

Latest NYPD killing highlights de Blasio's history of defending the police

Isaac Finn**22 October 2016**

The New York Police Department's (NYPD) recent killing of Deborah Danner, a 66-year-old Bronx resident afflicted with schizophrenia, further exposes the failure of "progressive" Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio to stop the wave of police killings.

NYPD Sergeant Hugh Barry and five other officers arrived in the Castle Hill section of the Bronx on October 18, after Danner's neighbors reported a problem. Following a confrontation in which Danner picked up a baseball bat, Barry—an eight-year veteran of the NYPD—discharged two shots from his service revolver, killing the elderly woman.

The de Blasio administration has developed an almost routine response to the brutal police killings that attempt to appease public anger while defending the NYPD's egregious actions as the product of insufficient training.

Immediately following the killing, de Blasio described the killing as "unacceptable," and vowed to prevent such incidents from ever happening again through initiatives such as training officers to handle confrontations with mentally-ill individuals.

The new Police Commissioner James O'Neill also described the incident as a failure and stripped Barry of his gun and badge and placed him on modified duty.

The Bronx District Attorney, Darcel Clark, is currently investigating the incident. However, such investigations are used to whitewash police abuse and violence towards the population. The New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has announced that his office would not be conducting a separate investigation.

Edward Mullins—president of the Sergeants Benevolent Association that is representing Barry—has criticized the mayor's comments claiming had Barry not shot and killed Danner, "We could be sitting here

talking about how a 66-year-old fractured his skull."

According to the *New York Post*, Barry has also been named in two lawsuits alleging his involvement in the beatings of African-American and Hispanic men. In one case, 25-year-old Gregory Peters charged that Barry and other officers punched, kicked, and beat him with batons in Time Square on August 22, 2010, and displayed racial animus. The suit was settled for \$25,000 in 2012.

The police killing of Danner is the product of the de Blasio administration's failure to stem the epidemic of police killings and further embolden the NYPD's brutal actions. According to the *Guardian*, Danner is the ninth person killed by an NYPD officer this year.

The self-proclaimed "progressive" mayor ran for office in 2013 on a platform of protecting New York City's most disenfranchised residents and in opposition to "stop-and-frisk," an NYPD program of disproportionately harassing and searching black and Hispanic working class youth.

After de Blasio took office, however, he began courting the NYPD through the re-appointment of Bill Bratton, who had initiated the stop-and-frisk program under mayor Rudy Giuliani, as the NYPD's Police Commissioner. Bratton resigned earlier this year leading to de Blasio appointing O'Neill, a longtime associate of Bratton, to the position.

The mayor has continuously moved to adapt himself to the police, and assure cops that his occasional anti-police brutality statements are nothing more than rhetoric.

In 2014 de Blasio came under criticism from the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association for his statements on the death of Eric Garner—a Staten Island resident who died after a NYPD officer put him in a chokehold. In response de Blasio kowtowed to the NYPD's line,

associating anti-police brutality protesters with a mentally unstable individual who killed two officers and demanding that demonstrations end. He also vowed that he would veto a bill that would designate the police use of chokeholds as a misdemeanor.

The chokehold is already explicitly banned from the NYPD manual, but did not prevent Officer Daniel Pantaleo from using the hold on Garner. Despite the incident being filmed Pantaleo was not even indicted for killing Garner.

The following year the de Blasio administration announced that it would hire 1,300 more cops, including a heavily armed counterterrorism team composed of 300 officers. Soon after the announcement, Bratton let slip that the counterterrorism team would be used to deal with situations such as the protests against police killings.

Last August, de Blasio and Bratton both appealed to Congress to grant New York City \$100 million in anti-terrorism funding as part of the Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative.

Over the past two years de Blasio has demonstrated that his promises to reform the police are only used in order to temporarily appease public anger. The primary concern of the de Blasio administration is to protect the police, who are increasingly being used across the country to suppress and intimidate a population that is becoming politicized over the issues of social inequality and police brutality.



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