

1 COMMUNITY COMMISSION for PUBLIC SAFETY
2 And ACCOUNTABILITY

3 April 25, 2024

4 6:30 p.m.

5 8000 South Michigan Avenue
6 Chicago, Illinois

7 PRESENT:

8 MR. ANTHONY DRIVER, President;
9 MS. REMEL TERRY, Vice President;
10 MS. YVETTE LOIZON, Commission member;
11 MS. BETH BROWN, Commission member;
12 MR. CLIFF NELLIS, Commission member;
13 MR. ADAM GROSS, Executive Director;
14 MR. ISAAC TRONSOCO, Commission member;
15 MR. OSWALDO GOMEZ, Commission member.

16 ALSO PRESENT:

17 MR. FRED WALLER, Office of the Mayor,
18 Deputy Director;
19 MR. BENNY LEE, NAEFI;
20 MR. TERRY THOMAS, Community Violence Interrupter.
21
22
23
24

1 PRESIDENT DRIVER: The April 25th meeting of
2 Commission for Public Safety and Accountability
3 is called to order at 6:33 p.m.

4 We will begin with a call of the
5 rolls in order to establish a quorum.

6 Commissioner Brown.

7 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Present.

8 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Commissioner Nellis.

9 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Present.

10 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Commissioner Driver is
11 present.

12 Commissioner Terry.

13 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Present.

14 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Commissioner Gomez.

15 (NO RESPONSE.)

16 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Commissioner Troncoso.

17 COMMISSIONER TRONCOSO: Present.

18 PRESIDENT DRIVER: With six out of seven
19 members of the Community Commission for Public
20 Safety and Accountability present, we have a
21 quorum, and we can conduct the Commission's
22 business.

23 We will begin with public comments.

24 If you would like to share something related to

1 the Commission for Public Safety and
2 Accountability, you have a few options. You can
3 speak at a public meeting -- you can speak at a
4 public meeting. You can also submit a public
5 comment in writing by emailing your comments to
6 the
7 Communitycommissionpubliccomment@CityofChicago.org
8 or you can bring a copy of your comments to the
9 Commission's public meetings and give it to
10 someone on the Commission or someone on the
11 Commission staff.

12 People who wanted to speak during
13 public comment submitted their names in writing
14 earlier tonight. Names were then drawn at random
15 by a member of the Commission staff. Speakers
16 will be called in the order in which their names
17 were drawn.

18 If your name is called to offer
19 public comment, we ask you approach the microphone
20 and line up in the order in which your name was
21 called. When it is your turn to speak, state your
22 name and spell your name and then offer comments.
23 Each speaker will have two minutes. We have
24 allotted a time of 20 minutes for public comment.

1 Our first speaker will be District
2 Council member Dave Orlikoff who is speaking
3 virtually. Okay.

4 For the purposes of the quorum,
5 Oswaldo Gomez is present. All seven members of
6 the CCPSA are present.

7 MR. ORLIKOFF: Hello. Thank you. My name is
8 David Orlikoff in the 14th District Humboldt
9 Park-Logan Square. D-A-V-I-D --

10 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Excuse me, David. There
11 we go. You can continue.

12 MR. ORLIKOFF: Thank you. David Orlikoff,
13 D-A-V-I-D, O-R-L-I-K-O-F-F, as in fire truck. I'd
14 like to speak today to urge the Commission to act
15 in regards to ending pretextual traffic stops,
16 particularly in light of what's come out about
17 Dexter Reed.

18 There's no reason that we should be
19 devoting so many of our resources to aggressively
20 policing black and brown drivers for things like
21 not wearing seat belts.

22 So I think there's four strong
23 reasons we need to act quickly. Number one is
24 that this is really the new stop and frisk. This

1 is traffic stop and frisk. We know that the
2 second stop and frisk was banned. These traffic
3 stops increased 600 percent, and they're not
4 effective.

5 Number two, it is not good for road
6 safety. I have been personally hit by cars many
7 times and spoken with constituents, and it's
8 unfortunate that as traffic enforcement has
9 increased, they've actually only been focusing on
10 things that are not having an impact on our danger
11 to our safe-ways. So, unfortunately, reckless
12 driving and speeding stops have decreased as
13 traffic stops increased.

14 Number three. It's not effective
15 for public safety because 99 percent of these
16 cases are not resulting in anything like an
17 arrest, et cetera. And it hasn't worked. I asked
18 my commander has this helped with robberies, and
19 she had no examples of helping with anything.

20 Number four. Finally, it's
21 racially discriminatory. Black drivers are six
22 times more likely to be pulled over in the city.
23 Latino drivers twice as likely.

24 Shockingly, 97 percent of all uses

1 of force are against people of color and not white
2 people in the city.

3 So we definitely need to act
4 quickly, pass the general directive to ban
5 pretextual traffic stops, limit low-level
6 search -- or end consent searches and low-level
7 stops. Thank you.

8 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Thank you. You have one
9 more virtual speaker, right?

10 Our next speaker is Matt Beesley.

11 MR. BEESLEY: Hi. Good evening. Hopefully
12 you guys can hear me.

13 PRESIDENT DRIVER: We can hear you.

14 MR. BEESLEY: Great. Again, my name is
15 Matthew Beesley. M-A-T-T-H-E-W, B-E-E-S-L-E-Y.
16 I'm a Chicago police officer, and I'm very glad
17 the pretextual stops was brought up.

18 One thing I want to point out for
19 pretextual stops is that the State of Illinois has
20 had for many years a program called Click It or
21 Ticket. Something that we've had since we were
22 kids.

23 So to say it's a pretextual traffic
24 stop for seat belts is blatantly false. It is for

1 safety. Just like there's DUI checkpoints, there
2 are seat belt checkpoints.

3 All throughout the State of
4 Illinois, there are grants that are given to
5 Chicago Police, as well as other police
6 departments across the state, specifically for
7 checkpoints for seat belts. So to say it's
8 pretextual is wildly off base.

9 Now, to go to my original point, I
10 want to bring it back to ShotSpotter. I talked
11 about this two months ago, and I want to bring it
12 back.

13 Mr. Driver, I applaud you for your
14 meetings, again, with Andrea Kersten, with the
15 Superintendent, with everybody else, and I want to
16 implore you to consider having additional meetings
17 about ShotSpotter.

18 You say, and the Board says, that
19 it cannot change or influence the mind of the
20 Mayor, but you've proven with your meeting that
21 you just had the other day with the Superintendent
22 and with Andrea Kersten that you can bring people
23 to the table, and you can talk about very
24 important topics, including ShotSpotter.

1 Two Chicago police officers have
2 died in the past year and both of these robberies
3 and/or carjackings, these shootings were recorded
4 on ShotSpotter. This is not a fluke. This is not
5 some kind of outlier. ShotSpotter is an accurate
6 tool, and if anybody visits any SDSC room in any
7 district, you will be able to recognize the same.
8 Thank you very much for your time.

9 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Thank you. And I will
10 remind our speaker, and this is not geared toward
11 virtual speakers, we have a little bit over what
12 we've allotted, but we are going to allow
13 everybody to speak that thus far submitted, but
14 please respect the two minutes so we are able to
15 move on with our agenda.

16 Our first speaker is District
17 Council member Robert McKay.

18 MR. MCKAY: Good evening. I'm 5th District
19 Council Robert McKay -- Commissioner Robert McKay,
20 5th Police District, which is located on 111th
21 Street. We have -- we just held a meeting on
22 Monday in Altgeld Gardens, and one of the issues I
23 brought up was about the Consent Decree, which is
24 the City of Chicago's only -- which the Police

1 Department's only 5 percent compliant.

2 We read where the monitors --
3 federal monitors stated they want 100 percent
4 compliance. So we're wondering how can there be a
5 hundred percent compliance when they're monitoring
6 the Consent Decree, and if they're a hundred
7 percent compliant, then the Police Department
8 should be on that level also.

9 Now, according to the Consent
10 Decree, which I have the introduction to, it -- if
11 I can go to it right away. "Introduction, the
12 State of Illinois and the City of Chicago,
13 collectively the parties, hereby enter into a
14 Consent Decree agreement, the terms and conditions
15 set forth below. The State, the City, and the
16 City of Chicago Police Department, or the
17 Department, are committed to constitutional and
18 effective law enforcement. In furtherance of this
19 commitment, the parties entered into the agreement
20 to ensure the City and CPD deliver services in a
21 manner that fully complies with the constitutional
22 laws of the United States and the State of
23 Illinois, respects the rights of people of
24 Chicago, trust between officers and communities

1 they serve, and promotes community and officer
2 safety."

3 In addition, this agreement seeks
4 to ensure that Chicago police officers are
5 provided with training, resources, and support
6 they need to perform their jobs professionally and
7 safely.

8 This agreement requires changes in
9 the areas of community policing, impartial
10 policing, crisis intervention, and use of force,
11 recruitment, and hiring, and promotions training,
12 supervision --

13 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Mr. McKay, that's your
14 time. Two minutes. Sorry. There is no --

15 MR. MCKAY: Thank you.

16 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: The next three
17 speakers we have, Mr. Frank Chapman. After him,
18 Darnell Singleton and Sidney Brooks.

19 MR. CHAPMAN: My name is Frank Chapman.
20 Frank Chapman.

21 PRESIDENT DRIVER: The mic is not on. One
22 second, Frank.

23 MR. CHAPMAN: Allow me to explain our demands
24 that we have been demonstrating for since the

1 murder of Dexter Reed. When we say take action
2 for change of these policies -- can everybody hear
3 me?

4 When we say take action to change
5 these policies immediately, we're talking about
6 the cops. We mean take whatever action you are
7 required by the law. We understand that there's a
8 process. The sooner we act, the sooner change --
9 we are not -- we are not here about what all you
10 can do as commissioners. What we're saying, you
11 should team up with the community to make sure
12 that we get justice we deserve.

13 This is your opportunity to tell us
14 what you can and can't do, so we can adjust our
15 expectation accordingly and our demands are
16 addressed in a proper and efficient manner.

17 Justice delayed is justice denied.
18 What you can do, please proceed to do it now.
19 When we say immediately, we mean act with urgency,
20 because this is a very serious problem that needs
21 to be addressed. Thank you.

22 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you.

23 MR. SINGLETON: Good evening, everybody. My
24 name is Vondale Singleton, and I'm a founder and

1 CEO of the Champs Mentoring Program. Champs
2 stands for Culturally Helping and Making Positive
3 Success. And as we approach summer, I just want
4 to emphasize the importance of all stakeholders
5 coming together and work together for the safety
6 of our city, in particular our youth. I'm
7 particularly focused on social/emotional learning,
8 mental health, leadership development and identity
9 formation in about 400 boys and young men of color
10 here in Chicago.

11 As we also look to the funds that
12 are being disbursed around community violence
13 intervention, I know that a lot of violence
14 interrupters are at the table, but I also want us
15 to think about violence prevention. Focus on the
16 youth before we have to do high-level intervention
17 with our young people, and then also just to
18 challenge everybody to lean in a little bit.
19 There's a lot going on. There's a lot of tragedy
20 happening within our city. A lot of deaths of
21 nine-year-olds and seven-year-olds. It's
22 ridiculous to me.

23 So I wanted to advocate that we are
24 going to be doing a march on June 8th on the west

1 side of Chicago. We're calling 1000 boys and
2 young men of color. Not just a march, but it is
3 an opportunity in which we have over 30 partners.
4 Our goal is to get to 50 organizations, focus on
5 bringing out 20. So thank you for your time.
6 Appreciate the opportunity.

7 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you.

8 MR. BROOKS: Hello, board members. Sidney
9 Brooks. S-I-D-N-E-Y, B-R-O-O-K-S.

10 I have given a year. This is watch
11 the process. And we are still back at beginning.

12 In my district, we still don't have
13 communication with the commander. In our
14 district, our commissioners are not giving us
15 information. We have to go out and search
16 ourselves.

17 My understanding there is going to
18 be accountability. Community organized with the
19 Police Department. But how can you organize with
20 the Police Department when you can't get the
21 commander -- the district commander to attend
22 meetings? They have a -- they put together -- I
23 forget the word. They plans or what they going to
24 do in the community. Strategic. Half the people

1 don't know what it is. And your commissioners
2 don't know what it is. I had to pull it up. And
3 when I pulled ours up, there were two spots; one
4 was traffic on 95th to 75th and Stony Island, the
5 other one was a little part of the community. But
6 the 7th Ward, 10th Ward, we have problems all
7 over. But that's not in they plans. So how do I
8 hold the commander accountable for his actions for
9 what he say he is going to do? We don't have the
10 papers to know what he's going to do, so he is not
11 being held accountable. We can't question him for
12 what he said he is going to do. We can't question
13 him on what he said he is going to do in the
14 community, because we don't have the information.

15 So is it possible for the -- for
16 this committee, some kind of way to get that out?
17 Not just in our district but majority of the
18 districts I talk to, they don't meet with they
19 commander. I don't want to meet with the police
20 officers. I don't want to meet with CAPS, because
21 they don't run anything. The commander runs it.

22 PRESIDENT DRIVER: What district?

23 MR. BROOKS: Four.

24 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: The next three

1 speakers are Troy Gaston, Christopher Ramos, Tiwon
2 Sims.

3 MR. GASTON: Good evening, everyone. How
4 everyone doing today?

5 First thing I want to say for my
6 first minutes is that I really appreciate you,
7 Commissioner Terry, because I sat back and watched
8 all of the times that I had came over the -- I
9 guess four times. I see you, the most observer
10 that's most consistent out of trying to see what
11 it is the community really want, you know, and I
12 appreciate that. That's all I really ask for.

13 Beth and Cliff, we don't even know
14 y'all. We don't know y'all at all. Y'all don't
15 want to have a relationship with the community,
16 and it makes me wonder why you all not elected.
17 We need whatever power you all have to take a look
18 at what's happening on the ground when it got
19 something to do with violence and police, with
20 black men. You got to study it. It's a pandemic.
21 It is absolutely a pandemic. For whatever reason,
22 they dying. For whatever reason, they engaging
23 the police in such a way. It's a pandemic. Thank
24 God for y'all time.

1 people who are deaf, have auditory processing
2 disorders or can't respond immediately to physical
3 requests because of their disability are often
4 misunderstood during traffic stops, leading to
5 potentially harmful, misunderstandings or
6 confrontations.

7 These areas have disproportionately
8 high levels of people with disabilities as black
9 and brown folks are more likely to be disabled.

10 Ending pretextual stops can
11 alleviate some of these risks by reducing
12 unnecessary interactions between law enforcement
13 and vulnerable individuals.

14 A combination of effective
15 leadership and robust policy change is the most
16 comprehensive approach to correcting racially
17 disparate and harmful pretextual stops and foster
18 public safety, accountability, transparency within
19 CPD. Thank you very much.

20 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you. Our last
21 four speakers, Merawi Gerima.

22 MR. SIMS: Hello. Mic went in and out. But,
23 anyway, my name is Tiwon Sims, and I guess I'm an
24 activist. I didn't know that.

1 Deputy Director Wallen, when I met
2 him at an event, it was Juneteenth. He called me
3 an activist. I was like, Okay. I'll take that
4 moniker.

5 But Chicago Alliance against Racism
6 and Political Repression need to improve, but I'm
7 not here to speak about that.

8 What I'm here to speak about is
9 Officer Huesca. And so terrible what took place.
10 It's terrible, the event. It's terrible what's
11 surrounding him. But it's the afterwards. This
12 investigation -- this vague investigation which
13 shows a dark-skinned gentleman. Now we got
14 Chicago PD once again pointing at young black
15 Americans. We don't know who this gentleman is.
16 We don't know if he had anything to do with this
17 event. But now he's being paraded across the TV.
18 And that's a young black person. That's a black
19 American. A dark -- like my skin tone. So you
20 all know historically when that goes down like
21 that how it works. So now we got X amount of CPD,
22 we got X amount of his colleagues, we got people
23 that loved him seeking justice or wanting justice
24 by any means. This can be a hard case for us.

1 And for the news to come out so prematurely and
2 just, Hey, let's just put that image up. And we
3 got Anthony Napolitano saying we lost our city in
4 this event. So imagine the gravity of that. But
5 understand that this community that we have to
6 deal with that now.

7 I got a 15-year-old, 200 something
8 pounds, walking the street. We got heightened
9 emotion in our CPD right now covering this event
10 and praying that some justice come or praying that
11 proper justice is served. I'm just saying.

12 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you. After
13 Merawi Gerima, Jasmine Smith, Bella Bahhs, and
14 the last person will be Larry Richard.

15 MR. GERIMA: So I just wanted to start by
16 saying we want justice, period. You know what I
17 mean? We understand that there's a certain level
18 of powers that CCPSA has, certain level of
19 jurisdiction, and we believe that the ability to
20 stop pretextual stops is within that, and we want
21 to see you all fight tooth and nail to achieve
22 that. And if it comes in the course of y'all
23 giving it your best that your powers are limited
24 in our demands around these aspects, then we can

1 say, all right, through your proven effort, let's
2 fight to increase the powers of the Commission.
3 Let's fight to give, you know, you who are an
4 extension of this community more power to do these
5 things, because at the end of the day, we want
6 justice. So whatever it is we got to do, we will
7 do it.

8 This man, whatever you feel about
9 this or that, his death flowed immediately from
10 the fact that he was stopped pretextually. He
11 should be alive today. That's injustice. We want
12 justice.

13 Them officers who are walking
14 around on the street, as I believe they are, with
15 44 something complaints between them, that's
16 injustice on its own. But the fact that they are
17 allowed to stay on the force, and there's no way
18 we are going to allow them to go without being
19 held accountable, but for some reason they did.
20 That's injustice, and we want that to end.

21 We believe that Chicago, unlike any
22 other city in the United States, has the power --
23 the people have, as we have been saying, a pinch
24 of power in that direction to bring police to

1 accountability, to bring them to justice when they
2 do wrong.

3 And so we say, any talk about, you
4 know, distrust between the community and the
5 police is empty conversation if it's not talking
6 about justice, if it's not talking about the
7 police being held accountable for the things that
8 they do and the things they don't do. That's why
9 we're here today. Thank you.

10 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you.

11 MS. SMITH: Good evening, everyone. I'm
12 activist Jasmine Smith with Chicago Alliance
13 Against Racism and Political Repression.

14 I did get a clear understanding of
15 the powers you guys have in order to successfully
16 end pretextual stops, and that is months' time,
17 and we also need the commissioners that's been
18 appointed to the mayor to be selected in order to
19 even get that ball on the road.

20 So I just wanted to say thank you,
21 Anthony, for clarity of that earlier. And I'm
22 asking that you guys, like my partner just said,
23 to work -- work with each other and try to apply
24 as much pressure as you guys can to get whoever is

1 blocking that process from the mayor making that
2 selection to get the next commissioners appointed
3 to do so, because it is urgent that we get the
4 justice for these young men, because it didn't
5 just start with Dexter Reed. We still waiting on
6 the officers from the Ronnie Mann killing, waiting
7 on the officers from (inaudible) nephew that was
8 killed. Waiting on the officers from Reginald Kay
9 (phonetic) killing.

10 The officers all are still on the
11 force. And the only thing they get is a 30-day
12 suspension with pay while the investigation is
13 going on, and none of them are being taken -- the
14 Superintendent saying he is not taking nobody --
15 stripping them of their powers while there is an
16 ongoing investigation.

17 If I shoot one of y'all, I'm going
18 straight to jail and awaiting my trial until I'm
19 proven guilty or innocent.

20 I keep telling every time I speak,
21 the police be the same blood that we bleed. Their
22 contract needs to be dismantled before the new
23 contract even come up, because they contract what
24 is protecting them right now to get away with the

1 misconduct they doing. Not all officers are bad
2 officers, but the bad officers outweigh the good
3 officers. It's time for the powers that been put
4 in place to really use the powers that you guys
5 got and push the next person that have contact --
6 direct contact with the new one needs to be done
7 for these communities, because we cannot keep
8 allowing these officers to kill us, get away with
9 it.

10 You would think the killing would
11 stop when the uprising happened the last time.
12 The killings increased by the police and enough is
13 enough.

14 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you.

15 MS. BAHHS: Hi. I'm Bella Bahhs, B-A-H-H-S.
16 That stands for Black Ancestors Here Healing
17 Society, not bars, not prisons, not police. We
18 heal us. We keep us safe. We get us free.
19 That's our duty, to keep us safe. That is why we
20 are coming to you expressing this demand that we
21 end pretextual traffic stops. It is a collective
22 care measure. It is a collective care demand,
23 because this is not about individual officers or
24 individual community members, but justice for

1 Dexter Reed absolutely.

2 This is about justice for all of
3 us, so that there is no more Dexter Reeds. So
4 that every time we get pulled over, every time the
5 lights flash behind us, we are not scared that we
6 might die because we don't have on a seatbelt,
7 which is something that's only going to protect
8 us; it is not harming nobody else.

9 To the officer on the line who
10 talked about Click It or Ticket, that was our bad.
11 We let that go on for way too long. But it was an
12 educational campaign primarily. We're educated,
13 right. We know the benefits of wearing a seat
14 belt. So to use that to say that because you
15 don't have a seat belt, we can now -- you now have
16 the threat of armed confrontation, that is
17 unacceptable. And that is what we are here for.

18 This is a collective care demand.
19 We have to keep us safe. Sister, brother, allies,
20 we have to keep us safe. We have to end
21 pretextual traffic stops. We have to end Click It
22 or Ticket. We have to end the fact that I don't
23 got money to pay for this broken headlight, I can
24 be met with armed confrontation. That is not

1 acceptable. That is not okay.

2 Dexter Reed could have been any of
3 us. Could have been any of our brothers, our
4 sons, our fathers. It is not okay. Thank you.

5 MR. RICHARD: Good evening, everyone. My
6 name is Larry Richard, R-I-C-H-A-R-D. I'm a
7 member of the 73rd and Union Block Club. I came
8 -- I look at the panel, and, frankly, I see a
9 compilation of people with different backgrounds.
10 But what I don't see is enough gray hair like me.
11 I'm 64 years old. Okay. And let me say that the
12 only thing -- the absolute only thing that you as
13 a council and committee need to do is to be fair.
14 Regardless of whose side it comes down on, you
15 have to be fair. Okay.

16 Now, when you take a look at the
17 cops out here, most of them are working in a
18 hostile environment, war zone, although they do
19 not get that type of pay.

20 CPD today is not the CPD it was 10,
21 15 years ago. It is not the CPD when I was a kid,
22 and I can attest to that. And you need to be
23 aware of that. You need to be aware that a cop
24 working in Englewood is going to have different

1 challenges than a cop working in Winnetka.

2 And if you want the cops to
3 continue to work in a neighborhood, you have to be
4 fair to them. You have to know that for every
5 encounter, what they are met with, resistance.

6 I've been pulled over for not
7 wearing a seat belt. I've been pulled over for
8 talking on the phone. Never experienced any of
9 that. You know why? Because I know how to
10 conduct myself. Okay. I know how to conduct
11 myself. And I have still come out without a
12 ticket, because I conducted myself the right way,
13 and it was not in a Stepin Fetchit yes, sir, boss.
14 It was not.

15 Black folks need to be fair. Be
16 fair with the police if you want safety in your
17 community.

18 Who is it getting killed in the
19 community by and large? It is black children. It
20 is black people being killed by black people.

21 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: We have one final
22 speaker that was actually virtual that's in
23 person, and that is Crista Noel.

24 I do value Mr. Gaston's

1 perspective, and I would ask that whether we agree
2 or disagree, to be respectful of the mic. And so,
3 Ms. Noel, go ahead.

4 MR. NOEL: Okay. How's everybody doing
5 tonight? Okay. So Dexter Reed. This is the
6 definition of excessive, right? So we know that
7 there was -- they're throwing around the term
8 "pretextual." There's no such thing as a
9 pretextual stop. It's either constitutional or
10 it's unconstitutional. It's lawful or it's
11 unlawful. Okay. We don't need to put other terms
12 out there, because when it comes to legalities, we
13 want to use the terms that are used to explain
14 that it was illegal, it was against the law, it
15 was against the constitution of the United States.

16 We do not believe that the cops saw
17 his seat belt, because he had tinted windows. So
18 we believe that they stopped him for no good
19 reason. And because they did that, they violated
20 his civil rights from the jump. Okay.

21 I have veterans in my family, and
22 my friends are veterans, and every veteran tells
23 me you don't point a gun at someone unless you are
24 going to shoot them. So when cops get out and

1 point guns at people over seat belts, they should
2 expect to get shot. That should be their
3 expectation, because pointing a gun at me means
4 that I may get shot, so I am now in a mode of
5 self-defense. So if I have a gun, I will shoot
6 back at you, because I don't know what you're
7 going to do. And even if you have on your
8 uniform, if you point a gun at me over a seat
9 belt, I know you full of something. Okay.

10 So this is not the way you treat
11 us. And I want to make sure that everybody
12 understands that we're not going to accept it.

13 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT DRIVER: We've reached the end of
15 our public comment period. Thank you again to all
16 of our speakers. We value your input.

17 The next order of business is the
18 approval of minutes. Before today's meeting,
19 draft minutes of the Commission's meeting held on
20 March 21 were shared. Are there any corrections
21 to the draft minutes that have been circulated?

22 If there are none, I move to
23 approve the minutes of the Commission's meeting
24 that was held on March 21st.

1 COMMISSIONER TRONCOSO: Second.

2 PRESIDENT DRIVER: I moved. It's been
3 seconded by Commissioner Troncoso to approve the
4 minutes of the March 21st meeting. Is there any
5 debate on the motion?

6 (NO RESPONSE.)

7 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Hearing none, we will now
8 move to vote. Those in favor, signify by saying
9 aye.

10 (CHORUS OF AYES.)

11 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Are there any nays?

12 (NO RESPONSE.)

13 PRESIDENT DRIVER: The ayes have it and the
14 motion carries. The minutes are approved.

15 Our next order of business will be
16 new business. We will begin by discussing an
17 update on the CCPSA ordinance. For that, I will
18 pass it to Commissioner Terry.

19 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: The CCPSA ordinance
20 established that any new or amended Chicago Police
21 Department policy shall become effective only
22 after Commission approval by majority vote.

23 This authority applies to CPD
24 general orders and doesn't include policies that

1 are covered by the Consent Decree.

2 At the Commission's November
3 meeting, we voted to amend the CPD policy E08-03,
4 prohibitions on associations with criminal
5 organizations. CPD enacted the order in January
6 2024 after the 60-day period when the mayor can
7 review the policy and decide whether to veto it.
8 Since the passage of that amendment, Commissioner
9 Loizon and I have been working with CPD to further
10 refine the general order on criminal and
11 biased-based organizations.

12 Today, we're hoping to vote on a
13 new amendment that we've discussed in previous
14 public meetings and posted on the Commission's
15 website for public comment.

16 The amendment includes the
17 following additions to the order: A new section
18 on reporting and transparency, clarification
19 regarding criminal or biased-based organizations
20 related to illegally preventing or interfering
21 with the performance of police duties.
22 Additional language explicitly stating that a
23 criminal or biased-based organization can be
24 determined not just by analysis of activity, but

1 also by analysis of the group's stated mission and
2 values.

3 I move to adopt the proposed
4 amendment of the Chicago Police Department
5 Directive G08-03.

6 COMMISSIONER LOIZON: I second.

7 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Commissioner Terry has
8 motioned, and it's been seconded by Commissioner
9 Loizon to adopt the proposed amendment of Chicago
10 Police Department Directive G08-03. Is there any
11 debate on this motion?

12 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Could you just --
13 could you just clarify the amendment that says
14 clarification regarding criminal or
15 biased-organization related to illegally
16 preventing or interfering with the performance of
17 police duties? Can somebody just help me out to
18 understand what is that amendment related to?
19 What was the previous section and what is the
20 change?

21 COMMISSIONER LOIZON: The change was made
22 because there were concerns expressed in public
23 comment as well as our webinars regarding whether
24 certain groups that are perceived to engage in

1 that kind of behavior would actually fall within
2 the definition, and we wanted to make sure that
3 we were not limiting -- that we were not limiting
4 the scope and breadth of the language, so that
5 it's not intended -- I think the way it's written
6 is a little misleading. It is not intended to
7 say you are a biased-based organization if you
8 interfere with police activities. That's not
9 what the language says. Instead, it provides
10 additional definition and additional context for
11 how to assess whether certain categories of
12 organization would fall within the definition of
13 the ordinance.

14 So one of the things that we heard
15 many times is, for example, Black Lives Matter.
16 Is Black Lives Matter going to be considered a
17 biased-based organization under the definition
18 provided here?

19 We've clarified the definition so
20 that groups that are engaged in that kind of
21 social activity will not fall within the
22 categories necessarily.

23 But, hypothetically, groups do
24 change their mission, their names, their values

1 as time goes on. So it's written in a way that
2 makes it possible for there to be an assessment
3 based on the conduct of the group and not just
4 its stated mission.

5 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Thank you. That's
6 helpful. If I can just make sure I understood
7 that. What I was concerned -- thank you --
8 specifically is that the membership,
9 criminal-biased organization, could be limited to
10 only those organizations that's a subset of
11 biased organizations that somehow are determined
12 to interfere specifically with the performance of
13 police duties. It sounds like that was not --
14 that's not the intention. This may not be the
15 specific language in the general order; is that
16 correct?

17 COMMISSIONER LOIZON: It's not. It's just a
18 summary.

19 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Is there any other debate?
21 Any other questions?

22 Seeing no further questions, all
23 those in favor of the adoption of the -- did
24 somebody motion?

1 Seeing no further questions, all
2 those in favor of the adoption of the amendment
3 please signify by saying aye.

4 (CHORUS OF AYES.)

5 PRESIDENT DRIVER: All those opposed, please
6 say nay.

7 (NO RESPONSE.)

8 PRESIDENT DRIVER: The ayes have it and the
9 amendment is adopted.

10 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: So our next order of
11 business will be the panel that we have organized
12 and convened today to talk about the topic of
13 public safety. And so we also as a Commission
14 wanted to make a statement collectively regarding
15 current events. So I will start off the statement
16 and then President Driver will join.

17 On March 21st, Dexter Reed was shot
18 and killed by Chicago Police. And officer -- hot
19 mics. So an Officer Gregory Saint Louis was shot
20 and wounded. Many of us on the Commission have
21 lost friends and loved ones to gun violence.
22 Those losses change you forever, and I don't know
23 if you ever recover. So our hearts are very much
24 with every family member and friend who is

1 struggling to live with that loss now.

2 Since the release of the video
3 related to Dexter Reed's killing, there have been
4 loud cries for justice. We have heard from many
5 people who have watched the videos and think that
6 the officers involved violated police department
7 policy and broke the law.

8 We have also heard from people who
9 have followed COPA statements about the case and
10 think that this Civilian Office of Police
11 Accountability, or COPA, has shown bias in some of
12 its public statement and has called into question
13 the fairness and objectivity of COPA's
14 investigation.

15 We have to take all of those
16 concerns seriously. The Commission oversees CPD
17 and COPA. The law that created the Commission
18 says that the Commission has to work to increase
19 accountability of both the Police Department and
20 COPA.

21 One big part of increasing
22 accountability is making sure that when police
23 officers shoot someone, there is a fair and
24 impartial investigation that helps all -- us all

1 understand what the facts are. And then if the
2 facts establish that a police officer violated the
3 law or Police Department policy, there must be
4 accountability. That process can be frustrating
5 and painful. We want answers today. We want
6 justice today. But justice takes time.

7 COPA will have to determine whether
8 the officers involved in the case followed the
9 Department's policies and the investigation will
10 require looking at a lot of information beyond the
11 videos.

12 COPA will need to interview the
13 officers involved, which has not been completed
14 yet.

15 COPA usually does an extensive
16 investigation and analysis before it conducts
17 interviews, so they know what questions to ask.
18 That can take a while. Through the investigation
19 process, COPA is required to assess all
20 circumstances and then make a decision based on
21 its findings. Until it has completed its work and
22 made the results public, it is not appropriate for
23 the Commission to come to any conclusions about
24 the case. It's also not the Commission's job to

1 do the investigations. We don't have all the
2 information or the authority to do that work. It
3 is the Commission's job to oversee COPA and to
4 work to make sure that COPA conducts fair,
5 objective, and timely investigations.

6 We know that there are a lot of
7 questions and concerns about the reason police
8 made the stop, the tactics they used, and whether
9 they followed policy, and the number of gunshots
10 they fired. There has been made public all of
11 those things, but not concrete answers. And there
12 won't be until COPA wraps up its investigation,
13 which can take a year or more.

14 Many things have already been
15 discussed in the media, but it is essential
16 everyone who is involved in the investigation not
17 say anything that would raise questions about
18 whether the investigation is fair, objective, and
19 impartial.

20 If people don't believe an
21 investigation is fair, objective, and impartial,
22 it makes it much harder to get justice, and the
23 process that matters on fairness, and the process
24 can lead to the result none of us want, the

1 inability to do the justice.

2 PRESIDENT DRIVER: When there are
3 officer-involved shootings or allegations of
4 serious police misconduct, people often call on
5 the police superintendent to take some immediate
6 action, and some people have called upon the
7 Superintendent and us to fire all of the officers
8 involved. We understand why people want action
9 now. The Superintendent does not have the
10 authority, nor us, to fire those officers at this
11 time. There's a reason the Superintendent doesn't
12 have that power.

13 For many years, Chicago Police
14 superintendents had the power on their own to fire
15 officers who violated Department policies. During
16 that time, there are many cases where the
17 Superintendent didn't use that power that they had
18 appropriately.

19 For years, Chicago had a faulty
20 system. Eventually they succeeded and created
21 civilian officer oversight where the power to
22 investigate serious police misconduct allegations
23 and all officer-involved shootings and the power
24 to make recommendations about discipline in those

1 cases was taken away from the Superintendent and
2 given to an independent body outside of the
3 Chicago Police Department.

4 The Superintendent can't fire an
5 officer until COPA has gone through its process.

6 Dexter Reed's killing raised
7 serious concerns about two topics that the
8 Community Commission has immediately acknowledged
9 need careful consideration.

10 In fact, throughout the
11 Superintendent's search process, the Commission
12 assessed candidates in part based on their
13 position on these issues; one is traffic stops.

14 The Commission has serious concerns
15 about CPD's use of traffic stops. The
16 Superintendent has also expressed serious concerns
17 about how the Department has used traffic stops.

18 The Commission -- the Commission
19 has set goals for the Superintendent for 2024, and
20 the first one includes addressing concerns about
21 the overuse of certain police tactics that are
22 causing harm without necessarily making the
23 community safer. Traffic stops are one focus of
24 their work, and in the coming weeks, the

1 Commission will work to better understand what
2 progress the Superintendent has made in the first
3 month in his office and explore what additional
4 steps need to be taken.

5 Another issue that the Commission
6 thinks requires careful analysis is a use of
7 tactical teams. In recent years, there's been a
8 lot of concerns -- in recent years, there's been a
9 lot of concern about city-wide teams not tied to a
10 specific police district or area.

11 Our understanding is that those
12 city-wide teams have been mostly or entirely
13 disbanded. But there are still tactical teams
14 within each police district, and there are
15 questions about the mandate and use of these
16 teams.

17 We will work -- we will continue to
18 look into how these teams are used.

19 As always, when we look at police
20 policy and practice, we will listen carefully to
21 people across the city and give input -- give that
22 input the weight that it deserves.

23 Like all of you, we wish we all had
24 answers today, but we don't. It's hard to be

1 patient. But not doing that will further divide
2 our city.

3 We have a lot of challenges ahead.
4 We will continue to lose people we love to gun
5 violence -- we continue to lose people we love to
6 gun violence. We all want that to stop, and the
7 only way we get there is if we stand together and
8 work together towards justice and peace.

9 COMMISSIONER GOMEZ: I don't know if the
10 mics are the only ones that pick -- are they the
11 ones heard online? It sounds like that's the
12 case. We will probably publish this statement
13 online so it can be heard.

14 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Yes. So also we were
15 originally -- this is not the original location,
16 as many know, that this meeting was to take place,
17 and we had to scramble to find a new location. We
18 apologize for the technical difficulties that we
19 are now having with microphones. I know there's
20 folks online who probably cannot hear as clearly
21 as you all. I'm trying my best to speak up and
22 project my voice.

23 We will absolutely publish our
24 statement publicly, so that you all are able to

1 read it. And thank you for making that.

2 Before we -- our next order of
3 business will be discussion with the community
4 leaders on community public safety -- let's just
5 kill the mics.

6 COMMISSIONER GOMEZ: Quick point of order.
7 If we turn off the mics and maybe use a single
8 mic, there won't be feedback, and if we speak
9 further from the mic, it might actually work. I
10 will pass this mic down, and we'll try that. Last
11 attempt at using the mics. How about that? The
12 closer we speak, you get feedback.

13 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Turn the rest of the mics
14 off.

15 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Can I just have a
16 question of order here for the meeting today?

17 My understanding is there's going
18 to be opportunity for commissioners to add, as
19 they may feel needed, to the statement that was
20 just given. I'm wondering if that is now or at
21 the end of the meeting?

22 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: That will occur at the
23 end of the meeting.

24 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Before we get started, I'd
2 like to welcome Fred Waller of the Chicago Police
3 Department to the stage to give a brief statement
4 on how CPD is trying to partner with the
5 community. Deputy Director Waller.

6 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALLER: Thank you. Thank
7 you. CPD is partnering with CVI and other -- CPD
8 is partnering with CVI agencies and also other
9 outside groups, as I see Tyrone up here. So I
10 will definitely avoid speaking about --

11 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Can we turn the mics off?
12 That's not his. Maybe that's causing the
13 feedback. Turn all technology off.

14 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALLER: Okay. So we know
15 that this is not a perfect match. CPD
16 traditionally has not blended well with a lot of
17 the CVI partners and CVI members. This has not
18 been something that's been done in a way that we
19 do it now. Now there's a lot of training that
20 goes on. There's a lot of documents that we
21 copartner with to bring this together. In the
22 past, we know that CPD has entrusted a lot of
23 people with challenging backgrounds. We know also
24 that some of the people in these CVI agencies have

1 entrusted CPD because they've had uneventful
2 events with CPD.

3 But what we have as a common
4 knowledge and a common goal, I should say, is to
5 bring peace and prevention of violence. The
6 prevention of violence to make this city safer is
7 what the goal is. And we've created documents.
8 And I think three things that have been done
9 intentional and three things that work; the
10 training of the CVI workers along with developing
11 documentation so we can have workshops together.
12 We can come together to try to bring these
13 relationships forward.

14 Also, having more intervention and
15 interaction with each other.

16 These things that we bring forth
17 are the reasons why this is working. I've seen it
18 work. I've had instances in the past where I know
19 that it wasn't a good blend, but with the training
20 now that we have, also with more interaction with
21 each other, it's starting to work.

22 I've seen places where the crime
23 has come down. I've seen intervention on the
24 streets with the boots on the ground where they

1 brought the temperature down. Be it no slide rule
2 or any type of peace treaty, so I know this is
3 something that can work.

4 We're working hard with a lot of
5 different groups. I'll just say Project Hood
6 create different other organizations that we're
7 working with.

8 So along with CPD, this is
9 something that we're committed to. And I say I
10 just look forward to this opportunity.

11 It is not going to be a perfect mix
12 all the time, but we're working hard to create
13 this opportunity.

14 And, also, even though we can take
15 ideas from outside of Chicago, it's homegrown and
16 that's a Chicago culture and flare to it that's
17 been different from before.

18 So I look forward to this
19 opportunity, and I hope that this is something
20 that we can continue and people get behind. Thank
21 you.

22 PRESIDENT DRIVER: You can join us on the
23 panel.

24 I will ask the members of the panel

1 discussion today to please come to the stage, Mr.
2 Benny Lee and Terry Thomas.

3 I now ask the panelists to take a
4 few minutes to -- I want to be respectful.
5 There's people watching on line. To the extent
6 possible, I do want people participating
7 virtually to be able to hear us talk. If we can
8 just take a couple-minute recess. There we go.
9 Can we pass the mic down there?

10 I now ask the panelists to take a
11 few minutes to introduce themselves, and we will
12 start with Mr. Terry Thomas

13 MR. THOMAS: Thank you, Tony. My name is
14 Terry Thomas. I'm a lifelong citizen of Chicago.
15 I'm the age 55. I have 6 children, 14
16 grandchildren, and I'm formerly incarcerated. Did
17 15 and a half years in the federal system. Came
18 home. Got right to work. Me and Waketa and Fred
19 Hampton, Junior, brokered a peace treaty between
20 50 Strong and the Blackstone. And the peace
21 treaty has been going on for over two years right
22 now.

23 We had a couple of situations where
24 there was a couple of shootings, but we picked the

1 ball back up and continued with the peace in the
2 community. And so that's my mission. The stars
3 aligned.

4 Waketa was on the same page that I
5 was on while in the federal prison. He got out
6 looking for me, and I had already put the word out
7 while in prison that what page we needed to be on
8 to save some lives in the community, and that's
9 what we've been doing. We haven't lost any
10 brothers that's a part of the peace treaty. But,
11 you know, this is not something that you went into
12 with rose-colored glasses. We know situations may
13 occur. But we agree that we will pick up the ball
14 and continue to work in the community to save
15 lives. And that's my mission, to save as many
16 lives as I can, you know. So I know this is a --
17 a situation where you have a Samson & Goliath
18 situation.

19 So we need all hands on deck,
20 because the young brothers' lives and young
21 sisters' lives are worth saving. They're worth
22 saving. And they're not throwaways, and they just
23 need the resources, and we need the resources to
24 put things like safe zones in our community, to

1 police our own community, because we know what's
2 going on in the communities. We can't have
3 somebody from another community coming in our
4 community trying to solve a problem that we know
5 we can solve, you know.

6 So I want to pass the mic, and I'm
7 going to pass it to Brother Benny Lee.

8 MR. LEE: Good evening, south side of
9 Chicago. I was asked by my sister Remel to sit on
10 this panel.

11 Initially, it was going to happen
12 in my community on the west side of Chicago. When
13 I say the west side of Chicago, I ain't talking
14 about Garfield or Lawndale or Humboldt Park, I'm
15 talking about Austin community where I come from.
16 And that was my interest, to speak to my community
17 and to hear the voices of young brothers and
18 sisters in my community and some of the elders,
19 but, unfortunately, they changed the venue, so we
20 ended up here.

21 I've been around a minute, you
22 know. I'll be 70 years old next month. I done
23 survived a lot. I'm one of the original B.O.S.,
24 Bothers of Struggle.

1 We were in 1978 indicted for some
2 murders of some prison guards in Pontiac Prison,
3 and each one of us was charged with 15 counts of
4 murder, two attempt murder, and mob action. And
5 we were all from different mobs, myself, Larry
6 Hoover, Ike Taylor, Smoky Hill, Danky, Tuffy, we
7 all got indicted. And we organized ourselves,
8 because the state was definitely seeking the death
9 penalty. And so we went three years fighting the
10 death penalty.

11 Our people had to take our case all
12 the way to the United Nations saying that we
13 couldn't get a fair trial because it was the
14 largest death penalty case in this country.

15 I served for many years as the
16 national ambassador for the Almighty Vice Lord
17 Nation. So I know what it's like to structure and
18 organize. I know what it's like to be in
19 Stateville maximum security penitentiary and do
20 research and recognize there's only 80 slots for
21 people to go to school when you had over 2000
22 inmates fighting over those slots and to be on a
23 wait list and only 110 jobs, a condition and
24 circumstances where strong gangs try to dominate

1 the weaker gangs on who going to put they guys in
2 those slots. And it leads to a lot of violence.
3 I've been at those kinds of tables. I've been at
4 tables out here in the '60s when there was LSD,
5 Lord Stones and Disciples, came together at the
6 citywide coalition and shut down over \$80 million
7 worth of construction in the city because they
8 refused to hire black contractors.

9 I seen a lot, been in a lot, did a
10 lot. These kinds of forums here, they don't
11 impress me, you know, because people that really
12 need to be here, these little brothers that's in
13 the streets, they need to be -- they voices need
14 to be heard, but then at the same time, they need
15 to be educated. Got to be some type of dialogue.

16 And Martin Luther King, the first
17 step of nonbalance is you got to get your facts
18 together. And, see, we don't have the facts on
19 how our young people see the community, because
20 we're not talking to them. And they don't have
21 the facts because they are not listening to the
22 elders.

23 So we got to do some kind of
24 collaboration, right. But that's just a little

1 background about me, you know.

2 I thought we was going to be on the
3 west side, that's why I volunteered to come on
4 here.

5 And I'm going to say this landing
6 the plane. I'm totally against people outside our
7 communities that don't look like me that come into
8 my community, get these grants, open up programs
9 in our community, control the programs. And the
10 organization like mine and Brother Tyrone
11 Muhammad, when we go for these types of grants, we
12 got to compete with them. They end up getting the
13 money, right. And we get excluded and all those
14 kind of things. That's got to stop. That's
15 called colonization. Our communities have been
16 colonized. People on the outside coming in and
17 monopolizing the resources and all the political
18 power all that stuff, and then we just become like
19 little puppets and fight over each other for what
20 little crumbs they offer.

21 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Thank you for the -- for
22 your opening remarks.

23 I would just pose a question to Mr.
24 Terry Thomas. And that question, you spoke about

1 getting out of prison and immediately brokering a
2 truce. Can you talk a little bit how you were
3 able to do that? One. And, two, if you think
4 that's something that can be replicated in other
5 communities? I ask that specifically because I
6 think there's been a lot said about whether or not
7 people who are coming home, whether young folks,
8 will actually listen to them.

9 In all honestly, I'm a person who
10 has that question as well. Is it possible for our
11 young people to listen to elders who are coming
12 out of prison who have had that experience? And
13 can you talk a little bit about that?

14 MR. THOMAS: Well, it's paramount that they
15 listen. I did what I did, because I used to be
16 one of them young guys out there. You know, I
17 used to be a leader in the community. And so the
18 reason why I was able to get out and broker this
19 peace treaty with Jeff Fort's son and Chairman
20 Fred's son is because we had a prior relationship,
21 and the relationship wasn't always good, but it
22 wasn't always bad either. We always was able to
23 dialogue with one another, face-to-face and over
24 the phone.

1 And so I'm a witness to the young
2 people listening. I was outside til 2:00 in the
3 morning brokering this peace treaty. Talking
4 face-to-face with these young men with guns on
5 them. Not afraid, because I knew they parents and
6 they grandparents and they family members. So I
7 had relationship with them prior to going to
8 prison. And so they're to be commended for their
9 efforts to stop pointing the guns at each other
10 and stop trying to take each other's lives.

11 And so what I told them was, I just
12 gave them some of my life experience. To be
13 framed by Chicago police officers and sentenced to
14 30 years to life in the feds for a crime that I
15 didn't commit. I told them that that could be
16 them because of the way our community is being
17 policed. And so they listen to me. And I told
18 them they don't want somebody else to raise they
19 children. They don't want to be in a situation
20 where they have to be moved from state to state,
21 and you can't get visits from your family members.
22 And so they listen to me. And I just tried to be
23 open and honest with them that it's going to be
24 hard living in the community that you living in

1 because you wasn't -- before you was born, you
2 couldn't choose where you stay at.

3 So the difficulty come when you
4 have to be faced with dealing with the police
5 that's from a whole other community with these
6 attitudes that they can just come and treat us any
7 kind of way.

8 And to speak about the Dexter Reed
9 situation, that was a Terry Stop. That's called
10 Terry versus Ohio. It is an illegal stop. So the
11 stop shouldn't have happened in the first place.
12 Illegal.

13 So we have to go back to why the
14 stop happened. He don't have to be dead today
15 because had you not did a Terry Stop -- illegal
16 Terry Stop, he wouldn't be dead today. So what
17 I'm trying to do in my community is be the voice
18 of reason for both sides with the help of Waketa
19 and many other guys in the neighborhood where I'm
20 from, and to make sure that we can make sure that
21 this don't become a generational thing with them,
22 because it's been going on for over 30 years.

23 So it was other organizations that
24 came into the community that couldn't stop it.

1 And so everybody asking me, how was we able to do
2 it? It's because we have a relationship. You
3 can't come into these neighborhoods, and you don't
4 have a relationship with the young men that's
5 carrying the guns. You know, so I took it upon
6 myself to stay out to 2:00 o'clock in the morning,
7 because I had people who was in disagreement with
8 the peace treaty, because they said they lost too
9 many people. And like I told them, I was shot 13
10 times. I was shot 13 times. And so -- but I
11 understand that we can't bring those people who we
12 lost back. But moving forward, we can save they
13 children. You know, we can save they
14 grandchildren. We can't bring them back. But we
15 can work together to be in harmony in this
16 community, because I remember when the community
17 was in harmony. It wasn't no one getting shot and
18 killed every day, you know. So this is a model
19 that could be used across the city. And it's a
20 lot of organizations that's out here doing the
21 work. But we doing this without backing of the
22 so-called people that's at the top. We just doing
23 it because we want to see some lives saved. We
24 want to see our people stop killing one another.

1 PRESIDENT DRIVER: So question for you, Mr.
2 Benny Lee. Can you describe the work that you do
3 with the Department of Corrections and returning
4 citizens, and how do you think that work can
5 enhance the public safety in the City of Chicago?

6 MR. LEE: One, I know there ain't no such
7 thing as a black community. We so divided. You
8 got Christians at war with other Christians. You
9 got Muslims at war with other Muslims. You got
10 west side people look at south side people
11 different. There ain't no black community. We
12 don't control nothing.

13 But I do say this here, America
14 make up 5 percent of the whole world population.
15 But America has 25 percent of the world locked
16 up. Here in Illinois this morning, 70 percent of
17 the people in prison in Illinois this morning
18 been there before.

19 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can you say that again? I
20 didn't hear you. The mic went out.

21 MR. LEE: 70 percent of the people in
22 Illinois prisons are people that's been there
23 before. A lot of new people ain't going to
24 prison. It's the same people, and that include

1 women. 60 percent of those people come from six
2 neighborhoods in Chicago. Six neighborhoods in
3 Chicago make up close to 60 percent of Illinois
4 prison population. And when they released, they
5 go back to those communities. And it's sad that
6 more people woke up this morning in Chicago on
7 house arrest than you have in the whole Illinois
8 prison system.

9 Now, if that ain't an indication
10 there is a war on our communities, what is?

11 So my organization, NAEFI, National
12 Alliance for the Empowerment of the Formerly
13 Incarcerated, how we started in 2009, a lot of
14 brothers and sisters was coming to me like, Hey, I
15 need help when I get out. I been home. I can't
16 get a job because of my background. So I called a
17 meeting and challenged them. About 47 convicted
18 felons showed. 12 of them was women. Said we the
19 most passive group in this country. You know, the
20 handicapped people are being discriminated
21 against. They fought for human rights. And try
22 to go to any public facility and don't see a
23 handicapped parking space. They fought for they
24 human rights. The gay community was being

1 discriminated against. They didn't fight for gay
2 rights. They fought for human rights. Now try to
3 discriminate. Or women. Women are a protected
4 class. Gay people are a protected class.
5 Handicapped people are a protected class. We as
6 convicted felons, we got to fight that to become a
7 protective class.

8 Even the United States highest
9 court, the Supreme Court ruled in the case in
10 Washington, they couldn't vote for seven years
11 after they come out, and they took their case all
12 the way to the United States Supreme Court, and
13 the Supreme Court ruled, because convicted felons
14 are not identified as a protected class up on the
15 Voting Protection Act. There ain't nothing they
16 can do. This is why some states deny convicted
17 felons the right to vote.

18 Abraham Lincoln signed the
19 Emancipation Proclamation in 1862. It didn't pass
20 Congress until 1865. And it suggests no person of
21 U.S. citizenship should be subject to slavery or
22 indigent servitude, unless otherwise convicted of
23 a crime. And that gave birth to the 13th
24 Amendment.

1 And Fredrick Douglas argued, Okay,
2 now you don't see us as citizens. That's when
3 they fought to pass the 14th Amendment; that
4 everyone's entitled to equal protection of the law
5 and due process of the law, but do it really apply
6 to convicted felons?

7 That's what my fight is about. Go
8 inside the prisons and raise brothers' awareness.

9 I push an African proverb, you
10 can't go build your shield on the battlefield.
11 You see what's happening out here. It's another
12 proverb, An army of lions cannot be -- cannot
13 defeat -- no. An army of lions led by sheep
14 cannot defeat an army of sheep led by a lion.

15 So you look at these young brothers
16 out here, these are lions, but they leadership are
17 sheeps, flipping on them, leading them down to
18 slaughter. 20 years year later, where we at?
19 Dead, in prison, strung out on drugs. But those
20 so-called sheeps, the young brothers going to
21 school, getting an education, coming back with
22 degrees, they being led by men. And where they at
23 20 years later? Still alive, buying homes,
24 prospering.

1 We got to look at our leadership.
2 So that's what my organization do. We go in and
3 we train those that are coming home, raise they
4 awareness. Because, see -- I'm going to say this
5 and land the plane. The issues that brothers and
6 sisters have with the community led them to
7 prison. Those -- they now present in prison. No
8 one's challenging them to pay rent for they cell
9 they sleep in or the food they eat or the clothes
10 they wear. But the day they walk out of prison,
11 they got to figure out how they going to feed
12 themselves, clothe themselves, and house
13 themselves. And that's pressure for a guy like me
14 that came out at 32. Never had a Social Security
15 card, never had a driver's license. Right? I
16 never had a resumé. I was -- I really wanted to
17 stay out, but I had more confidence in my hustling
18 skills than I did working a job. Someone had to
19 normalize my reality and look at the life that I
20 was facing to be able to kill off that part of me
21 that was strong, the part that would commit a
22 crime, that would shoot somebody. I had to kill
23 that guy off and grow and empower the guy that
24 really wanted to function with integrity and with

1 some principles and some values and make my
2 community and my family proud of me. That part of
3 me was weak because of the circumstance.

4 And this is what we do with my
5 organization, show them they ain't got to be
6 traumatized in an interview when they say, "We do
7 background checks." How do you respond to that
8 moment? And that's educating them. Companies get
9 a tax break hiring a convicted felon. They can
10 earn a Fidelity bond and be assured if they steal
11 something or break something, the company won't
12 take a loss. They could earn a certificate of
13 good conduct with the governor's signature on it
14 stating that they recognize them in good standing
15 with the State of Illinois. They could earn a
16 medical disability waiver where a hospital
17 normally don't hire a convicted felon, they will
18 be hired. And a lot of them come out not knowing
19 this stuff. And you got these organizations
20 getting all this funding to work with formerly
21 incarcerated, convicted people they ain't never
22 left a penitentiary before.

23 They don't know what it's like to
24 deal with this double conscience that WB put it so

1 clear. How we as black folks see ourselves and
2 how we believe the world see us, and we don't know
3 how to respond that. Little brothers don't
4 understand the power of our contact that can lead
5 to a killing.

6 So we are going to teach them how
7 do you respond to someone just looking at you,
8 man. This kind of stuff we do.

9 You know, we understand
10 psychological block in ages that lead men and
11 women back to prison. So how do we address it,
12 right? I think we need to put more money into
13 communities, the people of the community, from the
14 community. Every block, if not a block club,
15 should have some type of restorative justice court
16 in that community. The only way the community can
17 get better is when the members of the community
18 get better. It's a community issue. Only the
19 community -- only the hood stay the hood. And I
20 put emphasis on that because we don't have
21 neighborhoods cuz we ain't neighbors no more. And
22 we see most of this stuff at -- who is in prison?
23 Your poor and your uneducated. That's who's in
24 prison.

1 So we got to address as Martin
2 Luther King said the three evils: Racism,
3 militarism, and poverty. Those are the three
4 evils. If those are not addressed, we will
5 continue to have crime and violence, and that's
6 how we come and make us aware that, yeah, this
7 stuff exists, but you have to learn a better way
8 to respond different than you have.

9 And trust me, I was the one that
10 did that. As a youth, two years in IYC, Little
11 Joliet, St. Charles, two weeks later County Jail.
12 Went to the joint at 19. Come out at 27. Went
13 right back four months later. Got out. So I know
14 what it's like to go in and out because of the way
15 I used to think.

16 I'm going to pass the mic.

17 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: Is it open questions
18 now? Okay. Thank you for being here and thank
19 you kindly for driving from the west side to the
20 south side. Thank you for all the great work
21 you're doing on the west side. I have just one
22 specific question. One specific question. So
23 this Commission has legal authority to review
24 policies and practices of the Chicago Police

1 Department for making recommendations to improve
2 those policies and practices as it relates to
3 community violence interventions, CVI. I'm
4 curious what both of you would say our policies or
5 practices that the Chicago Police Department
6 currently has that could be improved; in other
7 words, what would you want us to try to do if you
8 could give us a recommendation to look into so
9 that CVI is more widely embraced and partnered
10 with CPD, if anything?

11 I'm not assuming there is. I want
12 to give you the opportunity to point us in the
13 direction of police practices and policies you'd
14 recommend need changing.

15 MR. THOMAS: Well, someone mentioned earlier
16 today that you have good police and you have bad
17 police.

18 From what I'm seeing is that when
19 police officers, even the good ones, if you don't
20 expose the bad ones, that makes you bad as well.
21 You know, so when you can lie on a police report
22 and y'all signed your name to this police report,
23 and so that means you no longer a good police
24 officer. That means you are a corrupt police

1 officer. You're a criminal.

2 So right now we're still dealing
3 with the fact that we stand in a city, a state
4 that is now labeled as the torture capital of
5 America or of the world.

6 So I've been in places recently
7 since I've been home advocating for the brothers
8 who were tortured by Jon Burge, who was framed by
9 his cronies, his understudies.

10 My brother's been in prison for 33
11 years, Orley Thomas, framed by James Cassidy. So
12 none of these police officers have did any time,
13 but the leader, which was Jon Burge, who's now
14 dead right now.

15 And so we need to address that
16 issue, because these same officers who worked up
17 under Jon Burge are still on the force, some of
18 them. So we need to get them off the force so we
19 can get us some -- get these situations rectified
20 that these guys that they tortured and framed are
21 still in prison, serving time for crimes they
22 didn't commit.

23 So from my perspective, we need to
24 start there.

1 MR. LEE: Well, one thing I see is that we
2 got some elders that retired from the police
3 force that were real black men in the Police
4 Department. I mean where is the voice of these
5 black police officers at? I mean they live in
6 our community. These are our uncles, nephews,
7 cousins. I mean where is they voice at? I mean
8 at least Howard Saffold and Renault Robinson in
9 the '60s when we were strongly discriminated
10 against by the Police Department because the way
11 they were treated as black police officers, they
12 come together and organized an African American
13 patrol and sued the Police Department and won
14 that suit. Gained respect. So where is the
15 backbone of these black police officers, right?

16 And when it come to the work we
17 do -- see, I was one of the very first violence
18 interrupters hired by CeaseFire back in 1994.
19 And it wasn't but three of us, myself, and Big
20 Fareed and Albe Kahn, one of the generals of the
21 El Rukns.

22 And these guy nowadays that getting
23 this money and hired to do this, the violence
24 interruption stuff, these guys, they really

1 effective. And what I mean by that is that when
2 I was a violence interrupter, I networked with my
3 community and had agreements. Every area where
4 there was a war, I found a safe space bringing
5 brothers to talk. You don't see these kind of
6 guys doing that nowadays.

7 And the main thing before I pass
8 this mic is time. If I had a beef with Terry
9 back in my day, he couldn't put it on Facebook,
10 because Facebook didn't exist. He couldn't go on
11 Twitter and all them other social engines, right.
12 So by the time we do see each other, somebody
13 hollering at him, Man, I know Benny Lee. Let me
14 holler at him. They probably done holler at me.
15 I know Terry, let me holler at him. So when we
16 do see each other, it ain't that intense. But
17 today, if I had a beef with Terry, and he put it
18 on social media, my guys see it, they comment and
19 then his guys see the comment, so there a war on
20 social media. Ain't talking now when we see each
21 other.

22 So violence interruption now got to
23 intervene on the social media now. It's got to
24 be a triad approach. Not talking with the

1 brothers on the streets. But who is talking to
2 the guy that just left the street that's in the
3 jail and calling back to the land? Who's talking
4 to the brothers that's been in the joint 10, 15
5 years that's got some influence and on his way
6 home, who is talking to them? Because we could
7 quell the situation five 5 ago, then a brother
8 come home that's been gone 15 years and didn't
9 like the way it was dealt with and start it all
10 over again. We got to monitor that stuff.

11 Our community's like grave sites.
12 Every other telephone pole, light pole got
13 balloons where somebody got killed.
14 Anniversaries roll around. Got to stay on top of
15 that. These guys come, and they celebrate, honor
16 that. How they thinking? They get drunk. We
17 should -- you got to stay on top of this stuff.
18 This work ain't easy.

19 And when it come to working with
20 the police, I don't work with the police.
21 Because if I'm working with the police, then I
22 lose my credibility with these guys out here.
23 Because I might be talking to a little brother,
24 he got a thumper on him, and he ready to go on

1 this guy here. Hey, police, this guy got a gun.
2 I can't do that. I got to try to talk him down.
3 That's when my skills kick in, how do I
4 de-escalate. And what I mean by de-escalate is
5 calm his emotion down, because they ain't going
6 to talk when they emotions is high. And these
7 are the kind of things -- I'm going to say this
8 and land the plane for real. You got violence
9 prevention, you got violence interruption, and
10 then you got non-violence. We do a lot of
11 violence interruption, but that means you quell
12 the situation between me and Terry, we shake
13 hands and say we cool, but we talk away with
14 violence tendencies. So when we have a situation
15 in the future, we going to respond in a violent
16 way. We need to learn non-violence tactics. I
17 got to declare I am a non-violent person. So
18 when I have a situation in the future, I'm going
19 to address it in a non-violent way. This is what
20 we -- a lot of training and education and reduce
21 all this stuff.

22 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you both for
23 being here. This has been really helpful
24 tonight. And it's possible that you just

1 answered the question I have, but I wanted to
2 know. We heard from Deputy Director Waller
3 earlier that CPD is doing a lot more to reach out
4 to CVI organizations, and what he shared with us
5 is that it's getting better. It's not as bad as
6 it used to be. And I think my question was, what
7 is your perspective on whether it's getting
8 better or not?

9 MR. LEE: One thing, who own those agencies
10 is getting the CVI money. They don't look like
11 me being hired. And so those brothers that look
12 like me from the hood being hired to do outreach
13 work, they limited to what they can do, because
14 the overseers say, Don't do that, don't say that.
15 So they limited. Right? This is why I say that
16 money got to go to guys like us in the hood
17 that's got relationships with these brothers and
18 the families.

19 I remember last time I was at
20 Stateville, shoot, them little guys coming down
21 there 18, 19 years old. These were the sons of
22 girls I went to grammar school with. And I
23 challenged, they need to get they little butt in
24 school because we had an oath we took. We were

1 serving our time constructively because upon our
2 release, we would become a more productive member
3 of our community, see. And we stood on that --
4 because I had to go home. I had to see them
5 grandmamas, I had to see them sisters that I went
6 to school with. That's a community theme.
7 That's our community behind the wall. We got a
8 community behind the wall. They need resources
9 while they there to equip them psychologically,
10 emotionally, behavior-wise, so when they come
11 out, they know how to function out here. You
12 follow what I'm saying?

13 But, yeah, these CVI programs, a
14 lot of them they do good work. They got good
15 relationships. They limit what they do because
16 the people that got the funding, the
17 administration, the board of directors limit what
18 they can and cannot do because they work for
19 them.

20 And them brothers need jobs, so
21 they compromise they values for that job.

22 MR. THOMAS: The reason why I took the same
23 approach as my brother took, see, I'm in the
24 process of starting my own organization, because I

1 don't want to work for none of those
2 organizations, because I was offered many times to
3 come and work for the organization, but I know I'm
4 only going to get a lion's -- they going to get
5 the lion's share of the funds when I'm out there
6 doing the work. And it's evident that what I did
7 worked, when all the other organizations couldn't
8 make that happen.

9 Me and the brothers, Waketa and
10 Fred Hampton, Junior, and many others in the
11 community, we went and did what you getting paid
12 to do, and you couldn't do it, and I was gone for
13 17 years, you know.

14 And so the methodologies that I use
15 is that I meet them where they at. I don't look
16 at their appearances, cuz they sagging their pants
17 and judging them. I'm coming in there humble and
18 respectful, because I know where respect is given,
19 respect is due. I'm not coming in there like the
20 police. I'm going in a situation where there's --
21 I'm bringing clarity in a situation where there's
22 a bunch of confusion and disinvestment in the
23 community where I'm at.

24 So that plays a major role when you

1 have these communities disinvested in. You have
2 food deserts. You have educational deserts. You
3 have places where they can't go and learn a skill
4 to get them a living wage job or better.

5 So what I did while I was in
6 prison, I mentored young men with yoga. I
7 mentored young men with making bags, designing
8 bags. And I brought two of them with me here
9 today, so that I'm just not talking the talk.
10 This is what I do. I design bags by hand. None
11 of the bags go in a machine.

12 So I'm able to have something to
13 bring them in. This is a carrot stick for me to
14 do what I do to help them save they lives and make
15 them entrepreneurs.

16 We need them to have something that
17 they can learn and turn it into they own business.

18 So this is where we lacking in
19 community. We lacking community centers where we
20 can come in there while we teach them something,
21 we can mentor them, we can change their
22 perspective on the brother next to them, so they
23 can take a mirror and look in the mirror and look
24 to the left and look to the right and see that

1 when you kill him, you looking in that mirror, you
2 killing yourself.

3 So, therefore, we got to bring some
4 clarity and all of this confusion and chaos that's
5 in the community. And with that, we need the
6 proper resources. This movement ain't going to
7 continue without the proper resources.

8 So a movement needs some money to
9 move. But I'm not doing it for the money. I'm
10 doing it for the sake of all the young brothers
11 that came under me and the young sisters that came
12 under me, that they lives can be saved, that they
13 can have a future, instead of having a future
14 inside of a prison, or they life is gone in the
15 grave, you know, because they have more to live
16 for and less to die for. You know, so that's what
17 I believe.

18 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Are there any other
19 questions from any Commissioners?

20 COMMISSIONER GOMEZ: First of all, thank you
21 for your amazing work, for your testimony. You
22 know, one thing that I've noticed what y'all said
23 about, you know, the neighborhood -- saving the
24 neighborhood and the block clubs and all the work.

1 There's a lot of people from block clubs that come
2 to our meeting. I've gotten calls from meeting --
3 from block clubs from all parts of the city that
4 say, Hey, come talk to these guys. I'm like, Hey,
5 that's not what I do. I've never been to prison.
6 They don't -- a lot of people here use -- crux of
7 my question, a lot of people that don't have your
8 skills that don't get the respect that y'all get
9 don't know what to do, and they're frozen, because
10 they're scared, because they never held a gun, you
11 know. They feel themselves to be targeted. And
12 oftentimes their only answer to hearing gunshots
13 is calling the police. That doesn't necessarily
14 even get, you know, the response that it deserves
15 all the time in a city that's facing so many
16 issues.

17 So for those folks -- and I think
18 this is something that, as y'all have mentioned,
19 has exacerbated with the generational divide,
20 because I'm not particularly old, but I feel that
21 even the young kids in my neighborhood are very
22 different, and they operate differently, even
23 though I've been in the same neighborhood for a
24 long time from when I was growing up.

1 I'm curious to know how are y'all
2 approaching those folks? I do believe it takes
3 everyone, but not everyone has your courage, your
4 skills, your expertise. What are the kinds of
5 roles that those folks can play so they can
6 organize their block clubs and neighborhoods?

7 MR. LEE: Well, one thing I try to tell a
8 lot of my peers, we can't engage young people in
9 conversation about how it was for us, because
10 that ain't how it is now, so we got -- my thing
11 is I do 20 percent talking and 80 percent
12 listening. So they have to teach me how they see
13 things.

14 Good example. My son, he left
15 Chicago about eight years ago to get off this
16 east side, because he was kind of hot. He was
17 with a crew. They was no limit, right. And he
18 left because he was hot. But while he was there
19 through social media, his homie saw him working
20 in a hospital, right? Struggling in a Dollar
21 Tree and all this stuff. And his language
22 started to change.

23 Now, three months ago, he wanted to
24 be around his son, so he wanted to move back to

1 Chicago. So giving him some -- I wouldn't say
2 fatherly advice, but some OG advice, because I've
3 been there. He started what you call an urban
4 peace circle on Zoom. As a matter of fact, they
5 had it tonight. And he reached out to all his
6 homies that he sold drugs with, gang-banged with,
7 and appealed to them to get on Zoom. And the
8 first one about 30 guys got on. And he appealed
9 to them, man, we got to reconcile our
10 relationships with each other, because we all in
11 our 30s now, and we got to go back on these
12 blocks where we come from and press them little
13 shorties. If they can follow us into this gang
14 life, they can follow us into this new life. And
15 that peace circle been like a healing circle.
16 I'm hearing these little guys making comments
17 like, Man, I can't wait until the circle come
18 because I got so much stuff coming and this is a
19 safe place I can talk. A lot of little guys
20 became employed since then. A lot of them backed
21 down from a lot of stuff, right.

22 My approach when I'm talking to a
23 young person, I'm trying to pull out of them, not
24 pull into them. I got -- I got to ask my young

1 brothers, what do you want to have accomplished,
2 say, six months from now? What do you have
3 accomplished? What do you want your life to look
4 like one year from now? I know he can't answer
5 that because he never thought about it. Because
6 I know that I got to pull it out. Like, for
7 example, do you want to own property? Do you
8 want a car? So I'm pulling the vision out of
9 him. That's a technique. Then I ask, What do
10 you got to do to make that a reality? I know he
11 can't answer that because he never did it before.
12 For example, do you think you might need to get
13 in school? Do you think you might need to
14 probably take up a trade? He need to start
15 thinking for himself what he need to do, and then
16 what do you know about you that might block you
17 from reaching that? And I know he don't know how
18 to answer because he never did a self-assessment
19 or inventory. So I might ask the question like,
20 Let me ask this, have you ever had an opportunity
21 that you really wanted, and you know you blew it
22 because of you? Yeah, let's talk about that.
23 And -- I said that's what you got to pay close
24 attention to. That part of you. That's that

1 part of you you got to divorce, and you got to
2 kill off. What's some other things you recognize
3 what I'm saying that you know about you that
4 might block you?

5 So we got to know how to talk to --
6 I'm not -- I talk to old fools, too. You got
7 some old fools out here. And then you got some
8 black men that are really n*****. You got some
9 n***** out there. And there's a characteristic
10 and mind-set that come with a n*****. And all
11 black men, all black women are not n*****.
12 That's an attitude. That's a belief system. So
13 we got to get them to kill the n***** mentality,
14 because that's what lead to the black-on-black
15 violence and black-on-black crime. So we got to
16 train -- I'm one of the lead trainers with the
17 Peace Academy through Metropolitan Family
18 Services, right. Started off, right. And that's
19 what I train these outreach workers, you got to
20 understand motivation interviewing. How do you
21 motivate a person to change? How do you get them
22 to tap into the intrinsic, something inside of
23 them?

24 We got to believe that there's

1 something inside of them that's dying to come out
2 to be better. Because God ain't program no man
3 or woman to fail. We are not programmed to do
4 wrong. We are not programmed to mistreat each
5 other. And when we do, a sign go off what I call
6 guilt, shame, embarrassment. And that's working
7 with these young people we got to believe that's
8 inside of them. And we got to bring it out of
9 them. And not tell them what they should do, but
10 we need to pull what they think. Give them the
11 autonomy to figure out it out. We just guide
12 them there.

13 MR. THOMAS: To piggyback what my brother
14 said, I think we need to set up ecosystems
15 throughout the city where -- but I have to start
16 in my community first. These ecosystems consist
17 of giving them training, dealing with the
18 misplaced aggression that they have, because you
19 look at these young men, they got a lot of
20 misplaced aggression. And so by me knowing that,
21 I just know how to approach them and engage them,
22 because during my prison stint, I was dealing with
23 young men from all parts of the United States. So
24 I made it my business to have a program inside the

1 prison that I was into like -- I had a class that
2 I was running, and I was able to not only just
3 deal with my people, but I was able to deal with
4 Latino brothers. I was able to even deal with
5 some Aryan Brotherhood guys, because I was that
6 respected in the prison that they would listen to
7 me, too. And so -- and I wasn't part of no
8 organization. I wasn't in a coalition, because in
9 the federal prison coming from Chicago, most of
10 the guys that coming from Chicago are in what you
11 call a coalition, and that's all the street
12 organizations coming together, a Midwest
13 coalition. And so I wasn't part of that, because
14 I believed that being in the belly of the beast,
15 we got to be together. So -- and I just bring
16 those same skills out here to the street, to my
17 community, to help the young men and engage them
18 where they're at. You know, because I know that,
19 like I said before, I was once one of those young
20 men out there. I was once one of those young men
21 that was carrying a gun. I was once one of those
22 young men out there selling the drugs. But didn't
23 nobody give up on me, and I didn't give up on
24 myself.

1 So I know that a lot of these young
2 brothers never -- I engaged so many brothers
3 inside the prison that you wouldn't believe how
4 many of them never had another man tell them that
5 they love them. So with my -- in the leather shop
6 or me on the workout yard, I would always engage
7 the young brothers. Before I started to work out,
8 I'd say, Man, if ain't nobody ever told you that
9 they love you, man, I love you, man. So you would
10 see some guys tear up or come back to me and say,
11 Man, see, I needed to hear that, because no one
12 ever told me that before. I never had a father to
13 tell me that or my grandfather or none of my
14 uncles to tell me that. And so what I do as much
15 as possible, I try to make them feel wanted and
16 make them feel valuable and make them want to come
17 and open up and tell me some of the things that
18 they got going on.

19 So what we have to do is just
20 be the message that we bring, because they looking
21 at us. I had guys tell me, Man, you haven't
22 changed as far as the way you conduct yourself.
23 That's why I respect you so much.

24 So we just have to engage them in a

1 humble and respectful way. Even though they may
2 have a gun on them, but the gun may -- the gun
3 ain't for you, because you ain't got no situation
4 with them. So the gun is not for you. What you
5 try to do is prevent them from going to use the
6 gun on somebody over Facebook beef or cuz my
7 cousin got killed, and now you want to taunt me
8 because my cousin got killed.

9 So these are the things that we
10 have to grab ahold to, because those things can
11 blow up quick. They can get out of hand so fast
12 that it be like a wildfire. And you see people
13 coming up dead so fast that you can't get ahold of
14 it.

15 So that's my situation where I know
16 that even when a situation occurred, we have to
17 get right on top of it. We can't wait until weeks
18 later for something to transpire.

19 MR. LEE: This is a situation going on right
20 now. Maybe about 20 some odd years ago, my
21 eight-year-old nephew got gunned down on my
22 mother's front -- my parent's -- my parent's door
23 steps, because guys were after my older nephew
24 who were gang affiliated and missed him and hit

1 my eight-year-old nephew. And so that caused
2 division in my family, because they looking at my
3 older nephew as responsible for my youngest
4 nephew's death.

5 So we had to go through a healing
6 process. And some just had to work through that
7 as a family.

8 Now, the young brother that got
9 convicted of my nephew's murder got 50 years.
10 Now he's on the streets. So this stir up old
11 stuff in my nephews and my son.

12 So this is where real violence
13 interrupting work got to kick in in the family.

14 Y'all need to sneeze, man. Your
15 grandma ain't here, but your granddaddy here who
16 90 years old. He's worried about y'all. You got
17 to heal from that. That's over.

18 Pain was deep, but you got to deal
19 with that. And that's what we need in our
20 community is these restorative justice education
21 so every member of our community understand
22 restorative justice.

23 Because we commit crime on each
24 other -- if I break in his house, his family

1 looking at my family as the enemy. I come home,
2 it's tension on the block. Somehow before I come
3 home, there need to be a restorative justice
4 circle in the joint before I come home, and I got
5 to be confronted by the person I offended, right.
6 And at the same time, need the opportunity to
7 make that amends before I come home.

8 And when I come home, we need to do
9 it on the community level, because it had a
10 ripple effect.

11 These are the kinds of things we
12 need in our community. And the only people that
13 can do that, not somebody who got funded to come
14 over and send somebody to facilitate the process,
15 it's got to be us. That's what I want to say.

16 MR. THOMAS: It goes back to Madiba, Nelson
17 Mandela. When he became the president of South
18 Africa, he freed everybody from the prisons.
19 Didn't matter what type of crime you had. And so
20 what he did was, the people who committed crimes
21 up on the people, he made it where you was able to
22 go and get reconciliation. You had to sit down
23 with that family, and you had to apologize. You
24 had to do a public mea culpa, and you had to --

1 you had to reconcile that situation, even if you
2 killed somebody, and it was up on that family to
3 approve you as far as you being forgiven to that
4 family.

5 And so he created something that
6 was very important in South Africa where he set up
7 a Commission to have these people come and sit
8 down, and they did reconciliation, forgiveness,
9 and to restore them people back into the community
10 with forgiveness, and it worked in South Africa.

11 And so we have to -- we have to use
12 some of those tactics as well, because it's a lot
13 of people in our communities that's hurting behind
14 family members being killed by people two blocks
15 away. And so how do we solve that situation? We
16 have to -- we have to make amends. We have to sit
17 down and talk.

18 Like the brother said, we have to
19 have safe places where they can come and talk.
20 And so that's something that we need to work on.

21 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Thank you. So before we
22 close out, I wanted to make a closing statement.
23 I personally want to thank you all for joining us
24 today. I think this was -- I think it was really

1 insightful.

2 I don't want this to be the end of
3 it or just a conversation, actually moving that
4 into action.

5 Also, Deputy Director Wallen, I
6 don't know if you want to make any remarks. We
7 didn't particularly ask a question of you. If you
8 would like to, you may do so. I can't see if you
9 said yes or no.

10 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALLER: Yes. Well, now I'll
11 just say this. Listening to these two brothers, a
12 lot of insight, and you always learn something
13 from someone. One brother I know always says two
14 eyes, two ears, and one mouth for a reason, to do
15 more listening and looking than we do talking.

16 So always listen to people. I'm
17 always insightful. I try to understand from
18 different perspectives that people come from and
19 build relationships with those people. And
20 that's, I think, why I kind of been given this
21 task by the Superintendent, to try to forge some
22 of the issues that we've had with CVI with other
23 agencies.

24 And like I said, I've seen it work.

1 Of course it's never going to be perfect in how
2 it's conceived, how it's looked at by both sides.
3 People had problems with each other. But when
4 we've done some of these workshops -- I've worked
5 in the projects for a number of years when I was a
6 police officer, and I see some of these brothers
7 now who are on that side, maybe sometimes
8 motivated by money, but I've also seen where we've
9 had a team trend where they doing real work. So I
10 appreciate that.

11 Like I say, what I like is because
12 now it seems like we be taking ideas from L.A.,
13 New York, wherever, but a lot of this is Chicago
14 homegrown, and that's what I like about it,
15 because we can put our own cultural flare upon it
16 and do some things that's Chicago homegrown. And
17 that's what we need to focus on, because Chicago's
18 culturally different than a lot of places.

19 I appreciate the opportunity. I
20 get to exchange some ideas with some of these
21 brothers, and we can continue to move forward. So
22 that's all I have to say. Thank you.

23 PRESIDENT DRIVER: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER NELLIS: May I proceed? So I

1 just wanted to make a very brief statement related
2 to the Dexter Reed incident. I have prepared a
3 short statement I'll read, but based on some
4 public comment, I just have a few points I want to
5 make.

6 First, I just want to say I really
7 applaud COPA in this situation. This is a
8 record-setting transparency that the City of
9 Chicago has never seen. Videos, reports, all
10 things were released within 19 days, and that is
11 not something that we're used to. And I applaud
12 Chief Kirsten and COPA for exceeding the 60-day
13 requirement in the Consent Decree and doing it in
14 19 days.

15 A couple of things were also stated
16 in public comment. I do think it's important that
17 the public do understand what our powers are. We
18 have spoken what they are not. We do not have
19 powers to investigate. We do not determine what
20 should be the actions taken against the officers
21 in this incident. But we do have powers to review
22 police practices and purposes -- I'm sorry,
23 policies. And so it is on this Commission to
24 identify practices and policies like the ones many

1 of which have been raised by the public today, to
2 recommend changes, and I just wanted to say that.

3 Personally, I also wanted to just
4 share one of my close friends on the west side
5 that I spoke with in the last few weeks, and we
6 both related on how oftentimes it's very
7 triggering when we hear we can't comment on things
8 because it's, quote unquote, "still under
9 investigation." And while there is some truth to
10 that, it oftentimes comes off in a way that sounds
11 distrusting or like we're hiding something because
12 oftentimes responses, there's 32 videos and
13 multiple police reports. What else is there left
14 to see, right.

15 I'm just sharing I feel you on
16 that. I do feel you on that. I oftentimes wish
17 that leaders would focus on things that we do
18 know. Be very clear about what we do know,
19 because there are some things we do know. Be very
20 clear what we don't know. What is the piece of
21 evidence that would answer that. When do we think
22 we would get that evidence and why it matters.

23 But for reasons I'll share in a
24 second, that's not what I am going to do today.

1 The last thing I will say is that
2 the -- with respect to the -- with respect to the
3 unbiased fair -- with respect to not commenting --
4 -- it's working now.

5 With respect to not commenting on
6 the pending investigation, I just want to say that
7 that applies to all city agencies, and I would
8 make sure that I want to include CPD on that. We
9 don't want to undermine the validity of COPA's
10 investigation, particularly when they have, I
11 think, done such a good job of transparency and
12 modeling that for our city.

13 This is my statement. We are a
14 Commission with a name that tells the public that
15 we stand for community, public safety, and
16 accountability. This Commission is sitting here
17 today in the wake of an incident in which a
18 Chicago resident was fatally shot. A Chicago
19 police officer was seriously wounded by gunfire,
20 and nearly 100 bullets flew on a city block. And
21 the conflict is reported to have begun because a
22 driver was not wearing a seat belt. However you
23 respond to this incident, those are not easy facts
24 to digest. That this is an issue that is dividing

1 our city, and that division and debate will
2 continue for months to come, I'm sure.

3 Due to videos released by COPA
4 following its transparency mandate under the
5 Consent Decree, the public can see this incident
6 and feel the trauma of what occurred on this day.

7 Now there's an investigation into
8 the officers' actions and incident, and a civil
9 lawsuit has been filed on behalf of the family of
10 Dexter Reed.

11 I believe it's best for me to let
12 this process play out before I render an opinion.

13 But like you, I have one. I look
14 forward to the day when it's appropriate for me to
15 share it. And I will continue to spend my
16 personal and professional life committed to
17 reducing the likelihood of death and injury in our
18 city.

19 There are a lot of tears and anger
20 in the city right now over this matter, and those
21 emotions are fueled by how people react to what
22 they see on the videos. And I'm available to
23 anybody who wants to work with the community and
24 law enforcement to find solutions that reduce the

1 risk of people being shot in the City of Chicago.
2 Thank you.

3 PRESIDENT DRIVER: So we are now about to
4 conclude our meeting.

5 The Commission's next regular
6 meeting will be at Truman College on May 30th,
7 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

8 Seeing no further business before
9 the Commission, this meeting is now adjourned.
10 Thank you, everyone.

11 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings
12 were adjourned at 8:32 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF C O O K)

4 MAUREEN A. WOODMAN, C.S.R., being first
5 duly sworn, says that she is a court reporter
6 doing business in the City of Chicago; that she
7 reported in shorthand the proceedings had at the
8 hearing of said cause; that the foregoing is a
9 true and correct transcript of her shorthand
10 notes, so taken as aforesaid, and contains all
11 the proceedings of said hearing.

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16 MAUREEN A. WOODMAN, CSR
License No. 084.002740

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