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**Illinois Accountability Commission's Fourth Hearing Reveals Never-Before-Seen
Footage and New Eyewitness Testimony**

Current and Former Trump Officials Decline Call for Testimony, Shirking Responsibility

CHICAGO –The Illinois Accountability Commission, housed in the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR), today held its fourth public hearing to reveal never-before-seen footage and brand-new eyewitness testimony from specific incidents targeting Illinoisians. Following [Governor Pritzker's directive](#) for the Commission to examine the roles and responsibilities of key Trump Administration officials during the hearings, all [current or former architects of Operation Midway Blitz](#) declined the Commission's request for testimony, shirking responsibility to the People of Illinois.

During the hearing, the Commission's lead investigators outlined how Trump officials used three directives to construct an overreach playbook: militarizing neighborhood streets, suppressing lawful speech and assembly, and normalizing immunity for lawlessness. As a result of these directives, Illinois became a testing ground for a new model of federal power to escalate aggressive and unlawful enforcement tactics so the President [could invoke the Insurrection Act](#) to occupy an American city.

"For 62 days last fall, the federal government occupied an American city. In peacetime. On ordinary streets, in ordinary neighborhoods," **said Vice-Chair Patricia Brown Holmes**. "Masked agents in military gear roamed our communities. They abducted people. They tear gassed them. They beat them. They shot them. Afterwards, they blamed their victims, calling them domestic terrorists. This is not hyperbole. This is the evidence of misconduct."

Testimony #1: Denise Lorence, Mother of Katie Abraham

On September 8, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security announced in a press release that it was dedicating Operation Midway Blitz in honor of Katie Abraham, a 20-year-old who tragically lost her life to a drunk driver who happened to be undocumented. Denise Lorence, Katie's mother, provided the first testimony of the Commission's fourth hearing. This is the first time she has spoken in a public forum about this issue. The Trump Administration continues to use her daughter's name for political gain despite never asking Denise for permission to do so. Denise

wrote an op-ed in the [Chicago Tribune](#) in October 2025 to reclaim her daughter's legacy from the association with Operation Midway Blitz, but the administration continues to politicize Katie's name to this day.

"Having my daughter's name used this way added a level of despair I didn't even know could exist... They [DHS] preyed on vulnerable communities, and they preyed on Katie who had no say in the matter," **said Denise Lorence**. "Having my daughter's legacy associated with this violent government operation instead of the light and positivity she contributed to this world is inexcusable. And she would want nothing to do with it...I don't expect the Trump Administration to care, but I do think it's time for them to move on from her name and fight the real crimes that persist in our country. It's time to finally let Katie rest in peace."

Following Denise's testimony, lead investigators later reconstructed the incidents in Little Village, Lakeview, Old Irving Park, and Evanston using never-before-seen body-worn camera footage, bystander videos, law enforcement records, court filings, and the first-hand and recorded accounts of people whose lives were shattered by this operation. These stories were brought to life by the brave witnesses who recounted their stories.

Testimony #2: Marissa Vivoda, a Lakeview resident whose building was targeted by federal agents

In the Fall of 2025, Marissa Vivoda's landlord, Leo Feler, was having work done around the property, including replacing siding on the front and sides of the building, as well as some indoor renovations. Vivoda had come to know the construction workers.

On October 24, 2025, masked agents burst onto the property, utilized racial profiling to indiscriminately arrest construction workers, and pepper spray and beat people who called out in protest. One of the workers, who was not arrested, was hurt and came into the residence with blood dripping from his injuries. Vivoda and other neighbors tried to help him and another worker get cleaned up and coordinate their rides home. Feler helped the construction workers access legal support and several neighbors contributed.

"This was especially traumatic for me because in 2021, some friends and I were robbed at gunpoint in a very similar manner—people jumping out of cars in masks and threatening us with guns," **said Marissa Vivoda**. "That day fundamentally changed my whole relationship with the government and law enforcement, and it has left me feeling anxious every day since...After the incident that day, I was so shaken that I stayed at my mom's house in the suburbs for a while because it was difficult to be at my apartment and not think of everything that happened there. Having my space violated by people I am supposed to trust is deeply unsettling."

Testimony #3: Natalia Connolly, a Lakeview mother who witnessed another raid on October 24, 2025

On the morning of October 24, 2025, Natalia Connolly drove her four-year-old daughter to preschool near their home. Soon after drop-off, Connolly received an email from the school principal alerting parents that ICE was present in the neighborhood. The school would be instituting a lockdown.

Later that morning, after leaving the school, she witnessed a federal agent making an arrest on Lakewood Avenue. Connolly saw masked agents throw tear gas unprovoked on neighborhood citizens standing nearby. Connolly shared she saw agents' hands on their weapons, threatening them for simply holding their phones.

"I could hardly make sense of these things I'd seen; how was a preschooler to make sense of the insensible?" **said Natalia Connolly.** "Like every other mother in Chicago, I shook with the conviction that no child should have to endure the terror and violence of masked agents jumping out of cars and taking people. No child should have to live in fear that their parent, teacher, caregiver, or neighbor could at any moment be rounded up and driven away to an untold location. What would it do—what has it done—to our children's sense of safety and security? What about their right to live free of fear and violence? What about their innocence, their joy, their dignity?"

Testimony #4: Brian Kolp, an Old Irving Park resident who witnessed the events leading up to a children's Halloween Parade, including use of tear gas

Shortly before the Old Irving Park Annual Halloween Parade, on Saturday, October 25, 2025, masked ICE agents created mayhem and harm, including tear gassing with children present. Kolp, an attorney who started his career defending Chicago Police Officers in civil rights cases in federal court, was watching the morning news when events began to unfold outside his front window. He immediately went outside to see what was happening. He described at least a dozen agents in fatigues carrying weapons of war on his street in front of his house. Kolp's next door neighbor received several broken ribs and concussion during the incident.

"Watching the government, the federal government, openly and flagrantly abuse people's civil rights, my neighbors, ordinary citizens of Chicago....," **said Brian Kolp.** "I acted that day out of instinct. I wasn't thinking for my own well-being... I was responding to violent government agents terrorizing my block and because so many of my neighbors for their own reasons are not comfortable to do it themselves, I felt an even greater obligation and even greater responsibility to stand up and speak for the city that I've called home since I was a child."

Testimony #5: Jennifer Moriarty, Evanston resident who recounted her hours-long victimization at the hands of federal agents Timothy Donahue and Thomas Parsons

On October 31, 2025, Jennifer Moriarty took a walk through her community in Evanston. During her walk, she witnessed a car accident of a vehicle "break-checking" and causing a vehicle to crash into the back of them. Immediately, masked federal agents got out of the vehicle that was rear-

ended. She began filming with her cellphone when an agent grabbed her by the neck and threw her on the ground, before climbing on top of Moriarty and handcuffing her, and putting her in the back of a vehicle. Agent Timothy Donahue threatened to spray her in the face with mace and pulled her purse and sliced the strap with a knife. She was then taken to a federal facility where agents went through her belongings and asked her questions before her release. She was also retaliated against with her global entry status being revoked the following Monday.

“It’s made us stronger. I wasn’t engaged in, you know, I didn’t have a whistle before this day, I do now,” **said Jennifer Moriarty**. “I make sure that certain families that are struggling and cannot—afraid to go to the store. I do grocery shopping. I do things like that...It’s my obligation to do whatever I can to save our democracy and to preserve something for the future, for my child and everybody else’s child, this is not the world we’re supposed to be giving them.”

About the Commission and Next Meeting:

Over the last six months, Commission conducted 16 in-depth investigations in the Chicagoland area—including over 60 interviews—collected and reviewed hundreds of hours of footage from ICE/CBP body-worn cameras, surveillance cameras, personal devices, and social media.

Tomorrow’s fifth hearing will describe how the Trump Administration normalized immunity for lawlessness, used propaganda to justify and advance blatant misconduct, and outline the real intent of the overreach playbook—elections interference. A comprehensive report with specific findings, referrals, and recommendations will be issued to the Governor and the People of Illinois on Thursday, April 30, 2026.

Video packages featured today include:

- Operation Midway Blitz Sizzle - <https://f.io/2bm3EQBh>
- Little Village Morning of Terror - <https://f.io/ixbGRaQs>
- Little Village Vendors - <https://f.io/wXo8fonc>
- Lakeview - <https://f.io/SkweUAdP>
- Old Irving Park - <https://f.io/qMHtuCdy>
- Evanston - https://f.io/2f_sYd7n

To watch the hearing recording, visit www.youtube.com/@illinoisDHR/streams.

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