



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

CPD Log #2021-0000718

OIG Case #C2024-0000000095

Published October 16, 2025

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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 against Chicago Police Department (CPD) member Jennifer Finnegan, Star #16637, and their use of excessive force in retaliation to an arrestee biting Officer Finnegan. Officer Finnegan and Officer Rene Duran, Star #15514, were dispatched to check the well-being of the arrestee, who was described as a person "appearing to be overdosing." While being detained, the arrestee kicked Officer Finnegan about the chest. The arrestee was then "placed on the ground in [a] laying down position" to gain control of the arrestee's legs. The arrestee bit Officer Finnegan on their lower right arm, and Officer Finnegan responded by grabbing the arrestee "by the neck area." Officer Finnegan applied a wristlock hold and the arrestee was transported to the hospital.

On Officer Duran's body worn camera (BWC) footage, Officer Finnegan states, "You motherfucker," repeatedly, with her hand around the arrestee's neck for approximately five seconds. While in the ambulance, Officer Duran pushes the arrestee's head down into the gurney and tells the arrestee to stop acting like a "fucking animal."

COPA determined that this investigation met its criteria for closure under its Timeliness Initiative Project (TIP) and placed this investigation in a Non-Disciplinary Closure (NDC) status.² COPA's NDC memorandum lists allegations concerning unjustified uses of force against a restrained individual, highly objectionable instances of verbal abuse (as defined by MCC § 2-78-10), and acts of retaliation by Department members, as allegations that are disqualified from non-disciplinary closure.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen the investigation to investigate all appropriate allegations and close the matter in accordance with its policy.

In response to OIG's recommendations, COPA reopened this investigation. COPA sustained allegations against Officer Finnegan for using excessive force by placing their hands on or about the arrestee's neck, and for directing abusive, profane, and/or threatening language toward the arrestee, recommending a 1 to 30-day suspension and retraining on CPD's use of force policy. In addition, COPA sustained allegations against Officer Duran for using excessive force on the arrestee while they were restrained and recommended a 1 to 30-day suspension and retraining on

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.

² According to COPA's website, The Timeliness Initiative Project was a project launched by COPA to review aging investigations older than 18 months to determine if an alternative approach was warranted to expediting the closure of certain investigations.

CPD's use of force policy. COPA also sustained allegations against Lieutenant Joseph Ferrero, Star #233, and Sergeant Amelia Kessem, Star #2190, for failing to report Officer Finnegan's potential misconduct to COPA, recommending both receive a reprimand and retraining on responsibilities when reviewing TRRs.

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



Deborah Witzburg | Inspector General
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Via Electronic Mail

September 16, 2024

ANDREA KERSTEN
CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR
CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY
1615 WEST CHICAGO AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60622

Re: Log #2021-0000718

Dear Chief Administrator Kersten:

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 #2021-0000718. OIG recommends that the investigation be reopened to investigate all appropriate allegations. Log #2021-0000718 is currently in a Non-Disciplinary Closure (NDC) status.

Log #2021-0000718 concerns allegations against Chicago Police Department (CPD) Officer Jennifer Finnegan, Star #16637, and their use of excessive force in retaliation to an arrestee biting Officer Finnegan.

According to CPD's Original Case Incident Report, on August 31, 2020, Officer Finnegan and Officer Rene Duran, Star #15514, were dispatched to check the well-being of the arrestee who was described as a person removing their clothes in the middle of the street. Officer Finnegan and Officer Duran arrived at the location and observed the arrestee sitting on a bus stop bench "appearing to be overdosing." Officer Finnegan and Officer Duran requested an ambulance. While talking with the arrestee, the arrestee became "irate, uncooperative, and stormed away" from the officers. Officer Duran flagged down Officer Reiner Jerome Ebarle, Star # 7301, and Officer Gaetano Cardella, Star #5572, to assist. The officers placed the arrestee into handcuffs for the arrestee's safety and well-being. The arrestee pulled away from the officers and yelled out threats to them. Chicago Fire Department (CFD) Ambulance 47 arrived at the scene, and as the officers attempted to place the arrestee into the ambulance, the arrestee kicked Officer Finnegan about the chest, causing her body-worn camera (BWC) to fall to the ground. The arrestee was then "placed on the ground in [a] laying down position" to gain control of the arrestee's legs. While the officers waited for Officer Cardella to "retrieve leg shackles" from his vehicle, the arrestee bit Officer Finnegan on their lower right arm. Officer Finnegan then responded by grabbing the arrestee "by the neck area near the lower chin" to stop the arrestee's head from actively moving toward the

officers and paramedics, which “plac[ed] them in fear of being bit.” Officer Finnegan applied a wristlock hold to gain compliance from the arrestee, who was transported to the hospital.¹

OIG reviewed BWC footage included in COPA’s investigative file. On Officer Finnegan’s BWC, at the 9:34 mark, as the officers and paramedics are attempting to place the arrestee into the ambulance, Officer Finnegan attempts to take control of the arrestee’s legs when the arrestee’s foot hits Officer Finnegan’s chest area, knocking off her BWC. Officer Finnegan states, “Ah, fuck. Fuck. Goddamn it. Motherfucker. Fuck. Fuck, he just bit me.”² On Officer Duran’s BWC, at the 9:22 mark, Officer Duran states to the arrestee, “Do not bite. Do not fucking bite.” At the 9:27 mark, Officer Finnegan states, “You motherfucker,” repeatedly, with her hand around the arrestee’s neck for approximately five seconds. Officer Duran states, “Jen,” twice, while tapping her arm. After Officer Finnegan removes her hand from the arrestee’s neck, the arrestee states, “Ow, that shit hurt really bad, but okay.”³ On Officer Finnegan’s BWC, at the 10:40 mark, as Officer Finnegan is placing the BWC back onto their chest, Officer Finnegan tells a CFD paramedic, “Good thing my camera wasn’t on because I was going to choke --,” The paramedic states, “You’re on,” and Officer Finnegan responds, “Oops,” and taps her BWC with an open hand.

On Officer Duran’s BWC, at the 10:20 mark, while in the ambulance, the arrestee states that they want to kill themselves, and asks if anyone has something they can kill themselves with. An unidentified male voice responds to the arrestee, “Yeah.” At the 11:50 mark, the arrestee is yelling and calls the officers and paramedics “assholes” and states to take them to the hospital. An unidentified male voice replies, “Fuck you, shut the fuck up.” Officer Duran pushes the arrestee’s head down into the gurney and tells the arrestee to stop acting like a “fucking animal.” Officer Duran then slams the arrestee’s head twice into the gurney, telling the arrestee to “Shut up already.” An unidentified male voice in the ambulance tells the arrestee, “Shut the fuck up. Hey, you piece of shit, shut the fuck up. Nobody cares about you.” The arrestee responds by stating, “Fuck you, too, you little bitch.” The unidentified male voice in the ambulance responds, “I ain’t no little bitch. You’re the one tied down like a fucking hog, motherfucker.” The arguing continues between the arrestee and occupants of the ambulance for several minutes. At the 17:41 mark, an unidentified male voice states, “You’re fucked now. You bit a cop. You’re so fucked. Glad you like it in the ass.” At the 18:04 mark, an unidentified male voice asks, “Are you guys on?” At the 21:04 mark, as the ambulance arrives at the hospital, Officer Eric Schoessow, Star #6344, assists with removing the arrestee from the ambulance along with a CFD paramedic.⁴

In Officer Finnegan’s Tactical Response Report (TRR), which was written and approved on August 31, 2020, reviewing supervisor, Sergeant Amelia Kessem, Star # 2190, noted, “BWC footage does in fact show patient/offender bite PO Finnegan on her right forearm. BWC footage also showed officers using minimal restraint needed to prevent further injury.” Lieutenant Joseph Ferraro, Star #233, reviewed the TRR and marked that the report was “In compliance with Department policy and directives.”⁵

On February 26, 2021, the Office of Constitutional Police and Reform – Force Review Division initiated a complaint against Officer Finnegan for retaliation and excessive force, and against

¹ Attachment 2.

² Attachment 15.

³ Attachment 16.

⁴ Attachment 16.

⁵ Attachment 14.

Lieutenant Ferraro for inattention to duty, and failure to report the use of excessive force.⁶ The Force Review Division recommended that Officer Finnegan attend Control Tactics Training at the Education and Training Academy. The Force Review Division noted that Lieutenant Ferraro was not in compliance with General Order 03-02-02 and failed to obtain a complaint log number regarding Officer Finnegan's TRR.⁷

On October 3, 2023, COPA determined that Log #2021-0000718 met its criteria for closure under its Timeliness Initiative Project (TIP) and placed this investigation in a NDC status.⁸ A Non-Disciplinary Closure Memorandum is included in the investigative file. In COPA's NDC memorandum, it states that "Upon a determination that adequate investigative steps were completed..., a discovery of potentially viable allegations would have disqualified the investigation for Non-Disciplinary Closure." COPA's memo lists allegations concerning unjustified uses of force against a restrained individual, highly objectionable instances of verbal abuse (as defined by MCC 2-78-10), and acts of retaliation by Department members, as allegations that are disqualified from non-disciplinary closure.⁹

OIG does not comment, here, on the sufficiency of those criteria. However, based on the evidence captured on the videos included in COPA's investigative file, and by COPA's own criteria, this case does not meet COPA's criteria for non-disciplinary closure. Accordingly, OIG recommends that COPA reopen this investigation to investigate all appropriate allegations and close the matter in accordance with its policy.

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, Chief Investigative Law Officer, COPA
Yolanda Talley, Chief, Bureau of Internal Affairs, CPD

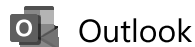
⁶ Attachment 8.

⁷ Attachment 8.

⁸ Note: CO-1335547

⁹ Attachment 22.

Appendix B | Department Response



RE: Recommendation to Reopen Log #2021-0000718

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

Date Wed 10/16/2024 9:52 AM

To LaDonna Candia-Flanagan <lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org>; Andrea Kersten <Andrea.Kersten@chicagocopa.org>

Cc Robin Murphy <Robin.Murphy@chicagocopa.org>; Yolanda Talley <yolanda.talley@chicagopolice.org>; Tobar Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dwitzburg@igchicago.org>

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Good morning, COPA will re-open 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: Monday, September 16, 2024 12:30 PM

To: Andrea Kersten <Andrea.Kersten@chicagocopa.org>

Cc: Robin Murphy <Robin.Murphy@chicagocopa.org>; Angela Snell <Angela.Snell@chicagocopa.org>; Yolanda Talley <yolanda.talley@chicagopolice.org>; Tobar Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dWitzburg@igchicago.org>

Subject: Recommendation to Reopen Log #2021-0000718

[Warning: External email]

Dear Chief Administrator Kersten:

On behalf of Deputy Inspector General Tobar Richardson, please find attached to this email a recommendation to reopen Log #2021-0000718. Please acknowledge your receipt of this correspondence and let me know if you have any questions.

LaDonna Candia-Flanagan

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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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