



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

CPD Log #2024-0005863

OIG Case #C2025-000000424

Published April 13, 2026

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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 that CPD Field Training Officer (FTO) David Ross, Star #15315, pointed their firearm while touring for subjects, placed their firearm against a juvenile subject's back without justification, performed an emergency takedown on the subject without justification, placed their knee against the subject's chest, applying pressure, applied direct pressure to the subject's throat without justification, failed to immediately notify the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) that they were involved in a reportable use of force incident, failed to properly search the subject prior to transport, failed to properly restrain the subject while in custody and in a CPD vehicle, failed to keep the subject under observation while being held in a CPD vehicle, forcefully pulled the subject from a CPD vehicle without justification, used force against the subject while the subject was restrained in handcuffs without justification, engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with the subject, failed to timely notify OEMC of a firearm pointing incident, and failed to accurately document their use of force in a Tactical Response Report (TRR).

COPA sustained all allegations against FTO Ross except for pointing their firearm while touring for subjects, performing an emergency takedown, and applying pressure by placing their knee against the subject's chest. COPA recommended training and a suspension of 180 to 365 days.

During its review, OIG determined that COPA did not conduct an analysis of whether FTO Ross violated Rule 14, the CPD rule prohibiting false reports, when: (1) FTO Ross denied applying direct pressure to the subject's throat during their interview with COPA and omitted it from their TRR; (2) FTO Ross denied having forcefully pulled the restrained, and apparently unconscious, subject from the car and omitted it from their TRR; and (3) FTO Ross denied having used any reportable use of force on the subject while they were restrained and omitted it from their TRR.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen the investigation to consider whether FTO Ross made false reports in their TRR and during their interview to COPA, in violation of Rule 14.

In response to OIG's recommendations, COPA declined to reopen the investigation, noting that it had already recommended significant discipline, OIG did not identify "any evidence to establish that FTO Ross willfully made false statements," and that COPA "has no evidence that [FTO Ross] intended to mislead or to fabricate [their] account."

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.

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

Appendix A | OIG Letter



Deborah Witzburg | Inspector General
City of Chicago
Office of Inspector General
231 South LaSalle Street, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (773) 478-7799

Via Electronic Mail

December 24, 2025

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

Re: Log #2024-0005863

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 #2024-0005863. OIG recommends that COPA reopen the investigation to consider all available evidence and to conduct a Rule 14 analysis. Log #2024-0005863 is currently in Command Channel Review (CCR).

Log #2024-0005863 concerns allegations that Chicago Police Department (CPD) Field Training Officer (FTO) David Ross, Star #15315:

1. pointed their firearm while touring for subjects;
2. placed their firearm against a juvenile subject's back without justification;
3. performed an emergency takedown on the subject without justification;
4. placed their knee against the subject's chest, applying pressure;
5. applied direct pressure to the subject's throat without justification;
6. failed to immediately notify the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) that they were involved in a reportable use of force incident;
7. failed to properly search the subject prior to transport;
8. failed to properly restrain the subject while in custody and in a CPD vehicle;
9. failed to keep the subject under observation while being held in a CPD vehicle;
10. forcefully pulled the subject from a CPD vehicle without justification;
11. used force against the subject while the subject was restrained in handcuffs without justification;
12. engaged in an unnecessary verbal altercation with the subject;
13. failed to timely notify OEMC of a firearm pointing incident; and
14. failed to accurately document their use of force in a Tactical Response Report (TRR).

COPA sustained all allegations against FTO Ross except for pointing their firearm while touring for subjects, performing an emergency takedown, and applying pressure by placing their knee against the subject's chest. COPA recommended training and a 180- to 365-day suspension.¹

According to the Original Case Incident Report (OCIR) and the Final Summary Report (FSR) in COPA's investigative file, on June 27, 2024, FTO Ross and Probationary Police Officer (PPO) Marcus Barrow, Star #7121, responded to a person with a gun call and observed three juveniles matching the description given by the 911 caller. FTO Ross and Officer Barrow approached the three juvenile subjects with their firearms pointed at them and ordered them to stand by a fence. As Officer Barrow handcuffed and searched two of the subjects, Officer Barrow recovered a toy Nerf gun from one of the subjects' waistband; no actual firearms were recovered from any of the subjects or their property. At the same time, FTO Ross walked the third subject to the fence and pressed their firearm against the subject's back as FTO Ross conducted a pat down of the subject and searched their pockets.² As FTO Ross continued to hold their firearm against the subject's back, FTO Ross attempted to remove the subject's crossbody bag with one hand and when they told the subject to keep their hands on the fence, the subject suggested that FTO Ross shoot them, at which point FTO Ross conducted a leg sweep and takedown of the subject.³

On FTO Francisco Moya's, Star #17172, body worn camera (BWC), at the 2:42 mark, FTO Ross conducts a leg sweep and pulls the subject to the ground. The subject lands on their back and FTO Ross straddles the subject as FTOs Ross and Moya struggle to handcuff the subject. At the 3:17 mark, FTO Ross places their left fist into the left side of the subject's neck for nine seconds while the subject gasps for air, makes choking noises, and states, "I can't breathe." Once FTO Ross removes their fist from the subject's neck, FTO Ross pushes the subject onto their stomach and places them in handcuffs.⁴

On FTO Ross' BWC at the 10:44 mark, FTO Ross and Officer Ayuk Nfundoak, Star #15772, place the subject in a marked patrol car. According to the FSR, from 3:11 a.m. to 3:38 a.m., the subject is in the car and during this time, the subject bangs their body against the interior of the car for about three minutes as FTO Ross and PPO Barrow stand next to the car; neither officer checks on the subject. The subject also maneuvers their arms to the front of their body while restrained in handcuffs, retrieves a pocketknife from their waistband, cuts the in-camera camera (ICC) cables, and wraps the car seatbelt around their neck.⁵ At 3:38 am, after having no contact with the subject for about 17 minutes, FTO Ross lowers the car window to speak with the subject and discovers that the subject is unconscious with the seatbelt around their neck. FTO Ross removes the seatbelt from the subject's neck, calls for medical assistance via radio and grabs the subject—who is still handcuffed, by their sweatshirt, pulling the subject from the car and dropping them on the ground. Once the subject is on the ground, FTO Ross performs chest compressions, the subject regains consciousness, begins striking their head against the ground and attempts to kick FTO Ross. FTO Ross instructs PTO Barrow to grab the subject's feet as FTO Ross holds the subject's hands then

¹ Officers Ayuk Nfundoak, Star #15772 and Marcus Barrow, Star #7121 were also named as accused in this incident and were recommended discipline and training for sustained allegations.

² FTO Ross did not conduct a complete search, as the subject still had a knife in their pant pocket following the pat down and search.

³ Attachment 3; 99; The subject made several comments regarding suicidal ideation throughout the entire incident.

⁴ Attachment 11.

⁵ Attachment 99.

FTO Ross places their right fist against the subject's neck again. Shortly thereafter, an ambulance arrives, and the subject is transported to a hospital for a psychiatric evaluation.⁶

In the TRR, when asked "Was any reportable force used against the subject while handcuffed or otherwise in physical restraints?" under "Member's Response," FTO Ross checked "No" despite video evidence which shows FTO Ross pulling the subject, who is restrained with handcuffs, from a patrol car, dropping them on the ground then pressing their fist into the restrained subject's neck. Additionally, in the TRR narrative, FTO Ross omitted both instances of applying pressure to the subject's throat with their fist, including while the subject was in restraints. FTO Ross also omitted the fact that they pulled the subject from the car onto the ground while in restraints. Instead, FTO Ross only explained the reasons they conducted an emergency takedown and stated that they "removed [the subject] from the vehicle and began chest compressions."⁷

In its FSR, COPA notes:

Both of these incidents [where FTO Ross placed their fist against the subject's throat] risked blocking [the subject's] airway and/or carotid artery and, therefore, are considered Level 3 uses of force under CPD policy. During [FTO Ross'] interview with COPA, FTO Ross stated he did not recall placing [their] hands on or near [the subject's] neck or throat. [FTO Ross] also argued that [they] did not use force against [the subject] while [the subject] was handcuffed, instead claiming that [they] only used control tactics against [the subject]. COPA finds that the preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise, clearly showing that FTO Ross twice used a restricted above-the-shoulders restraint tactic on [the subject]. These were Level 3 reportable uses of force, and therefore, FTO Ross had a responsibility to fully and truthfully document them in his TRR.⁸

During COPA's interview with FTO Ross, COPA asked FTO Ross, "Did you review any audio or video related to this incident including body-worn cameras?" FTO Ross responded, "Yes. When I did my TRR."⁹ COPA did not conduct any analysis of whether FTO Ross violated Rule 14, prohibiting false reports, when: (1) FTO Ross checked "No" on their TRR when asked, "Was any reportable force used against the subject while handcuffed or otherwise in physical restraints?"; (2) FTO Ross omitted from their TRR both instances where they applied pressure to the subject's neck with their fist; and (3) forcefully pulling the restrained subject from the car to the ground, despite FTO Ross' admission to COPA that they reviewed BWC while completing their TRR.¹⁰

In addition to the TRR,, in its interview, COPA asked FTO Ross, and FTO Ross responded:

Q: "During this takedown, did you ever place your hands on [the subject's] neck or [their] throat?"

⁶ Attachment 10 at the 10:43 to 40:20 mark.

⁷ Attachment 5; Deputy Chief Gilberto Calderon, Star #49, determined that FTO Ross engaged in Level 3 force (deadly force) by using carotid artery restraints against the subject and that FTO Ross' use of force was not in compliance with Department policy and directives.

⁸ Attachment 99.

⁹ Attachment 77, p. 77, lines 3 to 5.

¹⁰ Chicago Police Department, "Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department," April 16, 2015, accessed December 11, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6412>.

A: "No. No. I'm saying no. I mean, not that I recall, But I'm going to say no."¹¹

Regarding FTO Ross forcefully pulling the restrained subject from the car to the ground, COPA stated to FTO Ross and FTO Ross replied:

Q: "Our allegation here is that you forcefully pulled [the subject] from the vehicle. Tell me more about how you removed [the subject] from the vehicle."

A: "I carefully reached inside the vehicle just in case [they were] playing possum...then I pulled [them], I yanked [them] to see if [they] would respond. And then as I started to get [them] out the squad car, I don't know [their] pants [were] hooked on this, one of the buckles or something. So I jerked [them]. I mean, then [they're] heavy. [The subject] is not a small person."¹²

During the interview, COPA refuted FTO Ross' claim that the subject was heavy and characterized the subject as a "very small person."¹³ Further, under its Analysis section within the FSR, COPA wrote, "BWC evidence shows that [FTO Ross] aggressively grabbed and pulled [the subject] out in one continuous movement," contradicting FTO Ross' claim that the subject's size and pants latching onto the car contributed to the force used to remove the subject from the car.¹⁴

With regards to the second instance where FTO Ross pressed their fist into the subject's neck, COPA asked and FTO Ross responded:

Q: "Did you ever place your hand on [the subject's] neck?"

A: "No. My bottom two knuckles were pressed against [the subject's] very hard collarbone and that's how I was able to flatten [them] out...I didn't have my fist on [the subject's] throat."¹⁵

Q: "After you performed the life-saving measurements, did you use any force against [the subject] who was in handcuffs?"

A: "I didn't use any measurable force against [the subject]. All I did was use a, what do we call it? I just restrained [them]. I just kept [them] from moving."¹⁶

Lastly, regarding the discrepancies in FTO Ross' TRR, COPA stated and FTO Ross replied:

Q: "Was any reportable force used against the subject while handcuffed or otherwise in restraints? And you checked 'no.'"

A: "So I wrote 'no' for that because, as I said earlier, I didn't use any force against [the subject] while [they were] cuffed. I just used control tactics and use of control tactics is a not a use of force with our use of force model."¹⁷

¹¹ Attachment 77, p. 32, lines 3 to 7.

¹² Attachment 77, p. 58, lines 20 to 24; p. 59, lines 1 to 9.

¹³ Attachment 77, p. 61, lines 3 to 22.

¹⁴ Attachment 99.

¹⁵ Attachment 77, p. 64, lines 14 to 21; p. 66, lines 5 to 6.

¹⁶ Attachment 77, p. 66, lines 19 to 24; p. 67, line 1.

¹⁷ Attachment 77, p. 73, lines 11 to 13; p. 74, lines 11 to 17.

In its Credibility Assessment within the FSR, COPA wrote:

FTO Ross consistently denied the allegations against [them], defended [their] conduct, and deflected blame onto [the subject]. FTO Ross also exhibited a condescending attitude as [they] presented alternative versions of the incident... FTO Ross also consistently tailored [their] explanations in a manner seemingly calculated to cast [their] actions in a more favorable light... Overall, COPA finds that FTO Ross's behavior suggested an unwillingness to acknowledge or take accountability for [their] actions, which severely diminished [their] credibility,¹⁸

Yet, COPA did not conduct an analysis of whether FTO Ross violated Rule 14 when: (1) FTO Ross denied applying direct pressure to the subject's throat during their interview with COPA and omitted it from their TRR; (2) FTO Ross denied having forcefully pulled the restrained, and apparently unconscious, subject from the car and omitted this fact from their TRR; and (3) FTO Ross denied having used any reportable use of force on the subject while they were restrained and omitted it from their TRR. Instead, COPA sustained the allegation that FTO Ross failed to accurately document their use of force in a TRR, and charged FTO Ross with a violation of Rule 10, being inattentive to duty.

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 #2024-0005863 to consider whether FTO Ross made false reports in their TRR and to COPA during their interview, in violation of Rule 14, and whether FTO Ross violated any other CPD directives.

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
Angela Snell, Acting General Counsel, COPA
Timothy L. Moore, Chief, Bureau of Internal Affairs, CPD

¹⁸ Attachment 99.

Appendix B | Department Response



March 24, 2026

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. 2024-0005863

Dear Deputy Inspector General Richardson:

I am in receipt of your December 24, 2025 letter recommending that COPA re-open and conduct additional investigation in Log No. 2024-0005863. We understand the Office of the Inspector General - Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety (PSIG) recommends re-opening this case to investigate additional potential allegations. For the reasons stated below, COPA does not concur with PSIG's recommendation to re-open.

COPA has already recommended significant discipline for FTO Ross based on the sustained allegations in this case. PSIG has not identified any evidence to establish that FTO Ross willfully made false statements.¹ As noted in its report, COPA found that FTO's account of the incident was not credible because of his refusal to accept responsibility for his conduct. But FTO Ross consistently characterized his behavior in a self-serving manner, demonstrating his subjective belief that he did nothing wrong. While COPA finds FTO Ross' subjective beliefs about his conduct unreasonable, COPA has no evidence that he intended to mislead or to fabricate his account.

Under COPA's ordinance, the Chief Administrator may, in their discretion, re-open any closed investigation upon PSIG's recommendation.² Here, I cannot find an appropriate basis to re-open this investigation. I appreciate your continued diligent and careful review of closed COPA investigations.

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¹ To establish a Rule 14 violation, COPA would need to prove: (1) that a false statement was made, (2) that it was made willfully, and (3) that it was made about a fact that was material to the investigation. *See Agreement between City of Chicago Department of Police and Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Lodge No. 7 §6.1(M)*.

² MCC § 2-78-120(x)(iii).

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March 24, 2026
Ms. Tobar Richardson

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LaKenya White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "W".

LaKenya White
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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