

Notes on police violence

Chicago police fatally shoot 37-year-old man

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Late into the night of July 1, Chicago police shot and killed a man in the highly impoverished Lawndale area of Chicago's southwest side. While the Chicago Police Department (CPD) claims he was heavily armed and confronting them, the family are demanding the police body camera footage of the shooting be released.

The victim was 37-year-old Quintec Locke. After being shot by the police at 10:45 pm, he was taken to Mount Sinai hospital and died in the hospital at 12:26 am. The autopsy produced by the Cook County Medical Examiner's office revealed he had died of multiple gunshot wounds.

Police claim that he was armed with an AK-47 assault rifle and that they shot him in the head when an "armed confrontation" broke out. Witnesses have contradicted the official police statements, as is often the case in police-involved shootings, and Locke's family have denounced the police killing.

According to witnesses, the officers did not announce themselves or ask Locke to drop his weapon, and they dispute that he was shot in the head—witnesses claimed he was shot in the back.

Speaking to WGN-TV in Chicago, Eric Russell, who works with families of police-involved shootings, stated that there are "several narratives" about what happened.

Russell said that Locke may have been "shooting at some people he allegedly was having an altercation with." He added, however, that "The Chicago police acted as judge, jury and executioner. He did not command [Quintec] to drop his gun or announce himself. He didn't kill anybody although he had a gun. Maybe he would have surrendered."

Other witnesses have noted that gunshots are regularly heard in the neighborhood, suggesting that Quintec may have not fired his weapon at all.

Regardless, Chicago police, as across the country, have a history of shooting to kill without ever resorting to tactics of de-escalation. The actual body cam footage may reveal more damning details, as is frequently the case with police-involved shootings.

In January, a Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation—following the cover-up of the police murder of Laquan McDonald—came out with a scathing report detailing a pattern or practice of use of force and violations of basic constitutional rights by the CPD. The Justice report found that officers frequently failed to de-escalate and carried out brutal and horrific crimes against the working class and the poorest layers of the population, many of them African-American and Hispanic.

Meanwhile, not a single high-level official has been prosecuted. Rahm Emanuel, the Democratic mayor of Chicago, has worked with the entire political establishment to cover up their role in sanctioning police murders in Chicago and across the country.

In the wake of the exposure of the McDonald killing, all organizations of police "oversight" and accountability, including the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA) and the Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA), were found to be implicated in the cover-up of police violence and brutality. The Justice report revealed these so-called "independent" review organizations failed to investigate the majority of cases that they are required to investigate.

While IPRA is slated to be replaced by yet another "oversight" agency named the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), this is widely seen as a cosmetic facelift that will not produce any meaningful reform of the police organization. No measures have been put into place which will guarantee any form of genuine independent oversight of cover-ups of police

violence by the political establishment.

Recently, three police officers were indicted by a special prosecutor for covering up the murder of McDonald. Higher-level political figures such as Emanuel have not been charged for their role in the cover-up at all. Neither have charges been brought against the city's aldermen, who paid the family millions of dollars in order to suppress the video evidence of the brutal murder, which shows the police officers firing 16 shots into his body.

Following the murder of McDonald, Emanuel promised a series of steps that would reform the CPD, which has a decades-long history of torture and abuse. In reality, police murders and violence have continued under his watch despite all pretenses of "reform."

Recently, Emanuel backed away the DOJ recommendation that the city of Chicago enter into a court-enforced consent decree to enact police reform. Such court-enforced measures have been used in other cities across the US, but have not fundamentally stopped the national reign of police violence. Instead, Emanuel has promised to work together with the Trump administration and Attorney General Jeff Sessions on a toothless "memorandum of agreement" to reform the department.

Under the pretense of cracking down on gun violence, Democrats and Republicans are calling for greater police enforcement across the state of Illinois. Emanuel, who has met several times with Trump, is now working to expand a partnership with the Trump administration to bring more federal agents to Chicago to expand police powers.

According to statistics of police murders, compiled by killedbypolice.net, more than 600 people have been killed so far this year. Over one thousand were killed in both 2016 and 2015.

In the city of Denver and across the state of Colorado, there has been a spike of police-involved shootings, with more than eight separate shootings by police officers since June. Five of those incidents have resulted in fatalities. Last Friday, police officers shot and killed a female carjacking suspect after a long car chase spanning multiple cities. Another man was shot that same evening by police, claiming he had a weapon. Not even an hour later, officers killed a 23-year-old man on a foot chase.

The next day, officers from the Fort Collins Police

Department and Colorado State University police force shot and killed 19-year-old Jeremy Holmes near the campus. According to his mother, Holmes suffered from schizophrenia. Police claim he was armed with a knife before they shot and killed him.

A 30-year-old man was killed in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in a deadly police-involved shooting. In Cincinnati, in the state of Ohio, state troopers shot and killed 36-year-old Dana Dubose, who police claimed was a suspect in a homicide.



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