



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

CPD Log #2024-0008296

OIG Case #C2026-0000000001

September 30, 2026

September 30, 2026

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 recommend reopening an investigation to address a deficiency materially affecting its outcome.¹

COPA conducted a preliminary investigation of excessive force allegations against CPD Officer Gabriel Bikoma, Star #17897, after a complainant reported to a CPD lieutenant that a CPD officer "slammed" the complainant's head into a wall. The complainant also reported allegations that Officer Bikoma kned them in the mouth while they were restrained, dragged them by their hair while they were handcuffed, choked them in a CPD district station processing room, and that Officer Bikoma removed his tactical vest to prevent his body worn camera (BWC) from capturing the force used against the complainant in the processing room.

COPA closed its preliminary investigation without findings, stating that the alleged misconduct within COPA's jurisdiction "does not warrant the service of allegations." COPA did not document what evidence it analyzed before determining it would not serve Officer Bikoma with the complainant's allegations. During its review, OIG found BWC videos showing multiple perspectives of Officer Bikoma's force against the complainant, a TRR that inaccurately documented the tactics used, and a BWC video showing Officer Bikoma without a tactical vest while following another officer escorting the complainant into a processing room.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen its investigation to fully account for all available evidence and consider all potential rule violations.

In response to OIG's recommendations, COPA declined to reopen the investigation and provided two reasons. First, COPA stated that the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) "requires that investigations be completed within 18 months of opening." Second, COPA stated that after it reviewed the evidence cited in OIG's letter, it determined that Officer Bikoma used force but that "COPA would have a difficult time proving that it was unreasonable under the totality of the circumstances."

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



Tobara Richardson | Interim 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 19, 2026

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

Re: Log #2024-0008296

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 #2024-0008296. OIG recommends that COPA reopen this investigation to consider all potential rule violations. Log #2024-0008296 is currently in an Administratively Closed status.

Log #2024-0008296 concerns excessive force allegations against CPD Officer Gabriel Bikoma, Star #17897. According to the Initiation Report prepared by CPD Lieutenant Jermaine Harris, Star #423, a complainant reported that a CPD officer "slammed" their head into a wall multiple times in a processing room at CPD's 11th District station after they were arrested on November 9, 2024.¹ Lieutenant Harris recorded their interview of the complainant on body-worn camera (BWC), which captured the complainant reporting additional allegations not documented in the initiation report.² The complainant reported specific allegations that Officer Bikoma kned them in the mouth while they were restrained on the ground, dragged them by their hair while they were handcuffed, and choked them in the processing room.³ The complainant informed Lieutenant Harris that Officer Bikoma removed their tactical vest after arriving at CPD's 11th District station so that their BWC would not capture their subsequent use of force against the complainant in the processing room.⁴

COPA's summary of Lieutenant Harris' BWC video states, "Complainant tells Lt. Harris that the same officer who was on scene that pushed [them], grabbed [their] hair, and kned [them] is the same officer that banged [their] head against the wall at the District."⁵ According to the electronic case file record for Officer Bikoma, COPA administratively closed one allegation that Officer Bikoma

¹ Attachment 3.

² CMS Internal Folder, "Axon_Body_3_Video_2024-11-09_1731_X60AD576D LT. Harris, Jermaine.mp4."

³ Ibid at timestamp 2:46-3:06, and 4:06-4:14.

⁴ Ibid at timestamp 4:00-4:05.

⁵ CMS Note CO-1417810.

“slammed” the complainant’s head into a wall, and no allegations regarding the force Officer Bikoma used prior to and during the complainant’s arrest are listed.⁶ The case file does not contain a Non-Final Summary Report detailing the specific evidence COPA reviewed or any analysis explaining how COPA determined the complaint “does not warrant the service of allegations.”⁷ COPA forwarded the matter to CPD’s Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA) for review of potential BWC policy violations, and BIA determined there was no evidence of misconduct within its jurisdiction and closed the investigation without serving allegations.⁸

The incident which led to the complaint occurred in CPD’s 11th District on November 9, 2024, during a separate arrest by CPD Officers Adan Pedroza, Jr., Star #9584, and Alexander David, Star #16271, for unlawful possession of a handgun.⁹ According to the case incident report, the subject who possessed the handgun actively resisted arrest, and Officer Pedroza called for more CPD units to assist.¹⁰ Less than two minutes later, Officer Bikoma arrived on scene.¹¹ Officer Bikoma’s BWC captures Officer Bikoma running towards Officers Pedroza, David, and several other CPD members who are attempting to gain control of the subject.¹² As Officer Bikoma approaches, the complainant walks from the street onto the sidewalk and towards the group of officers attempting to place the subject under arrest.¹³

OIG located several BWC videos that capture multiple perspectives of Officer Bikoma’s initial encounter with the complainant, including the interactions which the complainant described to Lieutenant Harris as unjustified force. COPA’s case file includes a list of these additional BWC videos, but the videos themselves are not included in the case file.¹⁴

BWC video recorded by Officer Timothy Strauch, Star #2897, captures Officer Erin-Mackenzie McClary, Star #14996, placing their hands on the complainant’s arm and chest as several officers tell the complainant to back up.¹⁵ At the same time, Officer Strauch’s BWC captures Officer Bikoma disengaging from assisting with the original arrest, approaching the complainant, and Officer Bikoma shoving the complainant’s shoulder as the complainant grabs Officer Bikoma’s arm.¹⁶ Officer Strauch’s BWC captures the complainant pushing Officer Bikoma’s arm as Officer Bikoma pushes the complainant’s arm away and grabs a fist full of the complainant’s hair, which is styled in locs.¹⁷

BWC video recorded by Officer Nicholas Fiorito, Star #9116, captures Officer Bikoma dragging the complainant by their locs toward the street and continuing a physical struggle in the street when the complainant lands on top of Officer Bikoma on the hood of a parked car.¹⁸ Officer Bikoma continues

⁶ CMS Record CO-0087589 in the CPD module.

⁷ CMS Note CO-1418123.

⁸ Attachment 9.

⁹ CMS Internal folder, “OCIR JH501590 (Related).pdf.”

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Attachment 7 at 0:20.

¹² Attachment 7 at 0:21-0:25.

¹³ Ibid at 0:25.

¹⁴ CMS Internal folder, “Axon Body 3 Video 2024-11-09 1426 X60AD746A_Multi-Cam, PO Bikoma.pdf.”

¹⁵ Officer Strauch BWC (Axon Body 3 Video 2024-11-09 1426 X60AD315C) at 2:25.

¹⁶ Ibid at 2:25-2:26.

¹⁷ Ibid at 2:24-2:27.

¹⁸ Officer Fiorito BWC (Axon Body 3 Video 2024-11-09 1426 X60AD552A) at 2:06-2:19.

to grip the complainant's locs as the two strike each other with closed fists, and other officers pull the complainant away from Officer Bikoma.¹⁹ BWC video recorded by Officer Katarina Lazovic, Star #8131, captures Officers Bikoma, Fiorito, and McClary taking the complainant to the ground.²⁰ Officer Strauch's BWC captures Officer Bikoma shoving the complainant's face into the ground and striking the complainant in the face with their knee.²¹ After handcuffing the complainant and lifting them to their feet, Officer Bikoma continues to grip their locs and Officer Fiorito assists in escorting the restrained complainant.²²

Portions of the initial encounter between Officer Bikoma and the complainant are depicted in Still Images #1 and 2.²³

Still Image #1 – Officer Bikoma drags the complainant by their hair (Officer Fiorito BWC @ 2:07)



¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Attachment 8 at timestamp 2:39-2:43.

²¹ Officer Strauch BWC at 2:50-2:59.

²² Ibid at 3:11-3:17.

²³ OIG added circles and arrows to highlight portions of the included still images, and covered faces of individuals who are not city employees with an opaque rectangle to obscure their identities.

Still Image #2 – Officer Bikoma grips the complainant’s hair while on the parked car (Officer Strauch BWC @ 2:34)



COPA’s case file includes the complainant’s arrest report, case incident report related to their arrest, and Officer Bikoma’s Tactical Response Report (TRR) documenting the force they used against the complainant.²⁴ Each of these reports contain a narrative section, and none of the reports document Officer Bikoma gripping and pulling the complainant’s hair. At minimum, Officer Bikoma is required to describe those actions as control and compliance techniques in the TRR.²⁵

The complainant was transported to CPD’s 11th District station by Officer Lazovic and Officer Enrique Garcia, Star #17050.²⁶ Officer Lazovic’s BWC captures Officer Bikoma and Officer William Walter, Star #19145, following Officer Salvador Olayo, Star #14703, as Officer Olayo escorts the handcuffed complainant into the station. As the officers and the complainant approach the entrance, Officers Bikoma and Walter are wearing their tactical vests.²⁷ Officer McClary’s BWC captures Officer Bikoma no longer wearing their vest and Officer Walter removing their vest as the two follow Officer Olayo and the arrested complainant towards a processing room.²⁸ OIG did not locate any video evidence that captured any further interactions between Officer Bikoma and the complainant at the station.

²⁴ Attachment 5, CMS Internal Folder “Initiation Report and attachments.pdf” p. 6-7, and “TRR 2024-05875 - PO Bikoma, Gabriel (In Compliance).pdf”.

²⁵ CPD General Order G03-02-02 Incidents Requiring the Completion of a Tactical Response Report, Section IV-B-1-c-1.

²⁶ CMS Note CO-1417188.

²⁷ Attachment 8 at 9:20-9:24.

²⁸ Officer McClary BWC (Axon Body 3 Video 2024-11-09 1426 X60AD779D) at 9:44-9:48.

COPA's case file includes a CPD Crime Scene Processing Report documenting that an evidence technician photographed injuries to the complainant's forehead, but those photos are not included in the case file.²⁹ On November 22, 2024, COPA contacted the Cook County Public Defender requesting authorization to interview the complainant from their assigned legal counsel.³⁰ COPA received a response later that day that stated the complainant had not been assigned a public defender for their criminal case and asked COPA to follow up a few weeks later, which COPA affirmed they would do.³¹ However, COPA ceased their investigation of the complaint on November 26, 2024.³²

Based on OIG's preliminary review, OIG recommends that COPA reopen Log #2024-0008296 to fully account for all available evidence and consider all potential rule violations.

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
Interim Inspector General
City of Chicago

cc: 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 Moore, Chief, Bureau of Internal Affairs, CPD

²⁹ CMS Internal Folder, "Crime Scene Report 545527_2024-8296.pdf."

³⁰ CMS Note CO-1417788.

³¹ CMS Internal Folder, "Response from PD_s Office 2024-8296.pdf."

³² CMS Note CO-1418123.

Appendix B | Department Response



July 15, 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. 2024-0008296

Dear Deputy Inspector General Richardson:

I am in receipt of your May 19, 2026 letter recommending that COPA re-open and conduct additional investigation in Log No. 2024-0008296. We understand the Office of the Inspector General - Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety (PSIG) recommends re-opening this case to consider all available evidence to determine any rule violations. For the reasons stated below, COPA does not concur with PSIG's recommendation to re-open.

First, the officer's collective bargaining agreement requires that investigations be completed within 18 months of opening.¹ The incident in this case occurred over 18 months before the date of your letter. Reopening the log at this time would not result in any viable sustained findings or discipline.

Second, COPA reviewed the available evidence listed in your letter, and, while the officer used force, COPA would have a difficult time proving that it was unreasonable under the totality of the circumstances.

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 Agreement between the City of Chicago and Chicago John Dineen Lodge No. 7, effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2027, § 8.10.

² MCC § 2-78-120(x)(iii).

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July 15, 2026
Ms. Tobará Richardson

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LaKenya White". The signature is stylized with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

LaKenya White
Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability

cc: David Glockner (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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