

New witnesses describe police murder of Michael Brown

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12 September 2014

New eyewitness testimony has emerged in the case of the police killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Accounts given to local media by two construction workers further substantiate already existing evidence that police officer Darren Wilson fired numerous rounds into the unarmed Brown, even as the youth sought to surrender.

The presence of these workers at the scene is confirmed by cellphone video taken at the time of the shooting, which captured recordings of the two contractors. The witnesses both agree that Brown clearly posed no immediate threat to Wilson and continued to receive fire from the police officer after raising his hands and pleading for his life.

“And when he finally caught himself he threw his hands up and started screaming, ‘OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, OK,’” one of the workers said to St Louis local TV outlet KTVI.

“The cop didn’t say, ‘Get on the ground.’ He just kept shooting,” the worker told CNN, noting with astonishment that Brown “had his f***** hands up.”

The other construction worker described Brown’s final moments in comments to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, saying that Brown “got about 8 to 10 feet away from him ... I heard six, seven shots ... it seemed like seven. Then he put his gun down. That’s when Michael stumbled forward. I’d say about 25 feet or so and then fell right on his face.”

“It wasn’t a bull rush,” the worker said.

The construction workers’ statements echo those of another eyewitness, Phillip Walker, who said last week that Brown “did not rush the officer.”

“It wasn’t justified because he didn’t pose no threat to the officer. I don’t understand why he didn’t Tase him if he deemed him to be hostile. He didn’t have no weapon on him. I was confused on why he was

shooting his rounds off like that into this individual,” Walker said.

These firsthand accounts of Brown’s slaying illustrate the “shoot first and ask questions later” mentality that prevails among US police forces, corroborating other independent witnesses and an autopsy report that established that Wilson fired numerous shots at the unarmed youth and continued firing as Brown fell to the ground.

Such wanton acts of violence are the inevitable outgrowth of the transformation of America’s police forces into paramilitary organizations and the simultaneous cultivation of racist and chauvinist attitudes inside the police forces by the US ruling class, both of which have been carried out as part of general preparations for mass repression of the American working class.

Anger continues to build among Ferguson workers against the semi-official legal immunity enjoyed by the city’s police. At a Ferguson city council meeting held Tuesday, the council’s refusal to answer any questions about whether Officer Wilson remains on the city’s payroll provoked outbursts of rage from the audience.

A demonstration the following day by residents seeking to close down a portion of Interstate 70 for four and a half hours, in reference to the time Brown spent lying dead in the street, was broken up early by police in riot gear, who arrested 35 and charged 4 with assaulting the officers.

During the rally on I-70, Ferguson residents chanted slogans denouncing St. Louis County prosecutor Robert McCulloch for his refusal to press criminal charges against Brown’s killer. McCulloch has attempted to sidestep the issue, calling for a grand jury to review the evidence.

McCulloch, who has longstanding family ties to the

St. Louis Police Department and has previously faced accusations of protecting police officers involved in killings from prosecution, embodies the culture of impunity and contempt for democratic rights that has developed within the police agencies of the capitalist state.

In 2001, McCulloch declined to prosecute undercover police officers after they fired 21 shots into a vehicle parked next to a Jack in the Box restaurant, killing two men. While the officers claimed that the vehicle accelerated towards them, a federal investigation revealed that the victims' car was fully stationary and that the men, both of them African-American, were unarmed.

McCulloch still refused to press charges, describing the victims as "bums" and calling them crack cocaine dealers responsible for "destroying the community."



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