

Los Angeles police kill homeless woman

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Last Friday the Los Angeles Police Department committed an atrocity beyond the pale of even its usual brutal standards. At 4:30 in the afternoon Officer Edward Larrigan shot and killed a still unidentified homeless black woman weighing less than 70 pounds.

Patrolling on bicycles, Larrigan and his partner, Kathy Clark, stopped the woman, believed to have been around 40 years old, to investigate whether the shopping cart which she used for her few possessions had been taken from a local supermarket. The roust was part of an ongoing policy of the LAPD to harass homeless people who wander out of the city's filthy skid row. When the woman became hysterical and pulled out a screwdriver, Lorrigan shot her to death.

Local merchants, residents and other homeless quickly erected a memorial to the woman of flowers and candles on the spot where the shooting occurred near the intersection of La Brea Avenue and Fourth Street. On Sunday dozens of demonstrators assembled there and compared the killing to that of Tyisha Miller, the 19-year-old black girl killed in a fusillade of bullets by Riverside Police officers last December. Several protests over the last two weeks have condemned the decision of the Riverside County District Attorney not to prosecute the officers who killed Miller.

In this latest shooting, the LAPD immediately jumped to the defense of its officer. Commander David Kalish made the preposterous claim that Lorrigan had no option other than to shoot the woman because the incident occurred so quickly. Witnesses disputed the police version, claiming that the woman was walking away when Lorrigan shot her.

This latest LAPD outrage comes on the heels of a recommendation by the United States Commission on Civil Rights that a special prosecutor be established because the Los Angeles County District Attorney refuses to prosecute officers for abuse.



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