

Notes on police violence in America

Video shows Baltimore school cop beating 13-year-old girl with baton

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A 13-year-old Baltimore schoolgirl received ten stitches to her forehead after being chased through the halls of her school and attacked with a baton by a school police officer, according to surveillance video obtained last Friday by a local news station.

The incident last October began when Diamond Neals angered the black female officer, whose name has not been released, when she rushed to intervene after the officer shoved her cousin against a wall, apparently unprovoked. “So she goes over there thinking it’s another child, and she gets over there, and it’s an officer. She went over there to try to stop her,” her cousin’s grandmother told *WBAL-TV*.

Both girls, as well as another of one of Diamond’s cousins, were expelled from school and charged with assaulting a police officer. The charges were dropped in juvenile court after prosecutors saw the surveillance video, but the expulsions were upheld by Baltimore City Schools CEO Gregory Thornton, and the girls are now in “alternative” schools.

The video shows a savage, entirely unprovoked beating by the officer. It began when the officer yelled at Neal’s cousin, Starr, from the bottom of a stairwell in between classes. “The officer was hollering at her and said, ‘Little girl, get down here,’” her grandmother said. “And so Starr said, ‘My name is not little girl, it’s Starr.’ Starr came on down the steps, and Starr said that’s when the officer grabbed her.”

Later, the officer lets Starr go in order to chase Neals through crowds of middle school students. She is seen striking Starr twice, including once in the head, while Neals offers no resistance. She then returns to Neals’s cousins, whom she pepper sprays in their faces.

Neals and her two cousins were sent to the hospital without the school notifying their parents; Neals’s mother

told *WBAL* that she only found out from the paramedics that her daughter was at the hospital. From there they were taken to juvenile booking, where they were charged with assaulting a police officer. Despite having surveillance footage of the entire incident, the school district claimed that the officer “was kicked, scratched in the face and punched in the face and chest,” according to *WBAL*.

Video released of Pittsburgh police brutalizing man with batons at halfway home

Employees at the halfway house called police early in the morning last August after they said they found Jenkins with heroin. Jenkins was receiving treatment for drug addiction at the Renewal Halfway House after being released from prison in July.

The video shows Jenkins in the hallway of the facility, holding a rectangular black object that his attorney maintains was a cellphone, when three officers turn the far corner and head straight for him. The police report, which maintains that Jenkins approached them “suddenly and aggressively,” is completely contradicted by the video, which shows Jenkins backing away as the officers rush towards him.

Two of the officers immediately grab Jenkins without any provocation, push him against the opposite wall, and attack him with their batons. The officers continue beating Jenkins even after he falls to the floor. At no point does Jenkins offer any resistance; even the official police report only alleges that Jenkins made a fist with his right hand during the beating.

Jenkins's family, who had been skeptical about his version of the events, expressed shock and outrage after seeing the tape for themselves. "No one is perfect. No one deserves to be treated so inhumanely. They beat him worse than they would a dog," his sister Shawnishi Irvin said in an interview. "No, they were not within their rights," his mother said, "and they took my son's rights away and then handcuffed him."

Pittsburgh officials have announced a "review" of the incident, but the Pittsburgh Police Department's assistant chief of investigations said in a Monday press conference that police did not see any evidence of wrongdoing. "We looked at this video, believe me we looked at it numerous times, and we do not see anything inappropriate or wrong at this time."

Jenkins's attorney denounced the city's defense of its officers. "This is police brutality. It's simple," he told the press.

Misdemeanor trial begins for NYPD officer charged with stomping on suspect's head

New York Police Department officer Joel Edouard pled not guilty on Tuesday to misdemeanor assault and misconduct charges stemming from a videotaped incident in Brooklyn in which he deliberately stomped on a subdued suspect's head. The attack happened less than a week after the death of Staten Island resident Eric Garner.

Edouard stomped on 32-year-old Jahmiel Cuffee's head while he was held down by several other officers, in full view of a crowd of witnesses who howled in protest. Cuffee was only charged "attempted tampering with evidence, obstructing governmental administration and resisting arrest" after police said they caught him throwing away a joint, according to the *New York Daily News*.

Edouard's attorney was adamant in remarks to the media that the video would actually exonerate his client. "Neither the video nor the medical evidence will substantiate that Officer Edouard kicked this individual in the head; quite the contrary," he said. Although the video does not show the actual point of contact, it clearly shows Edouard winding up his leg in a stomping motion directly above Cuffee's head, an officer holding his hand up to Edouard as if to get him to stop, and a clear response from the crowd of bystanders.

District Attorney Ken Thompson, in an official statement, claimed that Edouard's conduct does not reflect on "the great work being done throughout the city by the vast majority of police officers who perform their duties honorably."

Disabled veteran receives \$860,000 from lawsuit after being "beaten almost to death"

Attorneys for the city of Denver reached an agreement last week, pending approval by the City Council, to pay a disabled veteran \$860,000 to settle a lawsuit filed after he was nearly killed in a police beating in 2010.

Officer Shawn Miller tackled, hog-tied and beat James Moore on the head with their fists and batons while responding to a noise complaint at his apartment in March of 2008. Woods was beaten so severely that his heart briefly stopped and he had to be resuscitated, according to his lawyers.

"Shawn Miller is the poster child for everything that is wrong with the Denver Police Department," Wood's lawyer, David Lane, said Tuesday. Miller, who is still on the force, has been the subject of 39 internal investigations, including 15 excessive-force complaints. In 2011 the city of Denver agreed to a \$225,000 settlement over another beating by Miller only two days before he beat Woods. "What we have is a police officer who is absolutely out of control, who has repeatedly brutalized people, who has repeatedly abused people and the city and county of Denver has repeatedly done absolutely not one single thing to him or about him," Lane said.

Yet another lawsuit involving Miller was filed earlier this year stemming from a 2013 incident in which he handcuffed a restaurant owner after he called the police. "The officer showed up, he was very irritated, he said I always call, he doesn't want to hear anything I've got to say," the owner told the media. "He said he gets tired of me calling and that's the way of him to punish me."



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