

Chicago police investigator fired for not covering up police killings

By George Gallanis
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On July 19, Lorenzo Davis, a former supervisor for Chicago's Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA), was fired for failing to falsely exonerate three officers who had killed innocent civilians.

Davis, a former Chicago police officer for 23 years and retired in 2004, was hired to work at IPRA in 2008. Two years later, he was promoted to supervising investigator and led a team of five. According to its web site, Davis served on a review board that "is directly responsible for conducting investigations into allegations of the use of excessive force, police shootings where an officer discharges his/her weapon and strikes someone, deaths in custody, domestic violence, verbal abuse including bias and coercion. IPRA also investigates allegations of off-duty misconduct relating to excessive force and weapon discharge incidents."

The *Chicago Reader* reported that during his seven years at IPRA, Davis and his team found six shootings to be unjustified out of a total of 13 investigations. In three of those cases, Davis' supervisor and IPRA's chief administrator, Scott V. Ando, ordered Davis to exonerate the officers, despite Davis' findings. When he refused to falsify the outcome of his investigation, Davis was sacked.

The firing reveals the true character of police investigations that follow killings by officers. Far from offering an independent investigation, the standard operating procedure for these police inquiries is to cover up for police murder.

Davis's firing came just two weeks after he received a performance review in which he was accused of having a "clear bias against the police" and for being "the only supervisor at IPRA who resists making requested changes as directed by management in order to reflect the correct finding with respect to OIS," or

officer-involved shootings.

In other words, Davis was the only employee who refused to go along with the police department's efforts to whitewash repeated police killings and protect the perpetrators.

Davis has since openly criticized the CPD and IPRA, stating, "I did not like the direction the police department had taken."

He continued: "It appeared that officers were doing whatever they wanted to do. The discipline was no longer there." Moreover, he said, "to me they have a hidden agenda, one that I don't know about, to decide that virtually all police shootings are justified. That logically cannot be."

Since the creation of IPRA in 2007, Chicago police have shot nearly 400 civilians. However, only one of these killings has been deemed "unjustified" enough to call for the firing of a police officer by IPRA.

The sole "unjustified" shooting, which took place in 2011, was by an off-duty officer who fired 16 rounds into a car after a drive-by shooting. The driver of the car was an innocent bystander and not involved with the drive-by shooting. IPRA found the off-duty officer guilty of lying to investigators after claiming he fired at the driver of the car responsible for the shooting. Video evidence showed this to be false, and so the review board was forced to act.

IPRA's investigative results are filled with accounts of officers using violence in one way or another against civilians, yet officers are rarely punished.

In fact, IPRA's record shows that police terrorize the population with virtual impunity. In its most recent quarterly report, IPRA concluded that only 37 out of 385 investigations required some sort of disciplinary action.

One complaint from 2011 that was recently reviewed

includes the following description:

“In an incident involving four on duty CPD [Chicago Police Department] officers (A, B, C, and D), an unknown on-duty CPD officer (E) and five Complainants (1,2,3,4 and 5), Officers A and D were alleged to have directed profanities at the Complainants, knocked Complainant 1’s head on a table, pushed Complainant 1 against a fence several times, punched Complainant 1 several times about the face and body, banged Complainant 1’s head several times against the back window of a police vehicle, entered Complainant 1’s residence without justification, handcuffed Complainant 1 too tightly, punched Complainant 1 in the face and groin several times, and failed to complete a Tactical Response Report.” The report goes to state that the officers allegedly continued punching, kicking and even using objects against the Complainants, all the while using racial slurs.

In spite of this overwhelming evidence, the only allegations which IPRA claims were “supported by sufficient evidence to justify disciplinary action” were the allegations that the officers used profanities against the complainants and that they failed to file a Tactical Response Report. All of the other allegations were either considered unfounded, or were deemed “not supported by sufficient evidence which could be used to prove or disprove the allegation.”

Police review boards across the country—including the IPRA—were created for the purpose of fostering the illusion that the police are in some way held accountable for repeated acts of brutality.

But the situation in Chicago is emblematic of the extent to which the police brutalize the population with near complete impunity.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported in May, the Chicago Police operate a torture chamber at the Homan Square “black site,” where “Chicagoans were held for hours and sometimes days in fetid conditions, denied access to lawyers, and physically abused or threatened until they agreed to police demands. In some instances, individuals were forced to participate in petty drug stings or supply the police with off-the-books firearms.”

This revelation came in the wake of the creation of a \$5.5 million reparation fund set in place for victims of police carried out over the course of 20 years by former

police commander Jon Burge. One of Burge’s victims had a shotgun placed into his mouth, with police pretending to load it and pull the trigger. Police also used a cattle prod to shock one victim’s genitals.

Davis’s firing is a further indication that the American ruling class will tolerate no criticism of its increasingly violent and depraved tactics of repression. More and more, the police treatment of the population domestically mirrors the brutal treatment of the populations of countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Indeed, 15 years after the start of the “war on terror,” no aspect of social, political, or cultural life in the United States is immune from the domestic repercussions of the permanent state of war abroad.

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