

Notes on police violence

Louisiana woman charged with attempted murder after sheriff's deputy kills her boyfriend

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19 July 2017

In yet another egregious display of police violence in the US, a sheriff's deputy in Evangeline Parish, Louisiana shot and killed 27-year-old father of three DeJuan Guillory earlier this month.

Adding insult to fatal injury, Guillory's girlfriend, DeQuince Brown, who attempted to intervene as deputy sheriff Holden LaFleur shot and killed him, is being charged with attempted first-degree murder of a police officer.

According to killedbypolice.net, Guillory was the 626th person killed by US cops in 2017. Since his death on July 6, 39 more people have been killed, more than 3 per day, according to the website, bringing the year-to-date total to 665.

Guillory and Brown, both African American, were driving on an ATV through the countryside outside of the small town of Mamou, on their way to hunt for frogs, a common recreational activity in rural Louisiana.

The couple was stopped by LaFleur, who is white, allegedly out of suspicion that the ATV they were driving had been stolen. Pride Doran, the Guillory family's attorney, denied this, stating that they had parked Guillory's truck at a friend's house and borrowed his ATV for the day.

LaFleur became enraged when Guillory and Brown were unable to provide identification, according to the Guillory family's attorney. "If you are out frogging, you have mud up to your waist. DeQuince (Brown) explained they left their IDs in the truck," one attorney told the press. "The deputy got irate with them."

LaFleur questioned them and began yelling, initiating

an aggressive confrontation with DeJuan. Attorney Pride Doran described what happened: "The deputy pointed his finger to DeJuan's face and DeJuan pushed him," Doran said. "It turned into a fight." The deputy then returned to his vehicle and came back with his weapon drawn, ordering the two to get down on the ground.

Joe Long, Brown's attorney, told PenPointNews: "Guillory was on the ground on his belly with his hands behind his back. The officer had a gun trained at Guillory's back, maybe a foot or two from Guillory's body. They were still arguing back and forth, but Guillory was on the ground as directed, his hands were behind his back. He was not resisting. All of a sudden, a shot rang out, and Brown knew that Guillory had been shot. She then jumped on the officer's back to stop him from killing Guillory."

LaFleur's account, which claims that the couple had initiated the conflict, is filled with inconsistencies. He claims that Guillory hit him in the head so hard that he "saw stars," but then still allegedly had the wherewithal to draw his gun, order Guillory to the ground, and begin handcuffing him. He claims that Guillory "struggled" with him even though he admits in his own affidavit Guillory was lying prone on his stomach.

The basis of the first-degree murder charge against Brown is LaFleur's claim that she jumped on his back and attempted to grab his gun, allegedly shouting "we are going to kill him."

State police are reportedly in possession of dashcam footage of the conflict, but refused a request by CNN for a copy, "pending the investigation."

Brown claims that state police falsified her version of events in the arrest warrant affidavit. It omits crucial elements such as her assertion that LaFleur initiated the conflict and that LaFleur shot Guillory while his knee was resting against his back. This suggests that a cover-up of the incident is already underway.

Media reports have made clear that LaFleur has a history of alleged violence. The sheriff's deputy is named in a wrongful death lawsuit stemming from a 2014 incident when he worked for the police department of the nearby town of Ville Platte, the parish seat of Evangeline Parish.

The suit alleges that LaFleur killed Keenan Ardoin, a 24-year-old African American man, during a domestic dispute call by pushing his face down in the mud until he died of asphyxiation.

Guillory's death at the hands of LaFleur is not an isolated tragedy. Rather, it and the thousands more like it arise out of the explosive growth of poverty and social inequality, incompatible with democratic forms of rule. The ruling class is turning more and more towards openly authoritarian, police state forms of rule.

Under both Trump and the previous Obama administration, the militarization of police and shielding of killer cops from any legal repercussions has been a national policy, with billions of dollars in surplus military hardware funneled to local police departments and the Justice Department siding with the police in every civil rights case to reach the Supreme Court. In particularly high-profile police killings, the standard practice under Obama was to announce a civil rights investigation which amounted to a whitewash.

Evangeline Parish in particular was the subject of a federal investigation, the findings of which were released last December. It found that both the Sheriff's Office and Ville Platte police systematically imprisoned 900 people, equivalent to almost 3 percent of the parish's entire population, without charges. The Justice Department did not indict a single individual for civil rights violations stemming from this investigation.

Roy Oliver, a former police officer in the Dallas suburb of Balch Springs, was indicted Monday for the murder of 15-year-old Jordan Edwards this April.

Police were called out to respond to allegations of underage drinking at a party in Balch Springs the night of April 29, when Oliver fired several rounds from a rifle into a car carrying Edwards, two of his brothers, and two friends, who were leaving the party together. Balch Springs police initially defended the shooting, claiming that the vehicle was reversing "aggressively" towards officers; they only changed course after dashcam footage showed that Edwards' car was driving *away* when Edwards opened fire.

Oliver was also indicted last month on two counts of aggravated assault in a separate incident when he allegedly pulled his gun after a minor traffic accident. Prosecutors only sought charges against Oliver after the facts of the Edwards shooting became known.

An attorney for the Edwards family called the indictment "one step on the road to justice." Oliver faces between 5 and 99 years if convicted of first degree murder; he also faces four counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon for firing on the other four occupants of the car. If Oliver is found guilty, he would be the first officer convicted of murder in Dallas County since 1973, according to the BBC.



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Dallas, Texas-area cop charged for murder of black teenager