

St. Louis police gun down another teenager

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St. Louis police shot and killed 19-year-old Isaac Holmes late Wednesday night, the same day that the *New York Times* reported that the U.S. Justice Department would not pursue federal civil rights charges against Darren Wilson, the Ferguson police officer who shot killed teenager Michael Brown last August.

St. Louis police claim the victim tried to get out of a stolen car and point a 9-mm pistol at officers, but these claims were contradicted by a witness who told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* he did not see a gun.

Nothing the police have said should be taken at face value. The shooting of Isaac Holmes follows the death of 18-year-old Vonderrit D. Myers, who was killed on October 8 while trying to flee an off-duty cop. At the time, St. Louis police said he was engaged in a shootout with the officer who shot him, but an autopsy indicated he was killed while running away. That shooting followed the police-involved death of 25 year old Kajieme Powell, a mentally-disturbed man, who was shot dead in a barrage of bullets from two police officers in St. Louis, just 10 days after Michael Brown was murdered in Ferguson.

In the most recent shooting, police said that Holmes was riding in the passenger seat of a car that was reported stolen since December 5. Police Chief Sam Dotson said officers on patrol followed the car, a red Chevrolet Monte Carlo, after it made an illegal u-turn around 9:45 pm. The car allegedly sped off and was followed by police before it crashed into a retaining wall in the neighborhood. When officers approached the car, police said Holmes came out of the car holding a 9mm pistol. Officers then told Holmes to drop the gun and opened fire when he didn't, said Chief Dotson.

Holmes was pronounced dead after he was taken to a nearby hospital, while the driver of the car, also 19, was taken into custody.

Terramus Manley told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

that he was visiting a friend at a nearby apartment when he saw the shooting. Manley said he saw a police car follow the Monte Carlo, but not at full speed as the police claimed. After the car stopped, Manley said he heard officers yell, "freeze, freeze, freeze, don't move."

At that point, Manley said, the passenger got out took two steps and looked as if he was about to run before officers shot him to death. Manley said he did not see a gun, but after the shooting he could hear officers say, "get the gun."

"I don't believe it happened the way Chief Dotson proclaimed it to be," Holmes' uncle told the *Post-Dispatch*. "I've never seen (Holmes) in trouble to the point where a gun is involved. I've never heard of any type of gang involvement or anything of that sort."

Police reported the gun was purchased in 2002, but Holmes was not the buyer, and the gun had not been reported stolen. Police Chief Dotson reported that Holmes had a criminal record, but according to *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Holmes' public court record in Missouri only show a misdemeanor charge in 2013 for "violating rules of a rapid transit car or bus". He pled guilty and was sentenced to one day in jail but received credit for time already served.

The names of the two officers involved in the shooting have not been released, but one is reportedly 29 years old, black, and has been in the police department for seven years. The other officer is 35 years old, white, and has been in the police department for eight years. The victim and the driver were both African American.



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