

“They just killed him for nothing”

Hundreds mourn death of 12-year-old boy killed by Cleveland police

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Hundreds of people from throughout the Cleveland area attended a viewing Sunday to pay respects and offer condolences to parents and other family members of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, the boy who was shot and killed by Cleveland police the previous weekend.

Many others came by the park where Tamir was playing when he was shot to leave notes of support along with stuffed animals, flowers and small toys.

“I am speechless, I still don’t know what to say about this,” said Kayla, a young mother who lives near the park. “This is just so very sad. I feel sad for this generation coming up. Now kids are afraid of the police.”

Pointing to the school that uses the park as its playground, Kayla said, “He was in this school, he was in sixth grade. It makes me think about my kids. My son goes to this school, he is in kindergarten. It could be anybody’s kid.”

Kayla also connected the shooting to the lack of jobs. “There are not enough jobs, people have to work two or three jobs just to get by. I moved here from Texas a year ago, and I just got a job two months ago, and I was looking and putting in applications everywhere.”

Many of Tamir’s classmates were among those who left stuffed animals and notes on the park table, turning the site where he was shot into a makeshift memorial. One sign read, “12 year old Tamir Rice Murdered by CPD. Indict the Killer Cop”

Last week the police released a video of the shooting taken by a security camera mounted on a light pole. The video shows the police pulling up only a few feet from Tamir and shooting him within 1.5 to 2 seconds of their arrival. The video exposed the lie by the police that they had instructed Tamir three times to put up his

hands before they shot him.

The video also shows that after the shooting both officers stood around pointing their guns at Tamir as he lay on the ground, making no attempt to save the child’s life. It took four minutes before an FBI agent working in the area arrived and started first aid. Tamir was shot at 3:30 in the afternoon on Saturday, Nov 22. He died the following morning in the hospital.

A US Marine who asked that his name not be used came to the park with his wife and their young daughter. He said that the Marines are taught rules for escalation of force, “shout, shout, shoot. But this is a playground, not a battlefield. You should be able to tell when it is a kid.”

He had served in Afghanistan and said that he was opposed to the US military involvement throughout the world. “We can’t police everybody. We had no business being in Libya. That is why so many people around the world hate us. We were just there for the oil.”

The Cleveland Police Department is defending the actions of its officers, seeking to blame the parents for letting the child play with the toy gun.

There is a need, said Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams, to “teach our children and our community about the danger of weapons, mainly handguns, whether they be real or fake.”

Tamir was playing with a BB gun, which can be purchased in many stores for less than \$20. He can be seen in the video walking alone, pulling the gun from his belt and pretending to shoot it. In the video he is also seen stepping on snow, talking on a cell phone and resting his head on the picnic table.

The 911 caller to police can also be seen in video

only a few feet from Tamir. At no time in the video or on the call does he sound alarmed. Three times he tells the dispatcher the gun was fake and that the person was a child.

“It is hard to talk about it,” said 71-year-old Pierre, who was visibly upset and crying at times. “I spoke with his grandfather, and his parents are devastated. He had his whole life in front of him, and they just killed him for nothing.

“I was here the other day, and there were two 12-year-old girls who knew Tamir. One of the girls said, ‘This is a hate crime.’ People don’t realize, but a 12-year-old thinks about these things. How can they come here and play again, when they know this is the spot where one of their friends was killed?

“This is touching everyone, people just keep coming and coming to leave messages. Everybody has kids. They are attacking the whole 12-year-old community.”

Pierre, who has been an outspoken critic of the Cleveland Police Department over its repeated murders of innocent people, described how he attended a public meeting last week in which he accused the police department of harboring a death squad.

“It has been two years since the murder of Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams in East Cleveland. 137 shots were fired at them by over a dozen officers, yet only one officer has been indicted.”

Russell and Williams were killed in a barrage of bullets after leading police on a 20-minute car chase through the city on November 29, 2012. When they were finally stopped, police fired barrage after barrage into the car at the unarmed couple. Among the shooters was officer Michael Brelo, who jumped onto the hood of the car and fired 15 shots directly into the victims. Autopsies of the two show that Russell was shot 23 times and Williams 24.

“They have been doing this since I was born,” Pierre continued. “This is no different than domestic terrorism. The police are legalized terrorists. They are aiming to terrorize the whole community.

“In my opinion, democracy doesn’t exist in the United States. Democrat, Republican there is no difference,” Michael added.

The killing of Tamir Rice is one of a number of recent brutal murders of innocent workers and youth throughout the United States at the hands of the police. Among the latest victims are Michael Brown in

Ferguson, Missouri; Akai Gurley and Eric Garner in New York City; and a string of killings by the police in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In the ten days since Tamir’s killing, at least 22 people have been killed by police in the US.



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