

New video shows off-duty New York cop murdering motorist

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11 July 2016

Newly released security video footage shows that off-duty New York Police Department (NYPD) officer Wayne Isaacs fired on Delrawn Small as he approached Isaac's car at a traffic intersection shortly after midnight on July 4 in Brooklyn's East New York neighborhood.

Small can be seen walking up to Isaac's window and then staggering back as bullets hit him. He glances off of another car and drops to the street where he dies. Small had been driving a car with his girlfriend, Zaquanna Albert, and their two young children.

After the killing, the New York media reported the incident as one of road-rage in which Small grabbed Isaacs and punched him. The Murdoch-owned *New York Post* not only described Small pummeling the cop but also carried a follow-up story that alleged that his relatives were seeking revenge.

The *New York Times*, for its part, uncritically quoted Police Commissioner William Bratton as saying, "We are comfortable, based on the preliminary investigation, that it was an apparent road-rage incident that precipitated the events."

The next day rumors of the existence of a video began to surface. By July 8, when the video was made public, the police story fell apart. The New York State Attorney General's office took over the investigation of the killing, as is now routine for cases of police shootings in which the victim is unarmed.

Small's brother, Victor Dempsey, responded by saying, "The video is as clear as day. That everything they told us from the very beginning was a lie. Was a lie. Every single thing. And I don't know how to feel now. All I know is my brother was murdered. Point blank period murdered."

Small's family has held a vigil, and various political figures around the Democratic Party have come

forward to contain popular anger, including the Reverend Al Sharpton and Democratic Party City council member Charles Barron.

But the media has been distinctly quiet at what is almost certainly an unprovoked police murder and subsequent attempt at a cover-up. The *New York Times* has written no editorials, and its op-ed columnists have not expressed their outrage. Moreover, protesters organized by groups around the Democratic Party have not raised Delrawn Small's name—with a few exceptions—alongside Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Philando Castile in Minnesota, both of whom were brutally murdered by police officers shortly after Small and whose murders were graphically caught on video.

The reason for this is not hard to find: both Delrawn Small and the cop who killed him, Wayne Isaacs, are black.

This follows a predictable pattern. In all but the most egregious cases, such as the murder of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, assaults that involve black, Asian or Latino officers generally receive far less publicity. Wherever possible, crimes by prison guards or cops are downplayed in the media when the issue of race cannot be put to the forefront.

To cite only two examples from New York City alone: In March 2015 a retired African-American Rikers Island prison guard followed, shot and killed a young Latino man with whom he had had a dispute on the subway in Brooklyn. There was no outcry in the bourgeois media, and the case was quickly hushed up and fully legitimized by the police. No charges were brought against the retired guard.

Then there is the killing of Akai Gurley, who was black, in an unlit stairwell in November 2014 in the East New York Pink Houses by NYPD officer Peter Liang, who is Chinese-American. The virtual police

occupation by the NYPD of public housing in New York City did not become a topic of concern for the *New York Times*. When Liang was given no jail time for the killing, there was no mobilization of dissent by the *Times's* editorial pages and no marches were sponsored by the promoters of #BlackLivesMatter, since it did not fit into the racist narrative of sections of the ruling elite, including the *Times* and the Democratic Party.

Whatever role racism may play in one or another police killing, these incidents and many others demonstrate that police violence is fundamentally a class question, in which workers and young people of all races are the victims of the police as an institution of the state and a defender of the ruling class.



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