

**BEFORE A MEMBER OF THE POLICE BOARD
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO**

IN THE MATTER OF THE	)	
RECOMMENDATION FOR DISCIPLINE OF	)	
SERGEANT KRISTOPHER RIGAN,	)	Case No. 26 RR 42
STAR No. 1279, DEPARTMENT OF POLICE,	)	
CITY OF CHICAGO.	)	(CR No. 2022-2537)

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

On June 11, 2026, the Executive Director of the Police Board of the City of Chicago received from the Chief Administrator of the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) a request for review of the Chief Administrator's recommendation for discipline of Sergeant Kristopher Rigan, Star No. 1279, arising out of the investigation of Complaint Register No. 2022-2537 ("Request for Review"). The Request for Review included the following material: the Final Summary Report of COPA's investigation that sets forth the Chief Administrator's recommendation for discipline, the Superintendent of Police's written response to this recommendation, the Chief Administrator's written objections to the Superintendent's response, and a Certificate of Meeting and Service.

The investigation stems from an incident on June 19, 2022. According to the Final Summary Report of COPA's investigation, at approximately 10:40 pm, Sergeant Rigan responded to a disturbance at Whispers Restaurant (Whispers) at Oak Street Beach. Two employees of Whispers observed [REDACTED] jump over the barriers of the closed restaurant and threaten employees of Whispers after being told to leave the

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area. Sergeant Rigan approached [REDACTED] walking along the beach area near Whispers, asked him to come toward him to investigate the claims made by the Whispers staff about [REDACTED] actions, and identified himself as a CPD officer to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] complied with Sergeant Rigan's orders and informed Sergeant Rigan he wanted his sandals from Whispers that he could not locate, which frustrated [REDACTED].

Sergeant Rigan attempted to detain [REDACTED] and an altercation ensued on the sandy beach of Oak Street Beach, leading to both Sergeant Rigan and [REDACTED] falling to the sand from an initial standing position. Sergeant Rigan stated that once on the sand, [REDACTED] attempted to strike him with a closed fist several times, punched Sergeant Rigan twice, and attempted to disarm Sergeant Rigan after one handcuff was placed on [REDACTED]. Sergeant Rigan also alleged that [REDACTED] threw sand into Sergeant Rigan's face and eyes. Thereafter, Sergeant Rigan used several closed fist, direct mechanical strikes toward [REDACTED] placed his hands at or near the neck area of [REDACTED] and struck [REDACTED] in the head while detaining [REDACTED].

After [REDACTED] was handcuffed, he was transported to Northwestern Memorial Hospital where his injuries sustained from this incident were documented, including an orbital-floor fracture and nasal fracture. Upon release from the hospital, [REDACTED] was transported to the 018th District station, where he was processed and charged with aggravated battery of a peace officer, criminal trespass to real property, simple assault, resisting/obstructing a peace officer, and attempting to disarm a peace officer.

Lieutenant William McClelland III reviewed the tactical response report completed by

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Sergeant Rigan as well as Sergeant Rigan's body-worn camera video recording and noted that deadly force, specifically a chokehold, was used by Sergeant Rigan during this incident.

Following the conclusion of COPA's investigation, the Chief Administrator recommended that the following allegations against Sergeant Rigan be *Sustained*:

1. Striking [REDACTED] on or about the head without justification; and
2. Placing hands at or near the neck area of [REDACTED] without justification.

The Chief Administrator recommended that Sergeant Rigan be suspended without pay for 20 – 60 days.

The Superintendent disagreed with the Chief Administrator's recommendation in that the Superintendent proposed findings of *Exonerated* for Allegation Nos. 1 and 2 and no discipline for Sergeant Rigan.

According to the Certificate submitted by the Chief Administrator: (1) the Chief Administrator issued the recommendation for discipline on December 19, 2023; (2) the Chief Administrator received the Superintendent's written response on March 18, 2024; (3) the Chief Administrator's designees met with the Superintendent's designees and concluded their discussion of this matter on June 9, 2026; and (4) the Request for Review was sent via email to the Executive Director of the Police Board on June 11, 2026.

The Executive Director of the Police Board forwarded the Request for Review material to Tyler Hall, the member of the Police Board who was selected on a random basis, pursuant to Article VI of the Police Board's Rules of Procedure ("Reviewing

Member"). The Reviewing Member reviewed the Request for Review pursuant to Section 2-78-130(a)(iii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago and Article VI of the Police Board's Rules of Procedure. Following his initial review of this matter on June 23, 2026, the Reviewing Member requested, received and reviewed body-worn camera video recordings from the investigation file.

OPINION

Following a thorough review of the Request for Review material and the additional items noted above, it is my opinion that the Superintendent met the burden of overcoming the Chief Administrator's recommendation for discipline.

The question presented is whether the Superintendent has met his burden of demonstrating that his proposed disposition — findings of *Exonerated* on both allegations and no discipline — is more reasonable and appropriate than the Chief Administrator's recommendation for a suspension of 20 to 60 days, based on the nature of the misconduct alleged and the information contained in the Request for Review file. In making this determination, I have reviewed the Final Summary Report, the Superintendent's written response, the Chief Administrator's written objections, the Certificate, and the body-worn camera video recordings I requested from the investigation file. For the reasons set forth below, I find that the Superintendent has met this burden.

Before addressing the physical struggle, it is necessary to acknowledge the Chief Administrator's concern regarding the initiation of the encounter. When Sergeant Rigan

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first approached [REDACTED] at Oak Street Beach, [REDACTED] was initially compliant.

COPA argues that Sergeant Rigan escalated the situation by immediately grabbing [REDACTED] wrist without a detailed discussion or explanation of the detention. I agree that the situation might have been avoided, or at least mitigated, had Sergeant Rigan provided a clear verbal command explaining that he was detaining [REDACTED] for the safety of everyone involved before initiating physical contact. However, while Sergeant Rigan's initial tactical approach may be critiqued, his subsequent actions must be judged based on the rapidly evolving reality that followed.

The environment of this incident is a critical factor in determining objective reasonableness. Sergeant Rigan was alone on a dark beach facing a subject who refused to comply once the detention began. The struggle took place on sand, which introduced a significant risk of visual impairment. COPA acknowledges it is "certainly plausible" that sand got into Sergeant Rigan's eyes, and civilian witnesses corroborated that [REDACTED] punched Sergeant Rigan in the face. An officer who is alone and potentially blinded faces an extreme tactical disadvantage in which any further escalation by the subject could result in lethal consequences.

The most contested evidence involves the application of force at the neck. Department policy permits deadly force, including chokeholds, only as a last resort and only when necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm from an imminent threat.

My review of the body-worn camera recording reveals Sergeant Rigan's firearm appearing to be loose and dangling near [REDACTED] while [REDACTED] is actively resisting.

This occurred approximately seven seconds before Sergeant Rigan's hands were placed at [REDACTED] neck. This established a clear means and opportunity for a disarming attempt, creating an imminent threat to Sergeant Rigan's life. While COPA focuses on Sergeant Rigan's verbal statement — "quit grabbing my gun" — as coming too late to justify the earlier force, I find that statement to be ambiguous as to timing. Given the intensity of the struggle, it is more reasonable to conclude that Sergeant Rigan was referring to the earlier vulnerability of his weapon, or to a sustained attempt to disarm him that was not clearly captured on audio/video until the later timestamp.

Furthermore, the body-worn camera recording confirms that the contact with the neck area was limited to a brief window of several seconds. In the context of a solo officer struggling to maintain control of his firearm while being battered, this brief application served as a necessary control technique rather than an unjustified chokehold.

Regarding the head strikes, which resulted in [REDACTED] sustaining an orbital-floor fracture and a nasal fracture, I find these actions were proportional to the threat posed by an assailant. [REDACTED] was not merely a passive resistor; he was actively fighting a lone officer in a compromised environment. Sergeant Rigan's use of direct mechanical strikes was a necessary response to stop the attack and ensure his own safety. Notably, Sergeant Rigan ceased all strikes as soon as assistance arrived and [REDACTED] stopped resisting, which indicates that his force was disciplined and calibrated to the level of resistance.

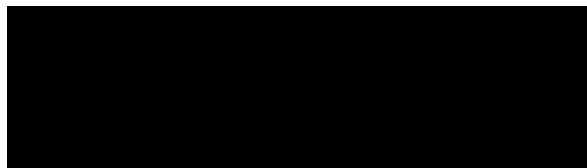
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While the initial detention could have been managed with more effective verbal communication, Sergeant Rigan's response once the physical altercation ensued was objectively reasonable. Faced with a loose firearm, an actively resisting assailant, and the risk of visual impairment while alone, Sergeant Rigan used the force necessary to prevent a potentially lethal outcome.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that the Superintendent has met his burden. The proposed findings of *Exonerated* on Allegation Nos. 1 and 2 are the more reasonable and appropriate disposition given the totality of the circumstances.

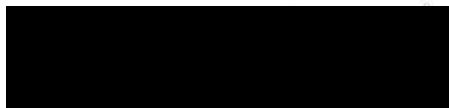
Therefore, pursuant to Section 2-78-130(a)(iii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Superintendent's response to the Chief Administrator's recommendation for discipline of Sergeant Kristopher Rigan, Star No. 1279, shall be implemented.

DATED AT CHICAGO, COUNTY OF COOK, STATE OF ILLINOIS, THIS 19th
DAY OF AUGUST 2026.



TYLER HALL
Member
Police Board

Attested by:



MAX A. CAPRONI
Executive Director
Police Board