

Statement from SoundThinking on City of Chicago-Michael Williams Settlement

March 4, 2026

Amid the news of the settlement between the City of Chicago and Mr. Williams, it's important to keep in mind undisputed facts about ShotSpotter's involvement with the matter – which didn't include being a party to Mr. Williams's lawsuit – in order to avoid the regurgitation of false and misleading statements that have long been corrected:

- ShotSpotter identifies gunfire, not individuals, and arrests and charging decisions are made exclusively by law enforcement and prosecutors.
- The real-time ShotSpotter alert on May 31, 2020 did not lead to Mr. Williams's arrest at the scene by the Chicago Police Department. It was nearly three months after the alert – on August 28, 2020 – that Mr. Williams was arrested after police investigated. The arrest report never even mentioned ShotSpotter or a ShotSpotter alert.
- The Cook County State's Attorney – based on the Chicago Police Department's work – ultimately made the decision to prosecute Mr. Williams.
- SoundThinking's policy is only to involve itself in cases at the request of prosecutors, public defenders, and courts. In this case, we believe SoundThinking was responsible for Mr. Williams's release from incarceration based on the unprecedented step to proactively reach out to prosecution. When the Company learned that the prosecution's theory depended on the assumption that the fatal shot was fired inside a car at extremely close range, we took the initiative to inform the Cook County State's Attorney's Office that ShotSpotter is not designed to detect gunfire within an enclosed vehicle, and that the prosecution's in-car theory was not supported by the acoustic evidence.
- Mr. Williams's defense counsel had access to the very same evidence and recordings as the Cook County State's Attorney, but failed to raise the issue. SoundThinking did. After better understanding the fact that ShotSpotter could not play a conclusive, evidentiary role in this specific case, the prosecutors withdrew its case against Mr. Williams.
- And let's remember, on May 31, 2020, Safarian Herring was shot and killed. His family has not received justice.