

Los Angeles police department on high alert after officers allegedly ambushed by gunmen

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30 December 2014

Two gunmen allegedly fired at two Los Angeles police officers Sunday evening as they were responding to a call in South Central Los Angeles near the border of the city of Inglewood. The officers claim that two individuals walked into the road on which they were driving and that a muzzle flash indicated that they were being fired upon.

According to reports, the two officers were able to apprehend one of the gunmen while the other still remains at large. A citywide manhunt for the remaining suspect was called off early Monday morning.

No injuries were reported in the exchange, and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has not revealed whether or not bullet holes were visible on the patrol car in question.

Three city blocks around the area of the alleged shooting were immediately cordoned off after the alleged attack, while police advised area residents to “shelter in place” and await further instructions.

Approximately a half hour after the shooting, the LAPD bomb squad responded to reports of a suspicious package left on the second floor of the parking garage adjacent to the *Los Angeles Times* news office building. Police later determined that it was not a threat. “It’s not a bomb, just some nasty messages that someone decided to leave for the police,” said LAPD sergeant Gia Rueda.

The two incidents coincided with the release by the Los Angeles County Coroner’s Office on Monday of the autopsy of 25-year-old Ezell Ford, who was shot by police despite a known history of mental illness.

Protesters and members of Ford’s family had been pressing the LAPD for months to release the autopsy report.

The coroner’s report found that Ford had been shot three times, in his right side, in his right arm and in the

right side of the back. The shots to the back and side were deemed fatal, while the shot to the back also had a muzzle imprint in the skin, indicating that the shot was made at very close range.

The shooting of Ford on August 11 was accompanied by mass demonstrations throughout the city in which protesters linked his death to the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, as well as to numerous other examples of police killings of innocent working class youth.

Ford was murdered by police after a so-called investigative stop in which police stop individuals on the street even though they are not suspected of involvement in any crime.

The report that the LAPD released immediately after the shooting itself revealed that the officers were seeking a confrontation with Ford. It reads, “The officers stopped the patrol car, exited the vehicle and attempted to talk to the individual. After looking in the officers’ direction, however, the individual continued walking and made suspicious movements, including attempting to conceal his hands.”

Police then claimed that Ford, who was unarmed, tried to grab one of the officers’ handguns, resulting in the shooting.

The police account has been contradicted by eyewitnesses who claimed that Ford was shot while lying prone on the sidewalk. Furthermore, the police allegedly attacked and billy-clubbed Ford’s mother after she tried to come to her son’s aid. The lone video taken by an eyewitness of the incident was also confiscated by police according to the eyewitnesses.

No officers have been charged in the incident, and the autopsy report arrived after months of stonewalling by the department.

In his remarks in relation to the autopsy report,

Mayor Eric Garcetti went out of his way to make police entirely blameless for the killing while linking the attempted shooting of the LAPD officers to any ensuing protest over the report. “Violence against the men and women of the Los Angeles Police Department will not be tolerated,” he said. “Last night’s incident reminds us of the risks our officers face every day.”

This stance was echoed in remarks made Monday by Tyler Izen of the Los Angeles Police Protective League. Izen released a statement drawing a clear line of causality between the officer shooting and protests over the shooting of Ford.

The autopsy, he said, represented “only one set of facts among many hundreds being collected and assessed in the ongoing investigation.” Izen continued, “LAPD officers are put directly in harm’s way as they face complex situations, unthinkable dangers and split-second decisions while protecting the citizens of Los Angeles.... Last night, there was an ambush and attempted murder of two LAPD officers in 77th area by what appears to be suspects who simply wanted to kill police officers. Murdering police officers is not a form of protest, it is an affront to all citizens to public safety.”

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) police union used the killings of two officers on December 20 to declare the NYPD a “wartime police department.” In the same statement, the union declared, “Absolutely no enforcement action taken in the form of arrests and or summonses is to be taken unless absolutely necessary and the individual must be placed under arrest .”

Whatever the true motive behind Sunday night’s alleged shooting, it will quite likely be seized upon by the LAPD to adopt a similar “wartime” footing in the second largest metropolitan area in the United States.

The LAPD has an extensive history of employing brutally repressive measures against the city’s population, including most notably during the Watts and later Rodney King riots. The remarks by the police and mayor must be taken as a dire warning by the working class.



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