

Autopsy report reveals Capitol Hill police shot woman five times

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An autopsy report made public a week ago by District of Columbia medical examiners revealed that Miriam Carey, the Connecticut woman killed by Capitol Hill police last fall, was shot five times in the back and head. The report comes nearly six months after the October 3 shooting death, and amid a wave of police killings across the US.

The report shows that Carey was struck five times by gunfire, including three shots in the back, one in the left arm, and one more in the back of her head. The report did not give the sequence of how the shots had occurred or if they had been fired while Carey was inside the vehicle.

Eric Sanders, the attorney representing Carey's family, said that the autopsy report "confirms what we said.... It was unjustified," referring to the aggressive response of police officers. The Carey family has called on the Department of Justice to launch an investigation into the killing, as well as demanding \$75 million in a wrongful death lawsuit against the District of Columbia.

"The Carey Family calls for immediate identification and termination of all police officers, supervisors, managers and other related employees involved in this matter who failed to order the immediate termination of pursuing Miriam and failed to establish firearms control; thereby, collectively causing the avoidable death of Miriam," said a statement released on Sanders's law firm's web site.

On October 3, 2013, Miriam Carey, a 34-year-old mother, failed to stop properly at a police checkpoint in the downtown area of Washington, D.C. While attempting to perform a U-turn in order to leave the checkpoint, she apparently knocked down an officer trying to block her path. This set off a high-speed chase through the city, ending in a hail of gunfire that killed

the woman as she exited her car. At the time of the killing, Carey's 14-month-old daughter was seated in the back of the car. (See: Unarmed Connecticut woman killed by police in Washington, DC: Collateral damage of the "war on terror")

At the time of the killing, media reports suggested that Carey had been armed and had fired upon officers. When this was found to have been untrue, references were made to Carey's supposedly unbalanced mental state and that she had been suffering from postpartum depression. Finally, officers attempted to justify their deadly response due to the number of potential sites vulnerable to terrorist attack located in the downtown Washington area.

The Carey family has rejected the official whitewash. Speaking late last year about the existence of "high value targets" for terrorism in the District of Columbia, Sanders dismissed such terms as "nothing other than an emotionally charged red herring to distract the public from demanding relevant answers from government officials who obviously violated Miriam I. Carey's civil rights under the guise of protecting society from Terrorism. I sarcastically call it the new civil rights Qualified Immunity defense."

Valerie Carey, the sister of Miriam and a former police officer, was quoted by the conservative *WorldNet Daily* as saying, "Everyone should realize we can't allow our civil liberties to be stripped in front of us. If my sister was traveling and came across a roadblock—we're not even sure it was a checkpoint, there was some training going on in the area—she should not have to be in fear of those sworn to protect us. And neither should we."

Both federal and District officials have declined to give an answer to the shooting or the autopsy report, deferring all statements until the release of an internal

investigation. Kimberley Schneider, spokesperson for the United States Capitol Police (USCP), stated, “The USCP does not comment on pending litigation and declines to comment while the investigation is ongoing. The USCP officers involved are on administrative leave.”

The autopsy report’s release comes amidst a spate of police killings. Last month, police officers in Albuquerque, N.M., shot and killed James Boyd, a homeless man camping in the foothills surrounding the city. A video taken from the head cam of one of the offending police officers has been viewed thousands of times, and led to protests against police violence in the city, which were themselves dispersed by law officials with the use of tear gas. A Department of Justice review of the Albuquerque Police Department found that “of the 20 officer-involved shootings resulting in fatalities from 2009 to 2012, we concluded that a majority of these shootings were unconstitutional.” The report also found that the police force had often used “deadly force in circumstances where there is no imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm to officers or others.” (See: Department of Justice reports Albuquerque police engaged in “excessive force”)

In of all these cases, police departments across the US have been militarized and charged with overseeing a society wracked by social inequality. Increasingly, methods of repression and brutality utilized in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere have been brought home to the US in preparation for the brutalization of the American population as well.



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