

# Florida musician Corey Jones killed by plainclothes officer

Evan Blake  
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Corey Jones, a well-known 31-year-old musician from Boynton Beach, Florida, was shot to death by police officer Nouman Raja early Tuesday morning near the city of Palm Beach Gardens.

Raja, dressed in plainclothes and driving an unmarked vehicle, approached Jones on an Interstate 95 off-ramp as he waited for a tow truck to arrive to pick up his broken down vehicle. After a brief foot chase Raja shot and killed Jones about 30 yards from the car.

The state prosecutor has revealed that while Jones had a gun he never discharged his weapon, suggesting that Raja might have shot him while he fled. “We don’t know how many times he was shot. We don’t know whether he was shot in the back,” family attorney Benjamin Crump told CNN on Wednesday.

Jones had performed with his band, Future Prezidents, Saturday evening, and called band mate Mathew Huntsberger at around 1:45 a.m. on Sunday asking for help fixing his broken down SUV. Huntsberger told *The Washington Post* that the two were unable to resolve the issue, and called roadside assistance.

Huntsberger left Jones at around 2:30 a.m. while Jones waited for the tow truck. Roughly 45 minutes later, Jones was killed by Raja. “When I left him he was sitting in his car calling roadside assistance. I never would have thought that someone was going to come kill him,” Huntsberger said.

While the police have released limited details of what led to the shooting, they immediately sought to justify the killing by asserting that Jones was armed when Raja approached him, prompting the officer to shoot him an unspecified number of times, killing him instantly.

“As the officer exited his vehicle, he was suddenly confronted by an armed subject. As a result of the confrontation, the officer discharged his firearm,

resulting in the death of the subject,” the police department said in a statement Tuesday.

The police have justified the fact that Raja was dressed in plainclothes and driving an unmarked vehicle by claiming that he was involved in a burglary detail. They assert that Raja believed he was investigating an abandoned vehicle.

Police have not stated whether Raja identified himself as a police officer when he approached Jones, if Raja was carrying his badge, and what if any words were exchanged between the two men before the shooting. Raja’s car was not outfitted with a dash camera, and officers with the Palm Beach Gardens Police Department are not required to wear body cameras. The Jones family has demanded that police release video footage from nearby businesses and freeway cameras.

Raja has a recent history of serious misconduct while on the job. In 2011, he was given a written reprimand after chasing a car with expired tags through a crowd of people who were forced to jump out of the way for safety. In 2012, he received another written reprimand for three separate incidents. In one of the incidents he failed to file confiscated morphine that was later found in his vehicle.

Jones’s cousin Frank Hearst rejected the notion that he may have threatened the officer telling the *Post*, “They’re saying Corey approached him armed, which is a total lie. That don’t make sense.” Hearst noted that family members are outraged that the police are withholding crucial details of the shooting, including how many shots were fired and what weapon Jones allegedly was carrying when he was killed.

Many of Jones’ family members are active clergy members in the Palm Beach region, and Jones himself was a well-known and liked drummer for the Bible Church of God in Boynton Beach. The family held a

prayer vigil at the church Wednesday and plans to hold his funeral this Saturday.

Family members have described him as a gentle, church-going man who would not even kill fish he caught, choosing instead to release them back into the wild. Breante Allen, one of Jones' cousins said that he had told her of a recent gun purchase, which he bought for security reasons. Jones worked primarily as a property manager, and often collected rent from tenants at all hours of the night, Allen told the *Miami Herald*.

She also said that he bought the weapon in response to the nine people shot to death at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June. Allen told the *Herald*, "That's what triggered him. He asked, 'What if someone tried to do that to my church? My family?'"

The Jones family is meeting today with the Palm Beach County state attorney while a protest rally is being held at the Palm Beach Gardens police station.

Despite the nationwide protests against police violence that have taken place over the past year the rate of police killings has increased. According to one count, the shooting of Jones was the 948th police killing so far this year.



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