

Notes on police violence

US police kill thirty people in ten days

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Since October 2, police in the US have killed at least 30 people in 21 states, according to the database KilledByPolice.net. The dead include:

* Sadine Dixon, an 84-year-old white woman in Rector, Arkansas. She was killed when officer Terry Burdin crashed into her car from behind while pursuing a stolen vehicle. The two suspects he was pursuing, Robert Huffines, 36, and Lea Mamino, 32, have been charged with first-degree murder in relation to Dixon's death.

* Antoine L. Ladeaux, a 32-year-old Native American man in Sheridan County, Nebraska. Ladeaux, who had run a stop sign and did not have a license plate on his vehicle, refused to pull over and led a Nebraska state trooper on a five-minute chase. The unnamed officer's cruiser hit Ladeaux's car, sending it off the road and ejecting Ladeaux from his seat. Ladeaux died at the scene. Three passengers were transported to Gordon Memorial Hospital and have since been released.

* Dean Allen Bruning, a 51-year-old white man in Mackinac County, Michigan. A relative, worried that Bruning was suicidal, called emergency services and asked that someone check on him. Two police officers arrived at Bruning's home and found him with a handgun. One of the cops shot him twice. Police did not say whether Bruning was aiming the handgun at anyone.

As is routine with police killings in the US, all of the officers involved in each of the deaths have been placed on paid administrative leave.

The violence committed over the past ten days did not target any one particular racial or ethnic group. Fourteen of the 20 victims identified so far were white. What is common to all these victims is their working class or poor backgrounds.

Major news outlets, which overwhelmingly portray police violence as an exclusively racial question, have paid scant attention to the 30 people killed over the past 10 days, presumably because most of the victims were white. At this writing, over 900 people have been killed by police so far this year.

The only homicides involving police that have made it to the front pages of US newspapers over the past ten days are killings of police, all three in California, not the more numerous killings by police.

The first, Sergeant Steve Owen, 53, was killed in Lancaster, California while confronting a burglary suspect, 27-year-old Trenton Trevon Lovell, who has been charged with capital murder.

In Palm Springs, California, 27-year-old Lesley Zerebny and 63-year-old Jose Vega were shot to death by a mentally ill man, 26-year-old John Felix. A neighbor, Frances Serrano, called police after Felix's father, Santos, came running to her for help.

"He said, 'Help. I need help. My son is in the house, and he's crazy. He has a gun. He's ready to shoot all the police,'" she told the *Desert Sun*. "He was afraid of his son." Santos said that his son was waiting for police to arrive and was "going to shoot them."

John Felix was standing outside the house when Zerebny, Vega and a third officer approached. He shot all three, then barricaded himself inside his family's house. The stand-off lasted over twelve hours and involved more than a dozen patrol cars, three fire engines, and a SWAT truck. "There were police everywhere," Serrano recalled. "I looked out the window and saw police with rifles."

Police used remote-controlled robots to pinpoint Felix's location. Felix finally exited the house and surrendered after midnight, after chemical agents had been propelled into the house.

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