

4 Chicago cops fired over alleged coverup of Laquan McDonald's deadly shooting

Chicago -- The Chicago Police Board on Thursday fired four police officers for allegedly covering up a white officer's 2014 fatal shooting of black teenager Laquan McDonald. The nine-member board found the officers exaggerated the threat posed by the 17-year-old McDonald to justify his shooting by Jason Van Dyke.

The board voted unanimously to dismiss Sgt. Stephen Franko and officers Janet Mondragon and Ricardo Viramontes. All but one member voted to fire Daphne Sebastian because of violations of department rules. She was not found to have made false reports.



Laquan McDonald walks on a road (top L -R) and is subsequently shot (bottom R) by police officer Jason Van Dyke (not pictured) in Chicago, in this combination of still images taken from a police vehicle dash camera video shot on October 20, 2014, and released by Chicago Police on November 24, 2015. Handout

Chicago's Fraternal Order of Police slammed the police board for its decision, contending the officers did nothing wrong.

"It is obvious that this police board has out-served its usefulness," said the organization's vice president Patrick Murray.

- [Ex-cop convicted in teen's murder moved to 1 of "cushiest" jails](#)

Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson in 2016 accused the officers of either giving or approving knowingly false statements. None of the four were charged criminally, however they were stripped of police powers and assigned to desk duty as their case proceeded. The firings can be appealed through a lawsuit.

A Cook County judge acquitted three other officers in January of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and official misconduct charges in the case.

Chicago cops found not guilty of covering up Laquan McDonald shooting

Former Officer Joseph Walsh, Officer Thomas Gaffney and former Detective David March were charged with obstruction of justice, conspiracy and official misconduct. Prosecutors said they lied to shield Van Dyke from prosecution. A judge rejected the contention that a video of McDonald's death proved police officers staged a cover-up.

McDonald was allegedly high on PCP and carrying a small knife in 2014 when Van Dyke exited his squad car and almost immediately opened fire. Police video released in 2015 showed Van Dyke firing 16 bullets into McDonald, many after the teen had crumpled to the ground.

Franko was accused of approving false police reports that McDonald attempted to stab Van Dyke and another officer and had in fact injured Van Dyke.

Mondragon was accused of falsely reporting that she did not see the shooting of McDonald because she was shifting the gear of her squad car. She was also accused of incompetence for not inspecting the video equipment in her car to see if it was working and recording events.

Ex-Chicago officer sentenced in shooting death of Laquan McDonald

Viramontes was accused of reporting that McDonald continued to move after he was shot and that he tried to get up with the knife still in his hand. He held to his statement even when an investigator showed him a video of the shooting.

Sebastian was not found to have filed a false report. However, it was determined she gave misleading and inconsistent statements to investigators that McDonald turned toward Van Dyke and another officer with a knife in a motion toward them.

Jurors convicted Van Dyke of murder in October. He's serving a more than six-year prison term.

Illinois' Supreme Court [denied a bid](#) by the state's attorney general and a special prosecutor to resentence Van Dyke. The prosecutors had expressed the belief the sentence was too lenient for the crime. In March [he was transferred to](#) a New York federal correctional institution that's been called one of the country's "cushiest" prisons. Absent a new sentence and with credit for good behavior, Van Dyke will likely serve around three years of his nearly seven year sentence.

The McDonald case has roiled the criminal justice system in Chicago. The then police superintendent, Gerry McCarty, was fired by then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the then top prosecutor, Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez, was ousted by voters. Many believe Emanuel decided against running for a third term because of the case. It also led to a U.S. Justice Department investigation that found a "pervasive cover-up culture" and prompted plans for far-reaching police reforms.