

Notes on police violence in America

## Fatal police shooting in Ann Arbor, Michigan

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### Michigan police respond to domestic disturbance call, shoot and kill woman

Ann Arbor police, responding to a domestic disturbance call around 11:45 p.m. Sunday night, shot and killed a woman. The victim, who is yet to be named, was shot in the head and chest. She leaves behind three children.

Victor Stephens, who made the call, had been arguing with the victim, who was his girlfriend. “Me and her, we had an argument,” Stephens told the *Michigan Local News*. “Glass was being broke, so I called the police to have her escorted out.”

When the police arrived, they found the woman holding a fish knife. She was in a room separate from Stephens and posed no immediate danger to him or to the police. Stephens pointed out that the hallway was well lit and officers knew she was not holding a gun.

According to Stephens, the officers announced themselves, said “freeze,” then promptly shot and killed the woman. “She wasn't going to kill anybody with a knife,” Stephens said. They opened fire on her before they even asked her to drop her weapon, he said.

An investigation begun Monday has been handed over to the Michigan State Police. Earlier this year, a State Police officer shot and killed an unarmed man in Munising, Michigan.

### Michigan police shoot and kill mentally-impaired man

Police in Westland, Michigan, shot and killed a mentally-impaired man on Saturday, Nov. 4, around 10 p.m. The victim, Troy Hart, 27, is said to have suffered from Kallman syndrome. The developmental disorder affects the victim's emotional maturity level.

Hart's mother described her son as being an 8-year-old trapped in a grown man's body. “With his impairment, he did not have a filter so he would just

blurt things out, inappropriate things,” she told local news.

Hart's family said he grabbed his hunting knife and headed outside in his pajamas on Saturday night.

His mother then called the police, hoping they could prevent him from doing something that could get him into trouble. “I called 911 and told them that my handicapped son was out in his pj's, could you bring him home or take him to a psychiatric ward to get an evaluation?,” she said to a local news outlet.

Police claim that they received a call about an armed man threatening to kill people. When responding, officers saw Hart with the knife, they told him to drop it while advancing on him. They then drew their guns and shot him. He later died of his wounds in the hospital.

### Protests erupt after police shoot and kill man in Akron, Ohio

Protests erupted after police shot and killed a man in Akron, Ohio, on the night of Monday, Nov. 4. Rauphael Thomas, 29, was shot in the stomach and died in the hospital later that night. Thomas had been driving in an Akron neighborhood with a friend when they parked. The victim's cousin told reporters that he had received a call from Thomas saying that he had a flat tire.

Officers claim they received a call about two men suspected to be scouting out the neighborhood for opportunities to burglarize homes. The police officers approached Thomas and his friend and began to question them. At some point, Thomas became “confrontational,” the police claim, at which point they attempted to put him under arrest. During this course of events, the officer shot Thomas.

Investigators say they recovered a gun at the scene. Initially, police did not mention to reporters a gun

being drawn on them at any point during the alleged altercation. It was only a day later that the police told media that Thomas had allegedly fired a shot at the officers.

An eyewitness tells a very different story. Police held Thomas down on the ground as they kicked him in the ribs three times and punched him in the face. Thomas escaped the beating and attempted to flee. He made it to a nearby streetlamp when police officers shot him in the torso at point-blank range.

### **Police run over and kill three pedestrians**

Since the beginning of this month there have been three instances in which police have run over pedestrians. In at least one case, the officer will face no criminal investigation.

Visalia, California:

Rodrigo Cabral, 27, was hit while walking during the early morning on Saturday, Nov. 1. He had been celebrating Halloween when an unmarked police car slammed into him. Cabral died of his injuries while in the hospital. The police did not reveal to Cabral's family the details of the incident. They only learned that Rodrigo had been hit by a police cruiser from an online news article. The police refused to tell the press whether or not the officer was still on duty.

Tuscon, Arizona:

A cyclist was hit and killed by an unmarked police car on Saturday night, Nov. 1. The victim was Francisco "David" Galvez, 49. Galvez, an avid cyclist, had made himself visible with his bike headlight turned on. He was on his way to a gas station around 10:15 p.m., when he was run down. The police department has composed a review board of three officers to determine whether the still-unnamed officer followed procedure during the incident.

The board has refused to pursue a criminal investigation and will not recommend disciplinary action against the officer.

Marietta, Ohio:

Washington County Sheriff's Deputy Sgt. Bradley Holbert hit and killed a pedestrian on the night of Monday, Nov. 4. Holbert ran over Aaron Fulton, 28, while on his way to respond to a 911 call. Sgt. Holbert is currently on wage continuation pending investigation. The victim's family is skeptical of the circumstances around the death and has expressed concerns about how the investigation will be handled

by law enforcement.

### **Louisiana ex-Sheriff's deputy sentenced over man's defrauding, disappearance**

An ex-Jefferson Parish Sheriff's deputy was sentenced to 92 years in prison after draining a man's bank account. The officer, Mark Herbert, is also a suspect in the defrauded man's disappearance.

Herbert stole the identity of Albert Bloch, 61, after the latter was badly wounded in a single-car accident in 2007. One of the responding paramedics recovered Bloch's wallet from the scene and gave it to Herbert to return to the injured man. Herbert kept the man's wallet, emptying his bank account in a series of cash withdrawals.

Shortly after Bloch reported the thefts from his bank account, he disappeared. Despite being a veteran with a respiratory condition that required daily prescription medication, he did not file for a single benefits check after his disappearance.

Herbert had also been convicted of numerous state charges for stealing from other motorists he encountered while on duty.

In a written statement, Herbert claimed he had gone on a "downward spiral" following the chaos of Hurricane Katrina. There are numerous known cases of police murders, violence and other forms of abuse that have followed the disaster in 2005.



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