

Notes on police violence

Philadelphia to pay \$4.4 million to delivery worker shot by police in 2014

E.P. Milligan
10 January 2017

The city of Philadelphia has agreed to pay \$4.4 million to Phillippe Holland, a 20-year-old college student who police seriously wounded in 2014 while he was attempting to deliver takeout food.

Two plainclothes officers fired into Holland's Ford Taurus 14 times, striking him in the head and body. Then-Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey announced shortly after the shooting that officers Mitchell Farrell and Kevin Hanvey had shot at the wrong man.

The settlement is the largest to be paid out for a police shooting in Philadelphia's history, according to the city's Law Department records. On Friday, the mayor's office callously dismissed the shooting as the result of "an unfortunate, regrettable series of events."

Though the city has awarded Holland a record settlement, the incident has radically altered the young man's life. He still has bullet fragments in his brain that doctors were unable to remove. He has been left with a permanent seizure disorder and his face is disfigured with a scar from the bullet wound.

Holland was delivering a cheeseburger to a house in West Philadelphia on April 22, 2014, when Farrell and Hanvey responded to reports of gunshots in the area.

The young man gave a chilling recount of events in a court deposition. He said that when he saw plainclothes officers Farrell and Hanvey approach him, he thought he was about to be robbed—not an uncommon occurrence for food delivery workers, which are easy targets. He slipped into his car through the passenger door when one officer shined a light into his car and Holland saw a gun in the other's hand.

Farrell and Hanvey, who were not in uniform, never identified themselves as police officers. Understandably, Holland panicked and tried to pull out

of his parking spot. The two officers, without warning, opened fire, hitting him in the head and body.

The officers claimed they had told Holland they were police and that they were in fear of their lives because Holland drove his car in their direction. At the time, however, it was against police regulations for officers to fire at a moving vehicle unless an individual inside the car was threatening them or someone else with a form of deadly force other than the vehicle itself.

Despite the department's Use of Force Review Board concluding that Farrell and Hanvey had violated department policy, it did not recommend a punishment. The district attorney's office quickly ruled out pressing any charges against the officers.

A police spokesman said that the two officers have been on administrative duty since the shooting over two years ago, and that "discipline is still pending." The department declined to comment on whether or not the officers would be allowed to return to street duty.

The city has boasted that it is attempting to prevent further police killings of this nature by introducing new protocols for plainclothes officers to introduce themselves as police (apparently, "Police!" does not suffice). The department also will introduce a new training video that plainclothes officers will have to watch before new assignments, which will be implemented July 1.

Unarmed Minneapolis man shot and killed by police

Police shot and killed an unarmed Twin Cities man in

Mankato, Minnesota, early Saturday morning, in yet another case of the use of excessive force. The shooting took place at a Country Inn and Suites hotel. Chase Tuseth, 33, had gotten behind the hotel lobby counter and had begun throwing things, according to staff.

According to the police report, Officer Gary Shnorenberg arrived at the scene and promptly tasered Tuseth. When Shnorenberg tried to handcuff Tuseth, witnesses claim he broke free and began punching and kicking the officer. The officer then pulled out his weapon and shot Tuseth, killing him.

Tuseth was a teacher at Tokata Learning Center, an alternative high school in Shakopee, Minnesota. The school's principal, Eric Serbus, described him an "outstanding educator."

"We are going to miss Chase," Serbus told CBS Minnesota. "Chase is such an important part of our school. Part of our family. He brought a lot of positive energy into our school. We are just trying to process and cope right now."

Tuseth's grandmother told CBS Minnesota that he was an outstanding athlete and a Minnesota State University-Mankato graduate. He had previously taught in Japan and South Korea. She said the behavior described in the police report was uncharacteristic of her grandson.

Police said McGovern attempted to stun Dove with a Taser, but it did not work. Two more officers arrived, and they shocked Dove again with a Taser. As they handcuffed Dove and placed him in leg restraints, he collapsed. St. Petersburg Fire Rescue crews attempted first aid on Dove as he was transported to St. Anthony's Hospital. He was later pronounced dead on the premises.

The officers did not find any drugs on Dove. Witnesses say he had smoked synthetic cannabinoids before officers had arrived. The man's death is currently "under investigation" by police and the state attorney's and medical examiner's offices. In the meantime, the officers involved will remain on full duty.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

Florida man dies from Taser as police struggle to arrest him near homeless shelters

A St. Petersburg, Florida, man died the morning of January 4 as police officers struggled to arrest him on a sidewalk near a group of homeless shelters.

Officers struggled with Joshua Dove, 35, for several minutes before they used a Taser twice in an attempt to subdue him. He died shortly thereafter, likely of cardiac arrest.

Police were dispatched to the area because they had been given a tip that Dove and other men were using drugs. Dove had been with four others when officers arrived. The officers told the men to leave, but Dove did not comply. According to officers, he then became confrontational and threw a punch at officer Patrick McGovern.