

# Complaints Against Police Almost Never Result in Punishment, Data Shows

**Black officers are disproportionately found guilty of offenses, punished more than twice as often as white counterparts**

By Tanveer Ali  
tali@dnainfo.com

Less than 3 percent of misconduct complaints against Chicago Police officers have resulted in disciplinary action being taken, an analysis shows.

Invisible Institute, a Chicago journalism organization focused on government transparency, unveiled the Citizens Police Data Project, built on 56,361 misconduct cases made public in 2014 by a court decision.

The website features information about cases filed against 8,559 police officers from 2002 to 2008 and March 2011 through March 2015.

Some of the findings in the data:

- More than 96 percent of allegations are dismissed, and only 3 percent of all cases result in discipline. Most of those result in less

than a week of suspension.

- The most prevalent category of complaints is related to First Amendment or illegal arrest violations. More than 36 percent of the nearly 13,000 cases filed in this category are found legitimate.

- Most officers, around 80 percent of the total force, have zero to four complaints, and about 90 percent receive zero to 10 complaints. But officers with more than 10 complaints — just 10 percent of all officers — have four times the amount of misconduct complaints per officer as the rest of the force.

- When it comes to punishment, officers with more than 10 complaints against them are rarely disciplined. Only 0.05 percent (1 in 2,000) of the complaints result in punishment.

- Black officers are disproportionately found guilty of offenses and punished more often. Black officers with sustained findings are punished more than twice as often as white officers.

“To be clear, this information does not tell us whether an officer is abusive or not,” said Jamie Kalven, the Invisible Institute’s founder and the plaintiff who successfully sued for the information. “But what it does tell us is complaints are not being properly addressed, and until now, the public hasn’t been given the department’s own evidence of that.”

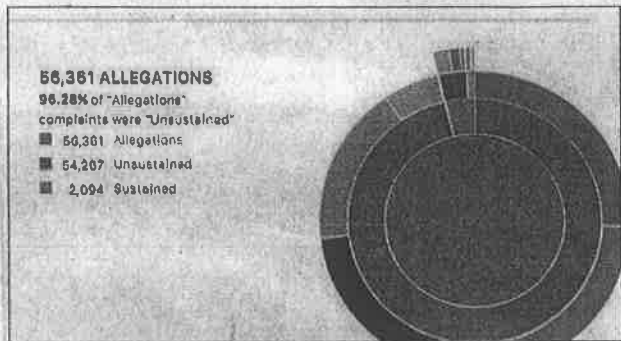
Anthony Guglielmi, Chicago Police Department spokesman, said that since 2011, the department has invested in a “police legitimacy and procedural justice” program aimed at stemming these complaints. Since implementing the program, the number of complaints has dropped 50 percent, he said.

“The Department has implemented early warning systems to help identify potential concerns with officers’ actions and arrange for the appropriate training, when applicable,” he said.

“The most important pillar of the Chicago Police Department’s crime strategy is to foster trust and positive interaction among the communities we serve,” Guglielmi said.

The data is now searchable, but that came after a long fight. While the city agreed to release the list of misconduct complaints, the police union fought the release in court.

Explore all the findings at [cpdb.co/landing/](http://cpdb.co/landing/).



Invisible Institute, a Chicago journalism organization focused on government transparency, unveiled the Citizens Police Data Project, built on 56,361 misconduct cases made public in 2014 by a court decision. [Invisible Institute]

**R FREIGHT**  
**DICULOUSLY LOW PRICES**

**ER COUPON** **SUPER COUPON**

**SUPER COUPON**  
**SAVE \$250**  
500 lb. Capacity

**26", 4 DRAWER TOOL CART**  
**US\*GENERAL**  
Customer Rating  
★★★★★





February 3, 2016

Lori Lightfoot  
President Chicago Police Board  
30 N LaSalle, Suite 1220  
Chicago IL, 60602

The Independent Retired Public Safety Officers of Chicago (IRPSOC) previously informed you of our desire to be involved in the selection process of the next Superintendent of Chicago Police. As of this day we have not received any response from the Chicago Police Board. As we get closer to the selection of the next Superintendent, it is important that we focus on the attributes of the candidates. The attributes will help to identify who will be the best Superintendent for the entire city of Chicago.

In doing this we once again present to you the opportunity to utilize the skills and expertise of retired law enforcement personnel. We would like to present the following individuals with impeccable credentials in law enforcement and community relations as representatives of (IRPSOC). With their combined experience of 851/2 years of CPD experience they will prove to be a valuable asset to the process as well as a handy resource to the Police Board especially, since there are no members with extensive law enforcement experience on the Board.

**Mr. William Shaw Jr.**

- Worked for the Chicago Police Department for 29 1/2 years in various units
- Achieved the rank of Assistant Deputy Superintendent (Internal Affairs)
- After leaving the Chicago Police Department was Chief of Police at Chicago State University for 10 years

**Mr. Mark Davis**

- Worked for the Chicago Police Department for 32 years
- Achieved the rank of Commander of the 6th District and Commander of OEMC (Office of Emergency Management and Communications)
- After leaving the Chicago Police Department he became Chief of Police in Calumet Park Illinois for 14 years.

**Mr. Wade Ingram**

- Worked for the Chicago Police Department for 24 years
- Achieved the rank of Lieutenant
- After leaving the Chicago Police Department he has been Chief of Police for, Gary Police Department and the Markham Police Department.
- He served 12 years as an adjunct Professor for Criminal Justice at Malcolm X College.



We are also requesting that the Board meet with the Independent Retired Public Safety Officers of Chicago as soon as possible to solidify the involvement of the above members.

This is the opportunity to demonstrate to the community that its' concerns have been heard. Please don't allow the adverse history of police/community relations in this city continue.

*"Each generation must discover its' mission, fulfill it or betray it in relative opacity"*

*Frantz Fanon - The Wretched of the Earth*



Richard Wooten  
Executive Director

We lose progress, time, resources and hope when we fail to read and understand our own history. These setbacks are compounded when we fail to protect the gains of our struggles. The following information is submitted as an opening to a fresh dialogue for community justice and empowerment. We will call this part the "Lawsuit in Review"

- (1970) Lawsuit filed in Federal Court by Renault Robinson and the Afro-American Patrolman's League of Chicago. The suit alleged that the City was discriminating against blacks relative to hiring, promotions, assignments and discipline.
- (1971) The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), a federal agency, was asked to conduct an investigation of the Chicago Police Department's hiring practices. The purpose was to stop federal funds to a city in violation of existing civil rights laws.
- (1972) LEAA sent a team to Chicago
- (1973) Comacho vs. the City of Chicago lawsuit (Tadeo R. Comacho, a Latino) and 10 blacks challenged the validity of the 1971 written exam, the subsequent background checks on the candidates, and especially the routine medical exam. Several of these men were rejected. The city alleged that they were found by the Civil Service physicians, to have mysterious heart murmurs that could not be found by independent physicians. The suit noted that 20.2 percent of white candidates were rejected for medical reasons, while 35.2 percent blacks and 43.4 percent of the Spanish surnamed failed because of bogus physical shortcomings.
- (Mid 1973) Elliott Richardson became the U.S. Attorney General. He immediately received a letter from (AAPL) requesting that he review the findings of the LEAA report of 1972 and the volumes of documents that had been forwarded to that office by (AAPL).
- (May 1974) First day of testimony. Federal Judge Prentiss Marshall had been assigned the case. The law firm of Kirkland and Ellis had assigned a team of lawyers to represent the AAPL plaintiffs.
- (March 10, 1975 thru June 26, 1975) a trial on the merits concluded with three cases combined, involving the hiring promotions and assignment practices of the Chicago Police Department relative to Blacks, Latinos and Females.
- (January, 1976) Judge Marshall handed down a decision that would change the make-up of the Chicago Police Department forever. (at least as long as they were being watched)
- The City of Chicago was dragged into compliance of that order, kicking and screaming every inch of the way. Over 119 million dollars of federal funds had to be with held in order to force the City to obey the ruling of the United States Federal court. After 80 days of trial and 10,000 pages of testimony, a comprehensive case of Racial and Sexual discrimination was proven against the city. The statement made to the press on the day by Chicago attorneys was, they would follow the court mandate because, "We had no choice, we needed the money". They never admitted to doing anything wrong..
- (1983) The first African American Mayor was elected in the City of Chicago. He brought the final chapter of the AAPL suit against Chicago to a close. Judge Marshall had ruled in favor of the Robinson (AAPL) plaintiffs in September 1977. The city had resisted paying the prescribed entitlements all the time.
- (1989) The City of Chicago returned to its traditional discrimination practices under the new administration. Since then it has settled Millions of dollars in unjustifiable death and injury cases brought on by "out of control" police. The ranks of African American males

are constantly declining in new recruits as well as in the ranks of detectives, youth investigators, Sergeants and Lieutenants. Community Policing does work in the communities that have a history of poor community police relations.

Discussions pertaining to racial issues between police officers are still not formally done. Discussions of racial concerns between the police and community are generally out of the question until a major incident occurs. The public in general and the African American police officers in particular, are taken for a "ride" with these so-called reverse discrimination lawsuits. That "vehicle" is traveling at a high rate of speed and it is carrying earned, legitimate progress backwards. The positive Anti-crime Thrust (the educational arm of the original Afro-American Patrolman's League) will be convening several educational workshops in the coming months starting in October, 2001. Many of the individuals who participated in this valuable slice of time as police officers, judges, writers and organizers will share this rich history with the public, criminal justice students and practitioners. They will propose workable solutions for residents of our communities throughout America where individuals and organizations are working to achieve a safe and just society

#### **Additional cases**

- **C2080-70 Renault Robinson v City of Chicago**
- **80C5246 William Bigsby v City of Chicago**
- **94C5727 Adams v City of Chicago**