

Monitor Signs Off On NYPD ‘Camera’ Rules, Says Add-Ons Needed

BY MARK TOOR | April 17, 2017

It seems a Federal monitor’s work is never done, particularly in the case of police body cameras.

Peter Zimroth, the court-appointed overseer of the NYPD’s efforts to change its stop-and-frisk policies, notified U.S. District Judge Analisa Torres last week that he had approved proposed NYPD guidelines for a court-ordered pilot program involving the use of the cameras.

“It is the monitor’s view that upon this approval, the draft operations order may be promulgated by the New York City Police Department without additional proceedings in court,” Mr. Zimroth said in an April 11 report to Judge Torres.

‘Added Policies Needed’

But he noted, “The draft operations order applies only to patrol officers and supervisors in their commands. Additional policies are needed—for example, governing the conduct of audits of officers’ compliance with the draft operations order.

“Moreover, the NYPD’s Information Technology Bureau will need policies in place to facilitate easy identification of and access to relevant video footage so that the monitor and other agencies, like the Department of Investigation and the Civilian Complaint Review Board, can perform their roles.

“The monitor looks forward to reviewing these additional policies when they are ready.”

Three police unions—the Detectives Endowment Association, the Lieutenants Benevolent Association and the Captains Endowment

Association—have said that they will go to court to block the department from using the cameras.

Not Bound by PBA Deal?

The unions said the city agreed to negotiate the camera issue but did so only with the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association. The other three unions say that their members will be affected by the use of cameras and that means the city should bargain with them as well. The city planned to start using the cameras by the end of the month.

The guidelines call for officers to record all arrests and investigatory encounters and to inform people that they are being recorded.

Civil-liberties groups involved with the stop-and-frisk lawsuits, particularly *Floyd vs. City of New York*, in which body cameras were ordered as a remedy, have expressed dissatisfaction that the NYPD did not include most suggestions from a poll of city residents in its guidelines. The Center for Constitutional Rights said it would go to court over some of these issues in the coming weeks.

“New Yorkers were clear that they wanted a body-camera policy that focuses on accountability and transparency, and it’s disappointing that the NYPD largely ignored their advice,” said Michael Sisitzky of the New York Civil Liberties Union. “Public support for body cameras will not last if the technology becomes just another gadget to help police and prosecutors, instead of a tool for meaningful reform of police practices.”