

San Antonio, Texas university student slain by police

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A confrontation on Friday, December 6, between a student at the University of the Incarnate Word and an Alamo Heights police officer led to the death of the student, Robert Cameron Redus. Alamo Heights is an upscale neighborhood in San Antonio, Texas.

Redus, 23, was shot five times by police Corporal Chris Carter during what appears to have been a fairly routine traffic stop on a rainy night. According to Alamo Heights Police Chief Richard Pruitt, Redus charged Carter with his hand raised, and he had also taken Carter's baton and beaten him with it.

According to investigators, no weapons other than Carter's were found at the scene. Carter is on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of a joint investigation being carried out by the Alamo Heights police department and the Texas Rangers, an organization notorious in the past for its use of indiscriminate violence against Mexican-Americans.

Carter said he saw Redus speeding and driving erratically near the entrance to the campus. Carter followed Redus to his apartment complex, the Treehouse Apartments, about a mile and a half away, and there pulled Redus over. Police claim that Redus initiated the confrontation. They also said the dashcam on Carter's patrol vehicle, a marked pickup truck, was not working. This map clearly shows the proximity of the apartment complex to the university. Both are located on Broadway Street, a well-traveled central thoroughfare in San Antonio.

According to Pruitt, Carter was placing a late-night order at a Whataburger restaurant around 2 a.m. when he saw a tan Ford Ranger speeding through a construction zone in the rain. When he saw the pickup truck hit a curb and swerve into the oncoming lanes, Carter turned on his emergency lights, radioed for backup, and initiated a pursuit. However, Carter named

the wrong street in his backup call, resulting in a delay in the arrival of the backup unit, apparently until after the shooting was over.

Redus had parked his truck at the apartment complex and "started to walk away," according to Pruitt's rather sinister description of a logical action anyone who lived at the apartment complex would normally take.

Many questions have been raised over the shooting. John Tedesco, writing in his blog, "What we know so far about the fatal shooting of UIW student Cameron Redus by campus police," noted that when he attended Incarnate Word in the 1990s, "campus security didn't even carry firearms. Why was an armed UIW officer shooting at a student at an apartment complex located off campus?"

According to Tedesco's blog entry, Carter's truck had a dashboard camera, but it had apparently come unglued as a result of the cold front that came through San Antonio a few days earlier. However, Carter was wearing a microphone, and the police released a summary of the confrontation, without, however, releasing the recording itself.

The confrontation lasted six minutes, during which time, according to the police version of events, Carter told Redus 14 times to put his hands behind his back, told him three times that he was under arrest, and told him to stop resisting 56 times; Redus, they say, pinned Carter against a wall, took away Carter's baton and began to hit him in the head with it. Carter managed to get the baton back, but then Redus broke free. Carter drew his .40-caliber semiautomatic pistol, warned Redus four times to stop or he would shoot; Redus "charged him [Carter] with an arm raised as if to hit him." Carter fired six shots at close range, five of which entered Redus' body.

The student's family does not believe the police

account. On Monday, they sent a statement to the *San Antonio Express-News* saying that, “Cameron has never been an aggressive or confrontational person. ... For him to confront a police officer would be completely out of his character.” They also said that the authorities quickly cleaned up the scene and searched Redus’ apartment before the family arrived in San Antonio from their home in Baytown, Texas, some 220 miles away.

One of Redus’ neighbors, Mohammed Haidarasl, 22, was in the living room of his ground-floor apartment. Haidarasl overheard Redus say, “Oh, you’re gonna shoot me?” In less than a minute, Haidarasl heard “four to six” gunshots. It was only later, after the emergency vehicles arrived, that he realized his upstairs neighbor, whom Haidarasl described as “the nicest guy,” had been shot.

Redus was described by his family as a loving brother, a devoted son, an adventurer, lover of travel, and a filmmaker. They showed a photograph of Redus taken in Bariloche, Argentina by his older brother Everett. The family’s positive description of Redus was confirmed by friends and classmates. Redus was on the dean’s list and was co-valedictorian of his high school graduating class.

That Redus had gone bar-hopping with friends to celebrate the end of the fall semester at Incarnate Word, a Roman Catholic institution originally founded as a university for women in 1881 by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, is not disputed by Redus’ family. A toxicology report from the Bexar County Medical Examiner’s office may not be available for six to eight weeks.

The family questioned Carter’s decision to follow Redus. “Even if Cameron was driving erratically, he presented no threat to the campus police officer or anyone else once he parked his truck,” they wrote. “We expect all official reports to confirm that Cameron’s death was unnecessary and unjustified.”

A professor of criminal justice at the University of Texas at San Antonio, Michael Gilbert, answered “some people’s claims” that Carter was out of his jurisdiction when he shot Redus. Gilbert said that sworn police officers in Texas have “broad authority,” not just at sites where they work, such as college campuses, but all over the state, due to the state’s licensing powers.

This fact should be noted by all working people. In Houston, for example, there are police departments for every university campus, for the public schools, and for the Houston Metro transit authority, over and above the regular police departments in Houston itself, and in the semi-independent enclaves of West University, Bellaire, Southside Place, Hedwig Village, South Houston, and numerous others—not forgetting the Texas Highway Patrol and the Texas Rangers.

Even the State Board of Dental Examiners, the State Insurance Department, the Lottery and Racing commissions, the Pharmacy Board, and several water districts have their own police forces. This pattern is repeated throughout the state of Texas—there were, as of 2009, police departments in 163 school districts in the state—and all workers in Texas should be aware that they are subject to the simultaneous authority of multiple well-armed police departments, questions of jurisdiction notwithstanding.

A 2009 report on National Public Radio cited a case where three “peace officers” with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission approached and shot a suspect who was being pursued by Austin police. NPR reported that the incident was being investigated—by the Texas Rangers!

As to Carter’s background, *San Antonio Express-News* reporter Guillermo Contreras tracked down one of Carter’s former neighbors in the Mulberry Terrace apartments in nearby Fort Sam Houston. Hugo Bustillos, 38, said “he [Carter] was mean.” According to Bustillos, Carter had run-ins with several neighbors over Carter’s dog, gave false statements to the landlord about his neighbors, “made trouble for someone else,” and got into an argument with the apartment management.

Funeral services for Redus were scheduled for Thursday, December 12, at Memorial Baptist Church in Baytown.



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