



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA
Land Title Building
100 South Broad Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19110

ROCHELLE BILAL
SHERIFF

Tel. 215 686-3578

September 21, 2023

Response to City Controller's Audit Final Report
(September 20, 2023)

In response to the recent press release from the Philadelphia City Controller, the Bilal Administration finds it necessary to clarify some of the misleading statements made about our Office and expound on information that was vaguely provided. On June 8, 2023, the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office submitted a one-hundred and fifty-nine (159) page response (which included extensive details, descriptions, and diagrams of our investigation) to the Controller's Office. As previously stated, the Bilal Administration was charged with the responsibility of piecing together incomplete property receipts, faded and incomplete ledgers, and other improperly kept records, to locate firearms that were unaccounted for (dating back decades, to the Williams, Deeley, and Green administrations).

Having been contacted by the Controller's Office regarding the missing firearms, our Office began an investigation, prior to the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Hearing. The hearing took place during our ongoing investigation, and at that time, our deputies were able to locate paperwork for 80 guns (57 service weapons, and 23 firearms that were still registered to retirees) allowing us to make reasonable inferences of the firearms' actual whereabouts. Of that list we concluded that 57 guns were found. After the budget hearing, and at the conclusion of our investigation, we found that out of a total of 101 firearms (based on a list provided by the City Controller), 58 were found, 20 are still considered "missing", 18 have presumptively been traded or burned, 3 were duplicates on the City Controller's list and 2 were never located at the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office.

Our Office sent the City Controller full reports for each firearm that was searched in the National Crime Information Center Database (NCIC), found on burn and trade lists (showing the serial numbers for the "missing" firearms), and four (4) diagrams providing descriptions for each firearm and our determination. We provided explanations for firearms that were found, firearms that we presumed were found (due to circumstantial evidence that derived from the investigation), and firearms that we determined are still "missing".

Once again, the Bilal administration has been asked to account for firearms that were allegedly registered to the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office, allegedly physically present at the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office, or was assigned to deputy sheriffs (who are now retired) as far back as the 1970s,



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and there is no record of the firearms' return. The City Controller recommends that our Office enter the listed firearms into NCIC as such. There are multiple issues with this recommendation. First, it would be misleading for the Bilal Administration to represent firearms from 1982 (which again, were under a different sheriff), that we have never seen or possessed, as "missing". Second, if this administration enters those firearms as "missing", the NCIC report will reflect that this administration was able to account for every firearm at one point, which is not factual. Third, it is irresponsible to recommend that the Bilal Administration attest to the location/ chain of custody of firearms that were received, improperly recorded, and likely went "missing" while in the custody of prior administrations.

The Bilal administration can account for every firearm/weapon received by the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office from January 7, 2020, until now. As stated in our June 8, 2023, response, our Office properly label/tag all firearms that are stored in the armory and will continue to update records accordingly. Since the inception of this administration (January 6, 2020), this administration has worked diligently in revamping the safekeeping of firearms and accuracy of the accompanying records. Simply put, we cannot answer for inconsistencies that derived as a result of bad record keeping in the past. Recommending that we make a definite determination about "missing" firearms, by way of using bad records and misinformation is unsatisfactory for the Bilal Administration.