

Denver police officer fired for social media post captioned “Let’s start a riot”

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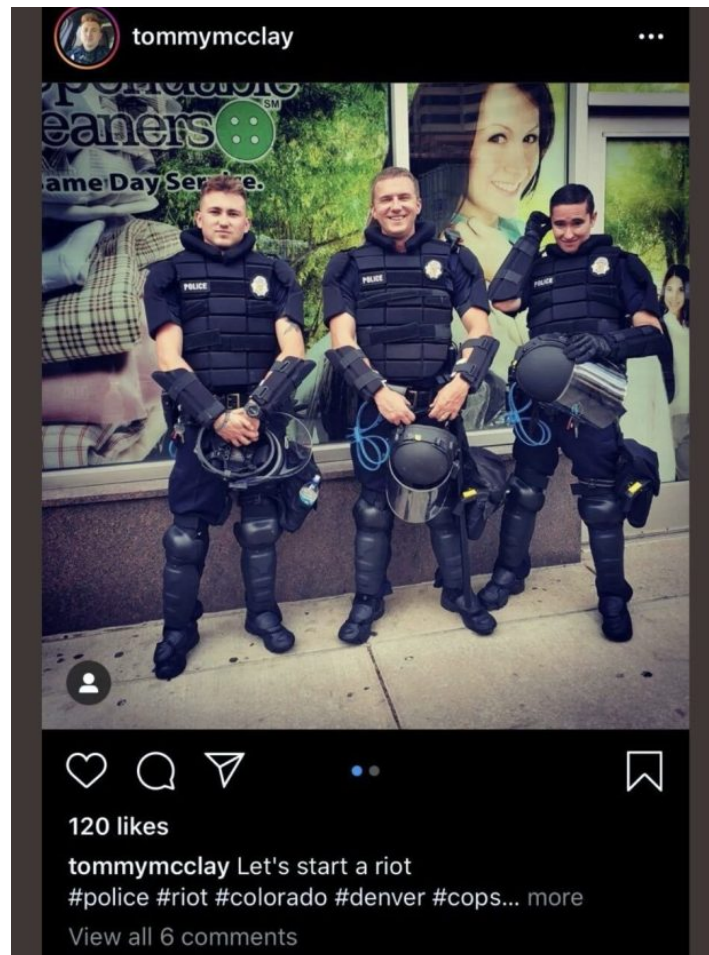
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A Denver police officer was fired for writing “Let’s start a riot” as a caption to a photo he posted on social media showing himself and two other officers in riot gear.

Officer Thomas McClay, who posted the photo on Instagram, was fired Tuesday, according to the Denver Police Department.

“The Denver Police Department initiated an Internal Affairs investigation into a social media post by Officer Thomas McClay,” according to a news release from the department. “The Internal Affairs investigation revealed that the officer violated the department’s social media policy, posted content inconsistent with the values of the department, and the officer has been terminated.”



Officer Thomas McClay, who posted this photo on Instagram, was fired Tuesday, according to the Denver Police Department.

McClay had been moved to a desk job while the department's internal affairs investigation was underway, police spokesman Sonny Jackson said Tuesday. The city's Office of the Independent Monitor oversaw the investigation.

The Instagram post was made as Denver police use tear gas and less-than-lethal munitions on crowds protesting police brutality. Foam bullets and pepper balls also have been deployed since protests began Thursday evening. Some members of the crowds have thrown rocks and fireworks at police, to which officers have responded with broad uses of chemicals and projectiles.

Jackson said he didn't know if the other two officers in the photo were still working the protests. The photo has since been taken down and McClay's account deleted.

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McClay graduated from the police academy and joined the department in October 2019, according to a Facebook post from the agency, which means he was working the protests only months after graduating from the 3.5-month-long field training program.

McClay was within the nine-month probationary period all officers have after joining the department, which means he could be fired without all the processes that slow down internal investigations.



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