



**Brandon Johnson**  
Mayor

**Department of Police · City of Chicago**  
3510 S. Michigan Avenue · Chicago, Illinois 60653

**Larry B. Snelling**  
Superintendent of Police

April 08, 2024

Andrea Kersten  
Chief Administrator  
Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)  
1615 W. Chicago Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Re: Superintendent's Concurrence with COPA's Findings and Non-Concurrence with COPA's Penalties  
Log# 2022-0003060  
Officer Luis Laurenzana

Dear Chief Administrator Kersten:

After a careful review of the above referenced complaint log number, the Chicago Police Department (Department) concurs with the recommended findings but not with the penalty recommendation as they pertain to Officer Luis Laurenzana, Star No. 19637. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Department provides the following comments.

The COPA investigation recommended a 5-day suspension for Officer Luis Laurenzana after concluding that he:

1. Kicked [REDACTED] bicycle into her body, without justification.
2. Struck [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) left hand with a baton, without justification.

The Department believes this incident cannot be considered without understanding the totality of the situation. The Department released a video and held a press conference detailing specifics of that day which captures the totality of the events that transpired. The video and press conference can be reviewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1VdhQbfSTY>.

The press conference video depicts how a peaceful protest turned into a riot that utilized marching protesters and bicycles that protected bad actors and these tactics allowed them to hurt police officers from a distance by using frozen water bottles, explosives, sharpened PVC pipes, etc. The bad actors were able to hide behind the marching protesters, and protester bikes were used to surround the bad actors, protecting them. It is stated the protest had turned into a riot. Press Conference at 2:17. The representative states that protesters moved up to shield bad actors. Press Conference at 2:52. The protester bikes surrounded the bad actors. Press Conference at 3:58. Moreover, during Officer Laurenzana's interview with COPA he states, "As we were at the statute, I'm around friends, police officers talking about the weather, hey we finally got some good weather. Before I know it, I see a group of hundreds of people wearing black, masked. They have PVC pipes with sharpened ends. They have banners that are concealing all of them. I didn't expect anything else of it until they started surrounding us in a tactical position, meaning like a 90-degree angle or an L-shape." Attachment 26 at pg.12.

Officers are seen in harm's way, getting pelted with rocks, frozen water bottles, sharpened PVC pipes, explosives, etc. Attachment 2 at 3:50. Officer Laurenzana was present for and actively engaged in this part of the riot. As a result, Officer Laurenzana sustained injuries from this. During Officer Laurenzana's interview with COPA he states, " I remember feeling heat on the right side of my head. I couldn't see out of [my left] eye because I got hit. I didn't feel it. It just went numb." Attachment 26 at pg. 13. Officer Laurenzana continues by stating "I had to dig these fingers into my eye to see if it was still there. And then it just went black." Attachment 26 at pg.13-14. Per the press conference, a total of 49 Chicago Police Officers were injured, 18 of which sought treatment at the hospital. The use of OC spray was authorized to assist with restoring the peace. The officers had to control the situation and work around those protester and protester bicycles to quell the violence by the bad actors.

Once attacked, the officers on scene understood that this was a coordinated effort to attack police and that the attackers were being assisted by protesters and protester bicycles. When the officers encountered a bicycle starting to reestablish a line, one can understand the necessity to move the bicycles as the officers were just attacked by bad actors, who were being protected by protestor bikes. The riotous situation began with bicycles establishing a line, protecting bad actors and allowing them to ambush officers. At the time that Officer Laurenzana met with ██████████ the SWAT team was deploying chemical agents, the officers were trying to move the crowd back and attempting to stop them from toppling the statue and hurting anyone else.

This incident was volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, a threatening environment, and potentially outgrew current training and policies. The use of force policy does not cover assailants who are collaborating with marchers and protester bicycles to hurt officers during a riot. In his statement, Officer Laurenzana perceived ██████████ to be an assailant as the rioters were using bicycles. Attachment 26 at pg.19. Officer Laurenza continues to explain that "a bicycle is a weapon. It can be used as a weapon. It is a mobile barricade. It can be used for several purposes." Attachment 26 at pg.19. The Department agrees with Officer Laurenza, that bicycles during this incident were being used as weapons and as tools of obstruction. Moreover, the Department believes black bloc tactics and violent anarchist tactics were employed during this incident by the bad actors against the officers on scene, including Officer Laurenzana.

Each piece of evidence reviewed by COPA: BWC footage and police reports, were easily accessible without delay. COPA scheduled only two interviews: Officer Witulski and Laurenzana. Nothing presented in this file suggest there was a reasonable cause or valid reason for the delay. However, a total of 553 days passed from the date COPA was notified to the day COPA signed the Summary Report and transferred the investigation to CPD to facilitate CCR: from July 22, 2022 to January 26, 2024. Moreover, this incident occurred July 17, 2020.

The Consent Decree requires that "the City will ensure that COPA reaches its investigative findings and recommendations within 180 days of the initiation of the investigation." Consent Decree pg. 137 line 470. Fundamentally, this standard simply ensures fairness to all involved parties. As the COPA investigation was not timely, it therefore violated the Just Cause standard of the Agreement between the Fraternal Order of Police, Chicago Lodge No. 7, and the City of Chicago, Article 8 - Employee Security, Section 8.1: "No Officer covered by this Agreement shall be suspended, relieved from duty or otherwise disciplined in any manner without just cause." Had COPA required an extension,

it would have had to provide a written report approved by the Chief Administrator explaining the necessity of the extension; the file includes no such report.

In addition, it should be noted that **COPA did not interview** [REDACTED] or attempted to contact her during their investigation. Furthermore, COPA never obtains [REDACTED] medical records even after attempting to obtain them: from [REDACTED] three attorneys; personally from [REDACTED] not subpoenaing them from the University of Chicago Hospital.

The Department agrees with the sustained findings. However, the Department believes the penalty recommendation is excessive and does not take the totality of the situation into account. Additionally, COPA's recommendation comes 553 days after receiving the referral complaint. Therefore, the Department recommends a Reprimand and Training on Baton usage for Officer Laurenzana. Officer Laurenzana has received 51 various awards. Notably, Officer Laurenzana has been a Department member for over 17 years and has no disciplinary history or SPAR history.

The Department looks forward to discussing this matter with you pursuant to MCC-2-78-130(a)(iii).

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Larry B. Snelling  
Superintendent of Police  
Chicago Police Department