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Criminal Justice

Southwest Suburban Cop Fired For Slapping Inmate

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Eight-year vet of police force seen on camera slapping man in genital area. Officer was previously suspended after a sexual assault allegation.

A Southwest Suburban police officer was fired last month after he was seen on video slapping an inmate in the area of the man's genitals earlier this year.

Village of Justice Police Officer Carmen Scardine was recorded March 22 patting down an inmate, who was under arrest for aggravated domestic battery. The video shows Scardine slapping the inmate during the pat down, police say.

Justice, Illinois: Officer misconduct



"After checking the right pocket, Ofc. Scardine then makes slapping motion with his right hand toward the genital region," according to records of the internal investigation into the case obtained by the Better Government Association through an Illinois Freedom of Information Act request.

"As Ofc. Scardine's right hand makes contact with [the man]'s genital area, an audible slap can be heard and [the man]'s knees momentarily buckle."

The inmate, who was being held on an aggravated domestic battery charge, said in an

interview with the BGA that the slap left him in pain all night.

“I was just hurting there,” he said referring to his groin area. “Basically, I was mad but what can I do?”

In the wake of the incident, the village fired Scardine, 49, alleging battery and official misconduct. Scardine, whose discipline records show that he has accumulated more than 260 hours of suspension time as a Justice police officer, contested the firing with Metropolitan Alliance of Police Local 60. The challenge is pending.

Scardine, an eight-year veteran of the Justice police force, declined to comment.

Justice Police turned over the criminal investigation to the Illinois State Police Public Integrity Unit. State police confirmed the investigation but declined to comment.

The man told Justice Police that Scardine attacked him in retaliation for fleeing when he was first arrested.

Another officer who was with Scardine in the jail reported it to administration, police records show.

According to records of an interview with Justice Police, Scardine said he conducts all searches of men the same way. Scardine told police investigators he “grabs their genital area to determine if they have contraband or weapons.”

“Ofc. Scardine also commented on how he is aware of the body camera and cameras in lockup,” according to Justice Police internal reports. Scardine told police investigators that if “he was to do something to the arrestee, wouldn’t he have stopped the squad [car] somewhere before arriving at the Justice Police Department lockup,” police records show.



Map created by  [Jared Rutecki](#)

Previously, Justice Police suspended Scardine for “approximately 26 days” after a Burbank woman filed a complaint with Justice police in May 2012, claiming that Scardine forced her to perform oral sex on him while on duty earlier that month. The woman filed a lawsuit against the village, which was later settled.

After serving his suspension, Scardine returned to work before going on medical leave in December 2012. When his sick days ran out, he filed for a disability pension. The village pension board denied the request, and Scardine filed a lawsuit, which is pending.

In July 2014, the village attempted to fire Scardine, saying that he was “medically unfit for duty.” Scardine challenged the firing, won in arbitration and returned to work in May 2015.

Scardine was also suspended for eight hours after he failed in October 2015 to handcuff a male arrestee who was being held in a holding area while no officers were present. The man was being held for a domestic battery warrant.

Justice Police Department Deputy Chief Michael Kurschner said in a report that Scardine also let the inmate keep his phone, which was used to harass his victim as well as update Facebook to show that he had checked into the Justice Police Department lockup.

"Ofc. Scardine has displayed on numerous occasions since his return to duty that he either is incapable of following procedures, procedures that protect us from additional liabilities, or he just chooses not to follow policy out of pure laziness, which appears to be the case in this incident," Kurschner wrote.

This story was written and reported by the Better Government Association's Casey Toner, who can be reached at (312) 386-9201 or ctoner@bettergov.org.

Image credit: Justice Police Department video



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