Finding status.

Log #2024-0007236 concerns allegations that Chicago Police Department (CPD) Officers Kevyn Velazco, Star #14783, and Jonathan Tovar, Star #15007, verbally aggravated and physically assaulted the complainant, causing injuries during the complainant's arrest on September 15, 2024. COPA administratively closed Log #2024-0007236 and in its closure memorandum stated, "COPA reviewed all the available evidence and determined there is insufficient evidence of misconduct to justify proceeding further with this investigation."¹

The Original Case Incident Report (OCIR), recorded under RD #JH430274, reported Officers Velazco and Tovar "on-viewed" the complainant involved in a battery on September 15, 2024, at approximately 7:16 p.m.² Officer Velazco's body worn camera (BWC) footage begins as Officers Velazco and Tovar approach a parked vehicle with two individuals fighting. Then, Officer Tovar grabs one individual and pulls them away from the vehicle as the complainant kicks the individual. The complainant then exits the vehicle with a visible bruise under their left eye.³ Officer Tovar holds the complainant's arms as the complainant attempts to pull away from Officer Tovar before the complainant lands face-first -on the street with Officer Tovar on top of them. Officer Tovar tells the complainant to calm down, and the complainant turns over to lie on their back while holding their face and crying. Officer Tovar asks the complainant whether they were okay and able to stand up, but the complainant shakes their head "no." Officer Tovar tells the complainant to sit on the street curb, and

¹ Attachment 54, p. 2.

² Attachment 2, p. 3.

³ Attachment 11, at 1:56 – 2:07.

the complainant stands on their feet. Officer Tovar states to the complainant, “Sit down or you’re going in cuffs.”⁴ Officer Velazco calls over the police radio that an ambulance is needed on scene stating, “[the complainant] has a bruised eye and a cut up face.” Officer Velazco shines a flashlight on the complainant’s face, showing a fresh bloody scrape on the complainant’s left cheek. The complainant attempts to further engage with the other individual by pulling away from Officer Velazco, who repeats to the complainant, “Relax or you’re going to get put in cuffs.”⁵

The complainant continues to pull away from Officers Velazco and Tovar after their repeated verbal warnings to relax or be placed in handcuffs. Officer Velazco then handcuffs the complainant, and the complainant questions why Officers handcuffed them instead of the other individual fighting in the incident. While handcuffing, Officer Velazco tells the complainant, “Hey, stop, stop trying to bite. Stop trying to bite me. Stop trying to bite me.” Officers Velazco and Tovar escort the complainant to the back seat of a CPD vehicle, but the complainant refuses to stay seated in the CPD vehicle. The complainant states, “No, I’m not going to. I refuse to, and I’m calling a Sergeant. I call a Sergeant.” The complainant then kicks Officer Velazco while stating, “And stop fucking touching me.” Officer Velazco states, “That’s it. That’s it. You’re going in” and additional CPD members on scene assist in pulling the complainant into the back seat.⁶

A Chicago Fire Department (CFD) ambulance arrives on scene to provide medical attention to the complainant, but Sergeant Daniel Ludwig, Star #2570, tells the unidentified CFD members that they will call the ambulance to the District station. Sergeant Ludwig states the complainant is screaming and kicking so they do not want to remove the complainant from the CPD vehicle.⁷ Officers Velazco and Tovar transport the complainant to CPD’s 10th District station and charge the complainant with two counts of Aggravated Battery to a Peace Officer.⁸ The complainant’s Arrest Report stated Officers Velazco and Tovar called EMS (Emergency Medical Services) to CPD’s 10th District station, but the complainant refused medical treatment.⁹

On September 17, 2024, the complainant appeared at COPA’s office to provide a statement but instead decided to postpone their statement until they spoke with their attorney regarding the pending criminal matter arising from the arrest at issue.¹⁰ The complainant, however, consented to COPA’s taking photographs of their injuries, including large bruising on the left side of the complainant’s face and the back of the complainant’s arms, and numerous smaller bruises on the complainant’s legs.¹¹ The electronic case file in COPA’s case management system (CMS) indicates a CPD Evidence Technician (ET) took photographs of the complainant’s injuries prior to the complainant’s release from CPD custody.¹² COPA included their request for the CPD’s ET photographs in the electronic case file for Log #2024-0007236, but did not include the photographs; it is unclear whether COPA received a response from CPD to their request for the photographs.¹³

⁴ Attachment 12, at 2:06 – 2:59.

⁵ Attachment 11, at 2:53 – 4:01.

⁶ Ibid., at 4:03 – 6:53.

⁷ Ibid., at 10:34 – 11:45.

⁸ Attachment 1, p. 1, 7.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Attachment 15, at 0:30 – 2:10.

¹¹ Attachments 26 – 37.

¹² Attachment 9.

¹³ Attachments 45, 48.

COPA's Non-Final Summary Report Closure Memorandum states that COPA requested an interview with the complainant on September 17, 2024, but the complainant did not want to interview with COPA until after they met with an attorney.¹⁴ COPA emailed a Cook County Public Defender on September 23, 2024, requesting to speak with the Public Defender assigned to the complainant's case "to ascertain whether an interview is possible." COPA did not include any information on whether they received an answer to their inquiry.¹⁵

The Notes section in CMS for Log #2024-0007236 details the complainant's phone call to COPA on November 4, 2024, during which the complainant stated they had third-party video footage pertaining to the incident and requested an update on the status on their case.¹⁶ During the November 4, 2024 phone conversation, a COPA investigator provided the complainant with a link to a OneDrive folder to share the third-party video and informed the complainant the investigation was still pending.¹⁷ However, COPA's closing memorandum for Log #2024-0007236 does not reference the complainant's November 4, 2024 phone call to COPA. The investigator did not note whether they followed up with the complainant to schedule an interview during the November 4, 2024 phone call when the complainant inquired about the status of the of investigation. It is also unclear whether COPA received the third-party video from the complainant.

COPA's Closure Memorandum stated, "BWC footage showed the injuries to [the complainant's] face before the officers removed [them] from the vehicle."¹⁸ COPA, however, did not conduct an analysis on the cause of the bloody scrape to the complainant's left cheek visible after contact with Officers Velazco and Tovar, nor did it conduct an analysis on how the complainant sustained large bruises on [their] left cheek and the back of [their] arms visible in the photographs taken by COPA on September 17, 2024. Further, the electronic case file in CMS for Log #2024-0007236 does not include the final approved Tactical Response Report (TRR) for either Officer Velazco or Officer Tovar from this incident to determine whether the use of force in this incident was in compliance with CPD Directives.¹⁹

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 #2024-0007236 to complete its preliminary investigation and gather to consider all available evidence, including CPD's ET photographs and the final approved TRRs.

¹⁴ Attachment 54, p. 2.

¹⁵ Attachment 46.

¹⁶ Note CO-1415023.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Attachment 54, p. 2.

¹⁹ Attachments 6 and 7 in CMS are the unapproved TRR reports for Officers Velazco and Tovar and do not include the Tactical Response Investigation (TRR-I) form as required by Section VI of CPD's General Order G03-02-02.

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 L. Moore, Deputy Director, BIA, CPD

Appendix B | Department Response

RE: COPA Recommendation to Reopen Log #2024-0007236

From Angela Snell <Angela.Snell@chicagocopa.org>

Date Wed 5/21/2025 10:18 AM

To LaDonna Candia-Flanagan <lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org>; Lakenya White <LAKENYA.WHITE@chicagocopa.org>

Cc Robin Murphy <Robin.Murphy@chicagocopa.org>; Timothy Moore <Timothy.Moore@chicagopolice.org>; Tobara Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dwitzburg@igchicago.org>

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Good morning, COPA agrees to reopen this log. Please let me know of any questions.

Best,

Angie Snell (she/they)
Assistant General Counsel
Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)
1615 W. Chicago Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622
Office: 312-746-0186
Cell: 312-965-2025

From: LaDonna Candia-Flanagan <lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org>

Sent: Thursday, May 1, 2025 1:59 PM

To: Lakenya White <LAKENYA.WHITE@chicagocopa.org>

Cc: Robin Murphy <Robin.Murphy@chicagocopa.org>; Angela Snell <Angela.Snell@chicagocopa.org>; Timothy Moore <Timothy.Moore@chicagopolice.org>; Tobara Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dwitzburg@igchicago.org>

Subject: COPA Recommendation to Reopen Log #2024-0007236

[Warning: External email]

Dear Chief Administrator White:

On behalf of Deputy Inspector General Tobara Richardson, please find attached to this email a recommendation to reopen Log #2024-0007236. Please acknowledge your receipt of this correspondence and let me know if you have any questions.

LaDonna Candia-Flanagan

Chief Investigative Analyst-Public Safety

City of Chicago | Office of Inspector General

231 S. LaSalle, 12th Floor

Chicago, IL 60604

lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org

(773) 478-5614

(833) Talk-2-IG | (833) 825-5244

talk2ig@igchicago.org | igchicago.org



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.

Talk to Us
(833) TALK-2-IG/(833) 825-5244
talk2ig@igchicago.org
igchicago.org/talk2ig

OIG Business Office
(773) 478-7799

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