Notes on police violence in America

Video shows New Jersey police killing man as he attempts to surrender

Tom Hall
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On Tuesday, police in Bridgeton, New Jersey released dashcam footage showing the December 30 police shooting of Jerame Reid, a 36 year-old African American. Reid was shot nine times as he was attempting to exit his vehicle and get on the ground after a routine traffic stop.

Reid was sitting in the passenger seat when Bridgeton officers Braheme Days and Roger Worley stopped him and Leroy Tutt late at night on December 30 for running a stop sign. The footage shows Days walking to the passenger side window casually to ask for Tutt's driver's license. The situation suddenly escalates when Days claims to see a handgun sitting in the glove compartment, drawing his own gun on Reid, and Tutt and shouting orders for them to raise their hands.

Police have not since confirmed who the alleged handgun belonged to, only confirming that a gun was "revealed" and "recovered at the scene." The video shows Days reaching into the window and pulling out what appears to be a silver-colored handgun, meaning that even if the police story were true, Reid would have been unarmed.

Reid remains calm throughout the video in marked contrast to Days, who repeatedly threatens Reid, telling him "I'm gonna shoot you. You're gonna be (expletive) dead." Finally Reid tells Days, "I'm getting out and getting on the ground." As he opens the car door Days and Worley fire seven rounds at him, killing him.

Days and Worley have been the focus of numerous complaints by Bridgeton residents, ranging from unfounded drug searches to pepper spraying a handcuffed man, none of which were followed up on. Residents in the small, impoverished city of 25,000 appear to be familiar with the officers' behavior: "He rides around all day bothering people for no reason," one complaint reads. Day was apparently caught on camera in an earlier incident in which he pepper sprayed a man during an arrest in front of several witnesses.

The Cumberland County Prosecutor's office has refused to comment on the case, citing the possibility of a grand jury proceeding. Jennifer Webb-McRae, the head of the office, has recused herself from the case, citing a personal relationship with Days which apparently began before he joined the Bridgeton police force in 2012. At that time Webb-McRae praised Days in a meeting of the city council, citing his "excellent character."

Police beat passerby while responding to gunshots near Joe Biden's Delaware estate

A Delaware man claims that police investigating reports of gunshots near vice president Joe Biden's home "beat the daylights" out of him after he was stopped by a police barricade.

Rock Peters was stopped by police at around 9 pm, around 30 minutes after the gunshots were first reported, as he approached the intersection in front of Biden's estate in the Wilmington suburb of Greenville. Peters protested when a police told him to turn around that he did not know any other route home. The officer then walked away, but returned when he thought he heard Peters say something.

At that point Peters sped away, only to be pulled over by a different officer. Peters placed his hand in his jacket pocket to retrieve his wallet, which the officer mistook for him reaching for a weapon. "And at that point, without saying a word, he cold-cocked me," Peters told the *News Journal*. He says the officer then placed him in a

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chokehold, shoved him to the ground face-first and pressed his knee against his back. Peters says that he repeatedly told the officer “I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe” before finally passing out.

Photographs taken at the hospital show the left side of Peters’ face covered in bruises, cuts and blood. He was treated for rib injuries, face abrasions, a black eye and a swollen nose.

Though the police did not find any weapon, Peters has been charged with reckless endangerment and resisting arrest. The official police report varies significantly from Peters’ version, alleging that Peters’ fought with officers, which he vehemently denies. “They’re lying through their teeth,” Peters told the *News Journal*.

Family of hostage killed by Stockton, CA police prepare to file suit

The family of a hostage killed in a hail of bullets by Stockton police is preparing to file suit against the city.

Thirty four officers fired over 600 rounds at a disabled SUV carrying three armed robbery suspects and hostage Misty Holt-Singh on July 17, striking her ten times and killing her and two of the suspects. Two other hostages were taken by the suspects, but either jumped or were thrown out of the vehicle prior to the deadly shooting. Lawyers for Holt Singh’s family argue that officers “violated numerous standard police protocols in their response” and that “the city has refused to accept responsibility for its actions.” They have not yet said when they will file suit; the family has another four months to decide before the statute of limitations expires.

Last week another hostage, bank employee Kelly Huber, filed a claim against the city and police department alleging that the negligence of officers in interrupting the robbery caused the kidnapping and shooting. Huber also accuses police of not waiting until she and the other hostages were freed before moving against the suspects. She was shot in both legs and suffered a broken bone in the ensuing melee.

St. Louis college student beaten by police in case of mistaken identity

Last Thursday police in the St. Louis suburb of St. Ann beat Joseph Swink, a 22 year-old college student, after mistaking him for a suspect that they were pursuing.

Swink, who has no criminal record, crashed his car while trying to avoid police vehicles pursuing Anton Simmons, who had warrants for his arrest. Swink jumped out of his wrecked car as it filled up with smoke when he was jumped and beaten by several officers, who mistook him for Simmons. Swink suffered serious injuries to his face and ear.

St. Ann police chief Aaron Jimenez publicly apologized to Swink. “All the sirens and lights were going off. It was very loud and they couldn’t hear anything the citizen was saying,” Jimenez explained. Swink was apparently unimpressed, telling local media, “I never really had 100 percent trust in police before, but I really don’t now.”

Long Island man released from prison after being beaten and arrested on false drug charges

Long Island resident Willian Guillen, an undocumented immigrant from El Salvador, was released from prison earlier this month after being beaten by police and charged on false felony drug charges in late December.

Undercover narcotics officers from the Nassau County police department confronted Guillen shortly after he finished work after midnight on December 22. Thinking he was about to be robbed, Guillen asked bystanders to call the police. The officers handcuffed Guillen, dragged him across the pavement and stomped on his head multiple times. Guillen suffered broken ribs as a result of the beating.

He was charged for possession of cocaine, and police concocted a story that Guillen had thrown a bag of cocaine to the ground while running away from officers, a claim contradicted both by surveillance footage and the fact that no cocaine was recovered from the scene.

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