

Autopsy reveals St. Louis police shot teenager Mansur Ball-Bey in the back

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A preliminary autopsy conducted by the St. Louis, Missouri medical examiner has found that 18-year-old Mansur Ball-Bey was killed by one shot to the back by police on Wednesday. The bullet entered his back, struck his heart and ruptured a major artery, killing him almost instantly.

The autopsy results, along with witness testimony, strongly indicate that police have lied to cover up a brutal murder committed by two of their officers.

St. Louis Chief Medical Examiner Michael Graham told Reuters, “He certainly wasn’t facing, his chest wasn’t facing the officers” at the time of the shooting.

The initial police story is that two officers arrived with a search warrant at 1243 Walton Avenue in north St. Louis, and then chased two armed men who they allege fled out the back door to an alley behind the house. “Officers in the rear alley ordered them to stop and to drop the gun,” St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson claimed Wednesday shortly after the shooting. “As they ran, one of the individuals turned and pointed the gun at the officers. There were two officers in the alley, both officers fired.” Dotson further claimed that Ball-Bey continued running after being shot, and threw his weapon to the ground.

The autopsy report alone overturns this story, as the officers undoubtedly fired at Ball-Bey when his back was turned to them. Further, one of the medical examiners that wrote the report told the Ball-Bey family’s attorney, Jermaine Wooten, that since Ball-Bey was hit in an artery, he would have collapsed almost immediately and not been able to continue running as police claim he did.

Ball-Bey’s family and attorney, along with other witnesses, contest every aspect of the official narrative given by police. Above all, they assert that Ball-Bey was unarmed at the time police cut him down. His

family highlights the fact that Ball-Bey had just graduated from high school, maintained a steady job at FedEx, was active in the local Moorish Temple and was going to begin college this fall.

Wooten has told the press that Ball-Bey was not even at the home where the officers arrived, but rather in back of a relative’s home two doors down in a shared alleyway. He had visited his family after work and was still wearing his uniform when he was shot.

Another family attorney, Jerry Christmas, told the *Los Angeles Times* that Ball-Bey fled because the officers were in plainclothes and did not identify themselves as police. “He saw men with guns and he took off running,” at which point police fired their weapons, Christmas said.

Christmas and Wooten have interviewed multiple witnesses in the area, with each one contradicting the police account. “He was not armed, he did not have a gun; our interviews show that,” Christmas said.

St. Louis has refused to mandate that officers wear body cameras, more than a year after the police murder of unarmed teenager Michael Brown by Officer Darren Wilson in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson. This has been a conscious decision carried out by the city, along with most other major American cities, to ensure that killer cops continue to go unpunished. Without video evidence to the contrary, prosecuting attorneys—often closely connected to the police—are under no pressure to mount any investigation into police killings.

In the case of Brown, local prosecuting attorney Robert P. McCulloch rigged the grand jury proceedings to ensure a non-indictment of Officer Wilson, admitting testimony he knew to be perjured. Police murders routinely go unpunished without even the pretense of a grand jury, with officer accounts given full credence in the absence of video footage.

Since the death of Michael Brown, numerous police murders have only been exposed due to bystander or body camera evidence. Most notable was the April 4 murder of unarmed Walter Scott by Officer Michael Slager in North Charleston, South Carolina. Only the presence of bystander cell phone footage secured the possibility of a trial, as Slager sought to cover up the murder by planting his Taser stun gun next to Scott's lifeless body.

While St. Louis Police wring their hands over requiring officers to wear body cameras while on duty, they themselves have begun to actively record the actions of protesters, selectively used to tarnish largely peaceful demonstrations. In the video released after protests held on Wednesday over Ball-Bey's killing, officers are heard yelling "Rock! Brick!" but neither objects are ever filmed being thrown in the air.

Commenting on this video footage, Dotson declared Thursday, "It is important that we document the things that are happening."

Authorities have utilized this footage to justify their militarized response to spontaneous protests. As roughly 100 people gathered in the residential neighborhood where Ball-Bey was murdered, officials sent in a SWAT team armed with assault rifles in a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) tank, along with dozens of backup officers. Police then proceeded to arrest nine people over the course of the day. In the evening, they assaulted the few remaining protesters, as well as child bystanders, with a hail of smoke and tear gas.



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