

Fatal police shooting in Raleigh, North Carolina provokes protests

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A crowd of about 300 people gathered in Raleigh, North Carolina, Monday evening to protest the fatal police shooting of a young black man earlier in the day.

On Tuesday, police identified D.C. Twiddy, 29, as the Raleigh police officer who shot and killed the man during a foot chase the day before. Twiddy's account of the incident has not been released and he has been placed on administrative duty pending investigation.

As of Tuesday afternoon, police had not released the name of the deceased. However, a Raleigh woman, Rolanda Byrd, told NBC News that she believes it was her 24-year-old son, Akiel Denkins, and that witnesses told her they saw him shot while running from the police. She said her son worked for a moving company and was the father of two young boys.

Raleigh police said in a statement that Twiddy had been pursuing a man wanted on a felony drug charge Monday afternoon when he fired at the suspect and killed him in the vicinity of Bragg and East streets in the city's impoverished South Park neighborhood.

Chief of Police Cassandra Deck-Brown claimed that a gun was found "in close proximity" to the suspect.

Deck-Brown had been scheduled to meet with the Raleigh mayor and city council Monday to discuss equipping police officers with body cameras, but the meeting was postponed after the shooting death.

People soon gathered at the scene of the fatal shooting, shouting at police across yellow crime scene tape. "They killed my son for no reason," Byrd told local news station WRAL. "Everybody out here said he was running, didn't have a gun, [was] trying to jump a fence, and that officer shot my son seven times. For what? For nothing," she said.

"My son didn't have no gun on him. My son wasn't threatening that officer," Byrd told reporters. She said people in the area at the time told her that her son was

fleeing the police and "they couldn't catch him, so they shot at him seven times."

Byrd told reporters that her son had a warrant out for his arrest for failure to appear and that she believed that was why he ran from police. She told NBC News that her son didn't own a gun and that witnesses told her they didn't see him with one during the police chase.

A witness, Truvalia Kearney, told the *Raleigh News & Observer* that she was standing near Denkins around noon on Monday when a police car pulled up and Denkins "took off running." She said that Denkins jumped a chain-link fence and ducked into the backyard of a house while Twiddy, the officer, pursued him.

Kearney told the *News & Observer*, "The officer jumped the fence and fell down" and then "pulled his gun out and started shooting. [Denkins] got shot in the back."

Byrd, the slain man's mother, spoke to reporters at the scene of the shooting several hours after it happened. "Everybody out here's saying that he ran," she said. "He wasn't running toward the officer, he was running away from the officer. ... He wasn't threatening anyone."

Byrd told reporters that her lawyer is in possession of a video in which the shooting can be heard, but not seen. "There's video," she said. "Y'all are going to see it soon."

Police chief Deck-Brown said that the shooting would be investigated by the State Bureau of Investigation and by the Raleigh Police Department's internal affairs unit.

People gathered Monday evening at a makeshift memorial and vigil near the scene of the shooting. Neighborhood resident Casanova Womack told WRAL that tensions were running high in the neighborhood and that "People are just frustrated, angry, upset and

disappointed.”

Rev. Chris Jones, pastor at a church several blocks from the shooting scene, told WRAL of Jenkins, “I treated him like my son. I’ve fed him at my church before,” Jones said. “Now, he’s lying back there, dead.”

Jones questioned why the police had to kill Denkins, WRAL reported. “If he ran from you today, you could have arrested him tomorrow,” he said. “Why did you have to kill him today?”

According to a *Washington Post* database that tracks fatal police shootings, Monday’s shooting is the first time a Raleigh police officer has shot and killed someone since at least the beginning of last year. Twenty-nine people were fatally shot by police in North Carolina in 2015.



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