

Notes on police violence in America

# Indian grandfather partially paralyzed by Alabama police beating

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Indian national and 57 year-old grandfather Sureshbhai Patel was temporarily paralyzed after police in Madison, Alabama, slammed him into the ground during a sidewalk stop. Patel was stopped by police on Friday while taking a morning walk through a residential neighborhood, after police received a 911 call about a suspicious “skinny black guy” wearing a toboggan and “walking around close to [his] garage.”

Patel, whose son Chirag works in Alabama as an electrical engineer, was visiting the United States for only the second time to help care for his grandson. He does not speak English and did not understand any of the police’s commands, repeatedly stating his son’s address and saying “no English, walking” when confronted by the police.

Footage recorded by a police dashboard camera shows that the officers, Eric Parker and a police trainee, continue to give Patel orders even after establishing that he cannot understand anything they say. Parker then attempts to restrain Patel, putting his hands behind his back and warning Patel that “I will put you on the ground” if he keeps resisting. When Patel continues to try and jerk himself free, Parker suddenly lifts him off his feet and slams him face-first into the ground, with his hands behind his back and unable to break the fall.

The beating left Patel temporarily paralyzed, and he required cervical fusion surgery to relieve pressure on his spinal cord. He is still unable to move his left leg, according to his family.

After the official police story crumbled earlier this week, Madison Police fired Parker and charged him with third degree assault. The FBI is also carrying out its own investigation.

Patesh’s family has filed a lawsuit against the

Madison Police Department. “This is broad daylight, walking down the street. There is nothing suspicious about Mr. Patel other than he has brown skin,” the family’s attorney Hank Sherrod told the media.

## **Washington police fatally shoot immigrant worker for allegedly throwing rocks**

Protestors demonstrated outside Pasco City Hall in Washington, Thursday, against the killing of 35-year old migrant worker Antonio Zambrano-Montes, who was first “tased” and then fatally shot as many as 13 times by police officers.

The officers involved claim that Zambrano threw at least two rocks at their vehicle prior to the shooting, which occurred as Zambrano briefly sought to flee across the street before turning to face the officers. Footage of the incident clearly shows Zambrano turning around and throwing his hands in the air in an effort to surrender moments before being killed in a hail of gunfire.

Zambrano did not speak any English, according to a cousin who spoke with media at the scene of the incident. Zambrano struggled with mental health problems, including depression, after being separated from his two daughters, according to family members.

## **Philadelphia police officers charged after footage of beating surfaces**

Philadelphia police officers Sean McKnight and Kevin Robinson were arrested last week in connection with a beating they delivered last May against then-24-year-old Najee Rivera.

The officers were chasing Rivera—who was riding a motorized scooter—for allegedly running a stop sign, while violating police protocol by not using their lights or sirens. The chase came to a close when they knocked

Rivera from his scooter by striking him with a baton through their window. McKnight and Robinson then charged from their vehicle and threw Rivera first against a wall and then to the ground, where they beat him repeatedly with their batons, surveillance footage shows.

“[Rivera’s] eye was beaten and swollen shut, there was a broken nose, there were approximately twenty staples to the top of his head, having his head split open,” Leo Flynn, Rivera’s attorney, told CNN. The District Attorney said that another officer, arriving later on the scene, assumed that Rivera had been shot due to the amount of blood splattered across the ground.

Rivera was charged with aggravated assault, based on a police report claiming that he “slammed [Robinson] against a brick wall” and threw his elbows during the struggle.

However, the surveillance footage, which was uncovered by Rivera’s girlfriend, convinced a grand jury to drop the case, and Rivera was awarded a \$200,000 settlement for pain and suffering. “The video undermined every aspect of the officer’s account,” Flynn said.

Robinson and McKnight now face charges for aggravated assault, criminal conspiracy and filing false reports.

“I’m not the same no more,” Rivera told local news station NBC10. “I’ll never be the same again to be honest with you.”

### **Lawsuit filed after San Diego police beat two brothers for entering their own home**

A lawyer for a Peruvian-American family filed suit last month over an incident last July, when two sons were followed and beaten by six San Diego police officers while attempting to enter their family’s store after a smoke break.

Two patrol officers somehow assumed that Luis and Diego Lobaton were attempting to break into the shop, which also serves as the family’s home, when they saw them unlocking the door with their own keys. They were joined by four other officers as they jumped the brothers in the doorway of their own residence, punching Luis repeatedly and wrestling their mother, Hedy Julca, to the floor when she attempted to break up the fight, while their three year-old brother Bruce watched nearby.

All three were arrested, and Luis and Hedy were put

on immigration holds, despite Luis being a US citizen. Hedy, an illegal immigrant, is now facing deportation to Peru.

Surveillance footage from outside the shop completely contradicts the official police report, according to which Luis assumed a “fighter’s stance” and attempted to hit one of the officers. “Some of the officers who had been at the store were standing outside and laughing,” Hedy told the *Voice of San Diego*. “I heard one of them say to the others, ‘What are we going to put in the report?’”

Police again followed Luis Lobaton, who according to his family has a brain tumor, into the store five months later on Christmas Eve, arguing that he was “acting suspicious.”

### **Police in North Carolina shoot 74 year-old in his own home during welfare check**

Police in Gastonia, North Carolina, shot and killed 74 year-old James Howard Allen in his own home during a routine welfare check last Saturday night.

Allen’s family asked the police to check on him because they were concerned for his well-being after recent surgery, according to police. An officer went to his home, where he found his car parked in the driveway, received no answer at the front door, and a search of nearby hospitals turned up nothing. Police returned to Allen’s house when his family asked them to check again, deciding to break through the back door.

Police encountered Allen inside his house pointing a gun at them, according to police, who responded by opening fire.

Allen’s friends and neighbors expressed outrage in interviews to the media. “They done kicked the door in,” one neighbor told WCNC, “Mr. Howard was scared. He come in with a gun—you know he didn’t shoot, but they see the gun and that gives them the right to shoot!” “Somebody kicks your door in, comes in your house—your first instinct is defend yourself,” said one of Allen’s friends.



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