

Notes on police violence

Charges dropped against Texas sheriff's deputies accused of sexually violating woman during traffic stop

Nick Barrickman
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A legal representative of 23-year-old Charnesia Corley announced Monday plans to file suit against the Harris County Sheriff's Department days after charges against two deputies were dropped by the local district attorney's office. Officers Ronaldine Pierre and William Strong had been facing charges of official oppression after a 2015 roadside stop resulted in the officers forcibly restraining the young woman as they conducted a warrantless cavity search.

Corley had consented to a vehicle search after officers claimed to smell marijuana. After having found nothing in Corley's car, officers insisted they do an on-the-spot cavity search.

According to Corley, officers insisted on searching her, responding "So?" when she expressed her discomfort with the forced strip search. An 11-minute police dash-cam video shows Corley lying face-down with her pants off as officers conduct the procedure. At the end of the video, Corley can be heard saying "that was extreme, to pull my clothes down, in front of people. ... People were watching—you didn't see people walking around?...it's not like I'm shooting away," to which an officer coldly states, "It's just one of those things. ... If you had been honest from the beginning. ... You escalated it. I gave you several outs."

Officers eventually found 0.2 ounces of marijuana on Corley, an amount not warranting jail time under local practice. Corley was later charged with resisting arrest for struggling against the forced cavity search.

On August 4, the District Attorney's office inexplicably dropped charges against the two officers, stating "significant" new facts had come to light that

justified the empaneling of a new grand jury. That grand jury subsequently dismissed all charges.

Natasha Sinclair, assistant district attorney for Harris County, argued for the legality of the officers' actions, telling Fox News, "No one in this office stands by the search the way it was conducted. No one condones that. No one thinks it's appropriate. It should not have happened. However, bad decisions, bad judgment, may not rise to the level of a criminal offense."

Due to grand jury secrecy laws, the exonerating "evidence" for the two officers will not be released, the effect being that the police officers charged with raping Charnesia Corley will be given more privacy than their victim.

In announcing the new charges, Sam Cammack, the victim's attorney, stated, "If what those officers did to Miss Corley was not mistreatment—did not amount to rape—I don't know what is." Cammack suggested the local DA's office had colluded with the county to frustrate the prosecution: "We know there's been conversations between the county attorney and the district attorney's office. ... They even shared our depositions of Ms. Corley with the district attorney's office." Cammack has called for a special investigator to oversee the case against the county.

Family calls for federal investigation of Mississippi police department after man killed in case of mistaken identity

The family of Ismael Lopez, a 41-year-old father shot to death by police in Southaven, Mississippi, last month, has called for the Department of Justice to investigate the Southaven Police Department for the July 27 slaying.

“They didn’t release the information on the police officers who were involved, they haven’t released any relevant information as to how this could have happened; most importantly they haven’t offered any condolences or apologies for killing an innocent man,” stated family attorney Aaron Neglia.

Lopez was killed inside his home by plainclothes cops. Police claim to have been responding to domestic violence charges brought against a neighbor, mistakenly confusing Lopez’s home address with that of the suspect. It has been revealed that not only had police failed to respond to the correct address, but they had failed even to obtain a warrant prior to doing so.

According to police, Lopez aggressively confronted them with a firearm, exchanging fire with officers before being killed by a gunshot to the head. Lopez’s family has asserted these claims are false, arguing that not only was Lopez unarmed at the time of his death, but that police had failed to announce who they were before shooting.

“All he heard was pound, pound, pound, pound, pound, pound, pound, and then pop, pop, pop of the gunshot,” recounted Neglia, who then added, “We’ve been flooded with phone calls of police brutality, police shootings, family members that were murdered by Southaven Police.”

Lopez’s death has resulted in community protests against the Southaven police. “The police department is there to protect and serve, and that’s the opposite of what’s happening right now, so we need to address this immediately,” stated local pastor Rolando Rostro to a CBS local affiliate at an August 3 protest against the killing. “This is a community issue, not just a one Latino issue. ... It’s all of us,” said Rostro.

Cellphone video in Troy, New York shows man bleeding, crying for help after police shoot him

A cell phone video was released Wednesday capturing the moments after police officers shot Dahmeek McDonald, a 22-year-old African American in Troy, New York. McDonald, who had done time for drug possession, was wanted for violating parole when he was confronted inside his vehicle and shot twice by

Troy police, with one bullet entering his torso and another grazing his head.

In a video, taken by a bystander, McDonald can be heard screaming for help as blood pours from his scalp onto the pavement. “Why’d you all shoot me? Why’d you all shoot me? I’m about to die,” McDonald cries. Bystanders can also be seen calling to the police to get McDonald help. The shooting resulted in spontaneous protests forming around city hall, led by family and friends of McDonald.

Troy police have not released footage of the moments before the shooting, nor have they stated whether McDonald had been armed at the time of the encounter. Witnesses to the event claimed the police had not been provoked. “I literally stepped two steps back and pow, pow, pow,” said Brittany Hughes, who had been speaking to McDonald moments before police interjected. Hughes stated that the officers had guns drawn before even stopping their vehicle, “so you have all the intentions of coming to shoot somebody.”

As in many impoverished areas across the country, Troy police have a record of brutality, including three fatal shootings in less than two years. “At the end of the day, nobody trusts the police,” stated Hughes to a local news publication. “If me and my boyfriend get into an altercation and I call to ask you to get him out of the house, how do I know you won’t shoot him?”



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