

Freddie Gray's death was a homicide, autopsy confirms

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The death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray, an event which provoked massive protests and unrest, leading to a police-military occupation of Baltimore by 5,000 National Guardsmen, was an act of homicide caused by police officers, an autopsy report leaked by an anonymous source to the *Baltimore Sun* confirmed.

The loading of Gray into a cage inside a police van by the Baltimore police, where he was left with feet and wrists shackled and without any safety belt, exposed the young man to lethal injuries sustained while the vehicle accelerated and decelerated. Gray suffered neck and spinal injuries comparable to someone who had dived into shallow water, the medical examiner concluded.

The autopsy report was completed on April 30, one day before Maryland State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby announced criminal charges against the six police officers who detained Gray. The driver of the van, Caesar R. Goodson Jr., is being charged with second-degree murder, while the other five police officers face charges of manslaughter and second-degree assault.

The police defense team has claimed, in blatant contradiction to facts established by the autopsy, that Gray's injuries were "self-inflicted."

The autopsy's findings were based on video footage of events surrounding Gray's arrest, along with witness statements.

"Mr. Gray was still yelling and shaking the van," the medical examiner said. "He was removed and placed on the ground in a kneeling position, facing the van doors, while ankle cuffs were placed, and then slid onto the floor of the van, belly down and head first, reportedly still verbally and physically active," he added, referring to Gray's condition during the second of five stops made by the police van.

The third stop was captured on video and shows the

driver of the van, Goodson, getting out to look. After the fourth stop, Goodson called for assistance.

"The assisting officer opened the doors and observed Mr. Gray lying belly down on the floor with his head facing the cabin compartment, and reportedly he was asking for help, saying he couldn't breathe, couldn't get up, and needed a medic. The officer assisted Mr. Gray to the bench and the van continued on its way," the autopsy states.

At the fifth stop, the officers picked up another detainee, only checking on the mortally wounded Gray after securing their new captive. At this point, Gray was "kneeling on the floor, facing the front of the van and slumped over to his right against the bench, and reportedly appeared lethargic with minimal responses to direct questions."

Gray likely suffered fatal injury between the second and fourth stop, and perhaps before the third stop, according to the autopsy. He was probably killed as a result of being thrown against the metal walls of the van in the course of abrupt turns or stops on the part of the driver, according to the medical examiner.

An injury to the spine would have caused Gray to lose control of his arms and legs and would have impaired his ability to breathe, the report noted.

The autopsy has proven that Gray was in fact murdered by Baltimore police as a result of his "rough ride," a euphemism used to describe the barbaric practice whereby police officers strap a detainee into a van unshackled and drive around the city, making sudden stops in order to intentionally cause injury to the person inside, who is typically shackled and without a seatbelt.



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