

CHICAGO POLICE DET. GUEVARA FACT SHEET

Disgraced Chicago Police Department detective Reynaldo Guevara is accused of framing more than 70 people for murder in the Humboldt Park neighborhood in Chicago.¹

- Guevara was active in the Chicago Police Department (CPD) from 1976 until his retirement in 2005.
- As of today, at least 39 men and women framed for murder by Guevara have had their convictions thrown out.
- In total, Guevara's victims served more than 850 years in prison for crimes they did not commit.

The City of Chicago has long had notice of Guevara's misconduct but has done nothing.

- Humboldt Park residents for years made public that Guevara had obtained convictions by torturing suspects and witnesses, fabricating evidence, taking and paying bribes, manipulating eyewitnesses, falsifying police reports, suppressing evidence, and committing perjury.²
- 30 formal complaints were filed to the city during and after Guevara's tenure as an officer and detective detailing similar allegations of torture and misconduct.
- In court proceedings, Guevara has pleaded his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself on multiple occasions in response to questions about his work with CPD.³
- The City and CPD never disciplined Guevara for any of his misconduct.
- Guevara continues to collect more than \$80,000 a year from his City police pension.⁴

Local, state, and federal officials have widely recognized Guevara's corruption.

- A 2001 FBI transcript documents an FBI informant explaining, "GUEVARA's 'policy' was to catch a person with drugs or guns, but let them buy their way out of trouble. [...] GUEVARA accepted bribes to change positive or negative identifications during line-ups for murder cases."⁵
- In 2013, the City of Chicago hired the global law firm Sidley Austin to investigate claims of Guevara's corruption. A \$1.9 million taxpayer-funded investigation concluded that Guevara had likely framed innocent people.⁶
- In 2017, Cook County Judge James Obbish found that Guevara had told "bald face lies" during court testimony and had "eliminated any possibility of being considered a credible witness in any proceeding."
- In 2022, Cook County State's Attorney said, "Even in cases where we still have questions about guilt, where we are not affirming actual innocence, the taint of detective Guevara is such that we cannot stand behind them any further."⁷
- In 2022, the Illinois Appellate Court called Defendant Guevara "a malignant blight on the Chicago Police Department and the judicial system."⁸

The City defends Guevara's misconduct in court, denying victims justice and wasting tens of millions of taxpayer dollars

- The City's staunch defense of Guevara's misconduct in court has cost Chicago taxpayers more than \$76 million in jury verdicts,⁹ settlements,¹⁰ and payments to private law firms that defend Guevara.¹¹
- To date, Chicago has paid over \$23 million to outside law firms to defend Guevara in civil lawsuits.
- Today, Chicago spends more than \$300,000 each month on outside lawyers to defend Guevara in lawsuits.¹²
- The City's spare-no-expense strategy of defending Guevara delays and denies justice for the families and communities that Guevara victimized.¹³
- In addition, the City's strategy is poor risk management. A 2022 analysis by the Chicago Inspector General slammed the City's failed promise to implement a risk management system to rein in costs stemming from legal claims against CPD and its officers.¹⁴
- Municipal finances are strained when taxpayer money is wasted fighting cases of extreme police misconduct. Wrongful conviction cases already have cost the City of Chicago's taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.¹⁵
- The City can pay \$500+ million fighting Guevara cases at all costs in court, or it can compensate Guevara's victims, recognize the harm caused, and save hundreds of millions in taxpayer money by doing so.¹⁶

References

- ¹ Segura, Melissa. "A 37th Person Has Had Their Murder Conviction Overturned Based on Chicago Police Misconduct." *BuzzFeed News*, www.buzzfeednews.com/article/melissasegura/gamaliel-rivera-chicago-murder-conviction-exonerated .
- ² "Judge Tosses Confessions, Says Detective Lied under Oath." *Www.cbsnews.com*, 14 Dec. 2017, www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/judge-tosses-confessions-says-detective-lied-under-oath .
- ³ Meisner, Jason. "Former Chicago Detective Takes the Fifth More than 200 Times in Wrongful Conviction Trial." *Chicago Tribune*, 12 June 2018, www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-met-wrongful-conviction-trial-reynaldo-guevara-20180612-story.html.
- ⁴ Segura, Melissa. "A 37th Person Has Had Their Murder Conviction Overturned Based on Chicago Police Misconduct." *BuzzFeed News*, www.buzzfeednews.com/article/melissasegura/gamaliel-rivera-chicago-murder-conviction-exonerated
- ⁵ Transcript, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 23 June 2001, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3474060-OMAR302-Copy.html>
- ⁶ Schroedter, Andrew. "Did Ex-Chicago Detective Frame Multiple Suspects?" *Better Government Association*, 6 Mar. 2015, www.bettergov.org/2015/03/06/did-ex-chicago-detective-frame-multiple-suspects/?CategoryId=1 .
- ⁷ Segura, Melissa. "Seven People Who've Served Decades in Prison Had Their Murder Convictions Overturned over Alleged Abuse by a Chicago Cop." *BuzzFeed News*, 9 Aug. 2022, www.buzzfeednews.com/article/melissasegura/guevara-chicago-murder-exoneration .
- ⁸ [https://ilcourtsaudio.blob.core.windows.net/antilles-resources/resources/27e8986c-f015-444c-b2ba-47c87991a1c2/People%20v.%20Robinson,%202022%20IL%20App%20\(1st\)%20200483-U.pdf](https://ilcourtsaudio.blob.core.windows.net/antilles-resources/resources/27e8986c-f015-444c-b2ba-47c87991a1c2/People%20v.%20Robinson,%202022%20IL%20App%20(1st)%20200483-U.pdf)
- ⁹ More than 20 civil rights lawsuits have been filed against Guevara and the City of Chicago. Two of those lawsuits have gone to trial (Juan Johnson and Jacques Rivera). In both cases, federal juries decided that Guevara had violated the constitutional rights of the plaintiffs and awarded tens of millions in damages. The *Johnson* case cost taxpayers \$23.57 million, consisting of a jury verdict of \$21m+ in damages, plus \$1.3m in plaintiff attorneys' fees/costs, plus \$1.27m in defense attorneys' fees. The *Rivera* case cost taxpayers \$29.4 million, consisting of a jury verdict of \$17m+ in damages; \$6m in plaintiff attorneys' fees/costs; \$5.8m in Defense attorneys fees/costs.
- ¹⁰ Jose Montanez and Armando Serrano litigated their cases against the City (and Cook County prosecutors) together. They each settled their claims against the City for \$10.25 million and their claims against Cook County for \$4.85 million. The total City payment to settle the two cases was \$20.5 million. Defense side attorneys' fees were \$2 million. Total cost of litigation was \$22.5 million.
- ¹¹ The City of Chicago has spent at least \$23 million on outside defense lawyers alone to defend the Guevara civil cases. This cost continues to rise, as the City spend at least \$300,000 per month paying outside defense lawyers. That number will only go up as the number of cases increases. A spreadsheet of these costs, compiled from Freedom of Information Act requests made to the City of Chicago Law Department, is available here: bit.ly/42tMvNG The invoices received from Freedom of Information Act requests are also available at this link.
- ¹² See footnotes 9, 10, 11.
- ¹³ Babwin, Don. "New Wrongful Convictions Could Pressure Chicago's Finances." *AP NEWS*, 3 June 2018, www.apnews.com/article/9e396ec354f0412abffd83b87f637c65 .
- ¹⁴ Spielman, Fran. "Taxpayers Shell out \$250M in Police-Related Settlements; New Report Slams City Efforts to Learn from Those Mistakes." *Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 Sept. 2022, www.chicago.suntimes.com/city-hall/2022/9/29/23379031/chicago-police-misconduct-lawsuits-settlements-inspector-general-witzburg-risk-management-lightfoot; see also Silets, Alexandra. "What Is Risk Management, and How Will It Save Chicago Money?" *WTTW News*, 1 July 2019, www.news.wttw.com/2019/07/01/what-risk-management-and-how-will-it-save-chicago-money .
- ¹⁵ Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board. "Delayed Justice in Cases of Law Officer Misconduct Hurts Victims and Taxpayers." *Chicago Sun-Times*, 11 Mar. 2023, www.chicago.suntimes.com/2023/3/10/23634130/law-officer-misconduct-victims-taxpayers-jon-burge-ronald-watts-editorial .
- ¹⁶ If the City resolves the pending Guevara cases at the same expense as prior cases, it will spend more than \$500 million resolving the currently pending cases. This number will only increase as additional cases of Guevara's misconduct come to light.

A digital copy of this fact sheet is available at bit.ly/GuevaraFacts