

Notes on police violence in America

Cincinnati cop who killed Samuel Dubose charged with murder

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On Wednesday, University of Cincinnati police officer Ray Tensing was indicted by a grand jury on murder charges for the July 19 fatal shooting of unarmed 43-year-old Samuel Dubose.

The indictment came three days after hundreds of protesters marched through parts of Cincinnati, converging at the University of Cincinnati Police Department to demand the arrest of Tensing.

There can be little doubt that Tensing would not have been indicted were it not for the presence of a video clearly showing the officer carrying out what can only be described as a murder. This is the first time a Cincinnati police officer has ever been charged with murder for killing someone while on duty.

In April 2001, Cincinnati police killed unarmed teenager Timothy Thomas, igniting riots that engulfed the city for three days. In total, scores of people were hospitalized, with an estimated \$3.6 million in damages done to storefronts and businesses. Roughly 1,000 people were jailed for civil disobedience and curfew violations. The footage, released at the same news conference in which Deters unveiled the indictment result, shows Tensing pull over Dubose for not having a front license plate.

Tensing repeatedly asks Dubose for identification, which he apparently does not have on his person. Tensing says “Go ahead and take your seatbelt off,” and then begins opening Dubose’s car door. It appears that Dubose then begins to drive away slowly, at which point Tensing immediately draws his weapon and shoots Dubose once in the head, killing him instantly.

In his account of the incident, Tensing claimed that he was dragged by Dubose’s car, prompting him to draw his weapon and shoot Dubose. This claim was

supported by another university officer, Eric Weibel, who arrived shortly after the shooting. Weibel also wrote in his report that a third officer claimed to have witnessed officer Tensing being dragged.

The video conclusively refutes these officer testimonials, as Dubose’s car only begins to increase in speed when he is killed by Tensing, overturning Tensing’s claim that he fired at Dubose after he “almost got run over by the car.”

Hundreds of people are killed by police under equally questionable circumstances each year, with fellow officers’ testimony most often absolving killer cops of their crimes. Over the past decade alone, thousands of people have been killed at the hands of police, yet only 54 officers have been indicted for these killings, of whom only 11 were actually convicted, according to a recent analysis by The Washington Post.

Medford, Massachusetts detective threatens to murder driver, yelling, “I’ll blow a hole right through your f---ing head!”

Medford Police Detective Stephen Lebert has been placed on administrative leave after video footage showing him threatening to kill a driver surfaced Monday. The video reveals the fascistic, antidemocratic mindset that has become ever-more pervasive among layers of American police in the recent period.

The driver, Mike, has only released his first name to the media, evidently for fear of reprisals from Lebert or his cohorts. Lebert had chased Mike after he had

accidentally driven the wrong direction through a traffic circle, and Mike recorded the incident using his own dashboard camera. The video begins shortly after Mike exits the traffic circle. Lebert is seen pulling alongside Mike's car, shouting through his window "Now you're done!"

Both cars stop, with Lebert, dressed in plainclothes, immediately exiting his vehicle. Lebert then reaches into his pocket while saying, "You're all done. Roll up your window." Mike, expecting Lebert to pull out a gun, throws his car into reverse and backs away as quickly as possible.

Lebert then repeatedly yells, "I'll blow a hole right through your f---ing head!" while approaching Mike's car.

Lebert finally identifies himself as a detective, and it becomes clear to Mike that he pulled out his badge, not a weapon. When Mike pulls over and tries to deescalate the situation, Lebert continues to threaten him with violence, saying, "You're lucky I'm a f---ing cop. Cause I'd be beating the f---ing piss outta you right now."

Mike then repeatedly tries to inform the interrupting Lebert that he has a dashboard camera, in order to comply with the consent laws of Massachusetts. Once he is finally able to finish his sentence, Lebert says, "So I'll seize that. I'm gonna seize that camera."

Later, Mike speaks with another officer, telling him, "I thought that guy was gonna kill me. He was yelling at me. I was super scared."

Lebert has a history of egregiously violating democratic rights. In 2012, he was also caught on camera trying to blur the lens of a bystander lawfully filming the arrest of another man in Medford, who Lebert assumed was his brother. It is unclear if the two men are related, as the recorder says "I'm not answering any questions today." The video shows Lebert harassing the bystander, saying, "You know your brother has a drug problem? You have a drug problem also? What's your drug of choice?"

Later, Lebert argues that the arrestee should be murdered, saying, "What they should do is just take him up on the railroad tracks and tell him to lay down."

The man filming responds: "You're gonna solve the country's drug problem, right?"

Lebert replies, "One at a time. Starting with you and your junkie brother."

Even after this video was brought to the attention of Lebert's superiors, he was merely given an unspecified form of counseling. According to Medford Police Chief Leo Sacco, "He was told the people have the right to do the video and he has to act accordingly."

Sarasota, Florida officer dehumanizes arrested homeless man

Another recent incident highlights the increasingly depraved character of police in America.

A surveillance video from inside the Sarasota County Jail in Florida shows officer Andrew Halpin throwing peanuts to a handcuffed homeless man as though feeding an animal. As the man struggles to pick up the peanuts from the floor using his mouth, Halpin further dehumanizes him by kicking the peanuts in his direction.

A witness told the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* that Halpin was making "dog commands" while tossing the peanuts at the man.

"Due to the actions I've seen on camera, I immediately initiated an internal affairs investigation," Sarasota Police Chief Bernadette DiPino said in a statement. Halpin has been placed on paid administrative leave pending the results of the investigation.



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