

Spokane, Washington police kill man as he surrenders

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Police officers in Spokane, Washington shot and killed 30-year-old Steven C. Cordery Wednesday as he was walking out of his house in compliance with their orders. The incident, the latest in a string of police shootings in the area, was captured on video and prompted local and nationwide outrage.

The video clearly shows that the victim had his hands down and posed no threat to police when he was shot. Police unleashed an extended volley of gunfire immediately after Cordery stepped onto his porch. He died in a hospital hours later.

Police said Cordery was holding a lowered pistol, but it cannot be seen in the video. Bystanders shown in the video were shocked and outraged at the police execution, shouting, “Oh my God!” and “Why would you shoot him?” The man who took the video pointed the camera at himself and exclaimed, “He can’t show them his f****ing hands because they just shot him in the face.” Another bystander yelled, “How about you shoot him again, maybe that’ll help.”

“Only in Spokane do the cops shoot somebody just for walking out the God damn door,” said one bystander. “Shoot now, and ask questions later, right?” added another.

The medical examiner confirmed that Cordery’s death was due to “gunshot wounds,” but did not say how many times he was hit. The house sustained 14 separate bullet impacts. Police said that they suspected Cordery in a series of robberies.

“He was a good guy,” Cordery’s neighbor Charity Burland told local TV station KREM. “He’d do anything. If we were out of food, he’d feed us.” Neighbors said that Cordery had a history of mental illness. “He wasn’t all there. He wanted to be liked. He wanted to be loved,” Burland added.

The killing of Cordery is the fourth police shooting in

Spokane so far this year. Five men in the area were killed by the police last year.

The day after the shooting, Spokane Police Department Chief Frank Straub was scheduled to speak at a use of force commission, to provide an update on police reforms implemented in the last year in response to the wave of police shootings.

None of the internal investigations by the Spokane Police Department into the shootings have found fault with any of the officers involved. Of the five people killed last year, officers have been cleared in all but one case, which is still under investigation. The US Department of Justice initiated a two-year review beginning last December to “evaluate the department’s use of force, internal investigations and cultural practices.”

There is still widespread anger over the March 2006 police killing of Otto Zehm, a mentally impaired 36-year-old, by Spokane police. Zehm had been incorrectly reported as robbing an ATM in a convenience store, and was repeatedly beaten with a baton, then tasered and hog-tied. Two days later Zehm died after being declared brain dead and taken off of life support.



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