

Notes on police violence

Officer who fatally shot Philando Castile to receive \$48,500 in severance pay

Anthony Bertolt
13 July 2017

Former St. Anthony, Minnesota, police officer Jeronimo Yanez, who was acquitted last month of manslaughter and discharge of a deadly weapon after he fatally shot Philando Castile, will receive a \$48,500 payout as part of his severance agreement.

Yanez will also receive up to 600 hours of unused compensatory time—but the agreement did not specify how much of this time he had accrued. City officials announced this severance agreement on Monday as “the most thoughtful way to move forward and help the community-wide healing process proceed.”

Following his acquittal, city officials released a statement declaring their intention to offer Yanez a voluntary separation agreement “to help him transition to another career.”

Yanez shot Castile last year during a traffic stop for what the officer claimed was a broken tail light, despite the fact that the dash-cam video from Yanez’s squad car showed otherwise. The officer also claimed at the time that Castile matched the description of a robbery suspect, telling another officer that he had a “wide-set nose.”

During his trial, Yanez claimed in court that he feared for his life and thought that Castile was reaching for his gun—even after Castile told the police officer that he had a permit for a weapon and had one in his possession, as is required by gun safety procedures.

Diamond Reynolds, Castile’s girlfriend, responded to the shooting by broadcasting a live video of the aftermath on Facebook, where she questioned the officer and managed to capture Castile’s last words: “I wasn’t reaching for it.” The disturbing video, in which Castile can be seen bleeding out from his wounds, quickly went viral online, sparking nationwide protests

against police violence.

After his trial, Minnesota officials released the video from Yanez’s dash-cam to the public. The video showed the brutal shooting of Castile and refuted the basis of Yanez’s defense that he was reaching for a gun. Both Castile and Reynolds can be heard in the video telling the officer that he is not reaching for a gun. Yanez aggressively fired his gun into the car despite the assurances of both Castile and Reynolds, killing Castile as he was reaching for his license and registration. In addition to Castile and Reynolds, Reynolds’s four-year-old daughter was in the car.

Responding to the announcement of Yanez’s generous severance package, Clarence Castile, Philando Castile’s uncle, told the Associated Press that Yanez “should be in jail.”

Yanez’s acquittal and subsequent payout follow a trend of police murder in America. Between 2005 and April 2017, only 80 police officers were arrested on charges of murder or manslaughter, and of this number only 28 were convicted.

While most officers who shoot and kill do not face charges, those who do are usually acquitted, and then rewarded with a sum of money.

Darren Wilson, the Ferguson, Missouri, police officer who brutally shot unarmed Michael Brown in 2014, received administrative leave while a grand jury deliberated and ultimately decided not to bring charges. Caesar Goodson, the Baltimore, Maryland, officer who gave Freddie Gray a “rough ride” in a van, ultimately killing him, received more than \$87,000 in back pay after his acquittal.

This trend held true throughout the Obama years and continues under the Trump administration, which has

promised to provide even more support to the police and emboldened the most reactionary elements.

Since January of this year, at least 650 people have been killed in encounters with police, according to online aggregator *killedbypolice.net*. Another tally kept by the *Washington Post* found that at least 523 people have been shot and killed by police in 2017, on track to match the 963 people fatally shot last year.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact