

Ex-Minneapolis cop sentenced to six months in workhouse for on-duty assault

Christopher Reiter received the maximum allowable sentence under state guidelines.

By [Brandon Stahl](#) Star Tribune

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Ex-Minneapolis police officer Christopher Reiter will serve six months in a county workhouse for kicking a man in the face during an arrest after a judge told him Tuesday that he "abused his position of trust and committed a serious assault."

Reiter, 37, was on duty in May 2016 when he kicked Mohamed Osman in the face during a domestic assault call in May 2016, knocking him unconscious and causing a traumatic brain injury from which he still suffers. A [jury found Reiter guilty of felony third-degree assault in October](#) in a rare conviction for on-duty use of force.

In handing down the sentence, Hennepin County District Judge Fred Karasov rejected arguments by Reiter's attorney Robert Fowler that the former cop's punishment should not be worse than that of Osman, who was sentenced to 75 days in jail for beating his girlfriend the night Reiter kicked him.

"This is not a case about a defendant assaulting a victim and causing substantial bodily harm. That's not all this case is about," Karasov said. "It's a case about a police officer, who while on duty and sworn to protect and serve, abused his position of trust and committed a serious assault. This unlawful action not only erodes the trust the community places in law enforcement, but it undermines the effort of the vast majority of law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every day, and serve honorably to protect and serve their communities."

Reiter was also handed three years of probation and a \$500 fine. He received a stay of imposition, meaning his felony conviction will be reduced to a misdemeanor if he successfully completes his sentence. Karasov said the jail sentence was the strongest allowed under Minnesota law. Reiter had already been fired from Minneapolis Police Department and will now lose his peace officer's license, as state law requires an automatic revocation for any felony conviction.

During the sentencing, Reiter maintained that he took responsibility for the assault.

"When I showed up to work that day, I had no intention of hurting anybody," he said.

But Karasov said Reiter did the opposite when he interviewed with a probation officer before the sentencing.

"You still made excuses and justified your actions," Karasov said.

Among those: Reiter again told a probation officer what he told a jury in October, that he feared Osman had a knife when he kicked him.

In May 2016, Reiter responded to a domestic abuse call at a south Minneapolis apartment building and found a woman badly beaten. When other officers arrived, they found the man who beat her, Osman, sitting in his SUV in front of the building. Officers surrounded him and ordered him out of the car. Osman complied, and began to get on the ground. Reiter then ran up to Osman and kicked him in the face.

Neither Reiter, nor any other officers mentioned in any police report, said that they feared Osman had a knife. However, at the trial Reiter testified that the domestic abuse victim told him that Osman was armed.

"I strongly suspect that was simply made up to justify your actions," Karasov told Reiter.

Reiter's kick to Osman was captured on surveillance video. Without that evidence, Karasov told Reiter, "I am convinced you thought you would get away with this offense."

After the sentencing, Hennepin County attorney Mike Freeman said his office considered charging Reiter with a higher-level offense that could have resulted in prison for a conviction, but ultimately dismissed it.

"We think this is an adequate, somewhat minimal sentence," Freeman said Tuesday. "The most important thing to me is that Reiter will never be a cop again."

Minneapolis police have investigated eight complaints against Reiter. Before being fired, Reiter [had kicked a gas station attendant while on duty in 2014](#). The attendant sued, and the case was settled after the city of Minneapolis [agreed to pay \\$105,000 after a federal lawsuit](#). Osman has filed a federal lawsuit [asking for \\$4 million in damages](#).