

Notes on police violence

Video shows Philadelphia police ruthlessly beat unarmed youth

Evan Blake
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Cell phone footage was released on Wednesday showing the savage beating by Philadelphia police of unarmed 22-year-old Tyree Carroll. The Philadelphia Police Department (PDP) has opened an internal affairs investigation into the violent arrest, which occurred in early April, only after proof of the beating appeared online.

The video, which has already been viewed over 100,000 times, shows multiple officers repeatedly punching and kicking the African American youth, and beating him with nightsticks, while continually taunting him verbally. Despite the fact that the filming is taking place roughly a block away from the incident, Carroll can be heard clearly screaming in pain throughout.

Shortly after the first group of officers began beating Carroll, multiple backup patrol cars swarm the scene. When the first backup car arrives, an officer immediately exits the patrol car and approaches the pile of officers crushing Carroll, yelling “You’re getting the f**king taser, here I come!” Another officer repeatedly calls Carroll a “piece of sh*t,” while multiple officers refer to him as “motherfu**er.”

Soon over a dozen officers are surrounding Carroll, who can be heard crying for his grandmother to come to the door, as she lives on the block where the beating took place.

In total, the video shows the officers punching and kicking Carroll dozens of times, and witnesses claim that officers tased him 4 or 5 times. Witnesses counted as many as 26 officers and 11 police cars at the scene.

The video is strongly reminiscent of the footage of police beating Rodney King in 1991, which set off the 1992 Los Angeles riots following the acquittal of all four officers involved.

According to a police spokesman, none of the officers

involved with the incident have been reassigned or taken off patrol duty.

Carroll, however, has been charged with aggravated assault, simple assault, recklessly endangering another person, resisting arrest and several drug charges stemming from a small amount of crack cocaine allegedly found on his person. His case has been ordered to go to trial. Carroll is still in jail, and the family’s attorney claims that he is still experiencing pain from the beating.

Carroll was initially stopped just before midnight on April 3 by four plainclothes officers for allegedly riding his bike in the wrong direction on a one-way street. The arresting officer, John Ellis of the PDP narcotics division, alleges that he saw Carroll approach a drug transaction between two other men, but did not see Carroll make any exchange with the men.

Ellis and another officer who testified at Carroll’s preliminary hearing claim that they punched Carroll and hit him with billy clubs, but denied kicking or tasing him. Once again, the truth of police brutality was only brought to light due to the fact that it happened to be caught on video.

The PDP is one of the most brutal police departments in the US, as documented in a Justice Department report released in March which found that there was an average of one police shooting each week in the city over the past eight years. Like other similar reports issued by the Obama administration, the report on the PDP did not seek any accountability for these crimes.

In 1985, PDP garnered the distinction of being the first police department in the US to carry out an aerial bombing assault on its own citizens. While targeting the Black Nationalist MOVE organization, the bombing killed 11 people and destroyed 250 homes.

Family alleges officer choked man to death in Mississippi

An investigation is now underway into the death of 39-year-old Jonathan Sanders, who died during a physical altercation with officer Kevin Harrington Wednesday night in Stonewall, Mississippi. Sanders' attorney, J Stewart Parish, claims that Sanders, who was unarmed, cried "I can't breathe" during the struggle, and that he suffered "some kind of asphyxiation" that led to his death.

Sanders was a father of two children, including a one-year-old. His relatives live at the site and witnessed the struggle take place. They claim that Harrington pulled Sanders down from a horse he was riding, engaged him in a struggle and choked him to death with a flashlight, with his dying words being, "Let me go, I can't breathe."

Following local media coverage of the police killing, police chief Michael Street immediately sought to tarnish this witness testimony, declaring "there was no flashlight used to choke anybody—that's false. And there were no shots fired by either man, there were no weapons at all, and he was not dragged off a horse." Street claims that the two men engaged in "a fight" after Sanders voluntarily stepped down from a horse-drawn buggy.

Street has requested that the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation also investigate the police killing.

Fearful of tensions erupting in the small community, Street implored residents to refrain from protesting: "We don't need anything being taken out into the street. Our community is a good community. We don't see any issues there. We are going to continue our good relationship."

According to killedbypolice.net, Sanders was the 593rd victim of a police killing in the US so far this year.



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