Notes on Police Violence

Akron, Ohio police claim 17-year-old shot himself in the back of a police car

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Police in Akron, Ohio, say that 17-year-old Xavier McMullen killed himself while in police custody last Friday night. McMullen died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head while in the back of a police car, the Summit County Medical Examiner announced on Monday.

Relatives of McMullen are questioning the official version of events and want to know how the boy could have had a gun on him after being handcuffed and taken into custody on suspicion of armed robbery.

Wiley McMullen, Xavier's 29-year-old brother, told *Cleveland.com* he was still shaken days after the shooting and wanted to know how his brother could have shot himself with his hands in cuffs behind his back.

"I don't believe he killed himself. I can't," Wiley told the news site, "But maybe, if he had a gun on him, he was trying to get it off of him and while wiggling and struggling, the trigger pulled. I'd understand a gunshot wound to his back, stomach, something like that. But not the head— how is that possible?"

"Why wasn't he patted down properly?" Wiley asked. "The cops did not do their job. I feel the cops took my brother." He demanded answers from police officials, saying, "Enough violence is going on around us. We want the real truth, someone needs to pay the consequences. There needs to be justice."

Akron police say that Xavier and two other young adults were arrested following an armed robbery. A man and a woman allegedly told police they were sitting in a van when three robbers approached them, showed a gun and demanded money.

Police found the suspects in a nearby house and arrested McMullen and two 18-year-old men. At a press conference on Monday, Akron Police Captain Jesse Lesser said the three suspects were placed in separate police cars while they questioned witnesses. One of the officers returned to the car to find McMullen dead with a .45 caliber gun.

None of the six officers involved have been placed on leave, according to Lesser. The police official also did not say whether officers searched McMullen before placing him in a police cruiser. He also refused to review the police department's rules for pat-downs, saying, "It all depends on the circumstances." He added, "It's hard just to say, 'every time you do it this way.' It's a rapidly evolving situation."

Mentally ill Army veteran calls for help in Sunrise, Florida, SWAT shoots her dead

Police in Sunrise, Florida, shot and killed 28-year-old Army veteran Kristen Ambury after she barricaded herself in her house for more than three hours last weekend.

Police were called to the Water's Edge apartments around 4 p.m. on Saturday after getting a call about a woman who was threatening suicide.

Veda Coleman-Wright, the spokeswoman for the Broward County Sheriff's office, said that officers arrived on the scene to negotiate but determined that Ambury was armed and called in the SWAT team. As many as a dozen heavily armed officers arrived, leading to a tense standoff, with neighbors told to stay in their homes by police and others coming home from work denied access to the apartment complex.

Witnesses heard five or six shots. It was not clear whether Ambury had fired a weapon at officers. She died at the scene; no officers were injured.

A witness told local media how Ambury often walked

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her dogs throughout the complex and sometimes sat for long periods of time near the edge of a canal near her building.

Relatives told Local10 news that Ambury seemed to be under the influence of alcohol and had mental health issues. She was a U.S. Army explosive ordinance specialist and emergency medical technician who worked for the American Heart Association.

Michigan State Police trooper kills 15-year-old for riding ATV in Detroit

In a neighborhood on the east side of Detroit, on Saturday, a 15-year-old boy, Demond Grimes, was killed by a state police trooper at about 5:30 p.m.

The officer claims to have been pursuing Grimes for driving his four-wheel ATV in the street.

According to reports, the officer Tased the boy from his patrol vehicle with the window rolled down while he was driving his ATV in the street. Operating ATVs in the street is technically illegal in Detroit but commonly practiced by teenagers in neighborhoods throughout the city.

After being Tased, Demond lost control of his vehicle and crashed into the back of a pickup truck, a collision which killed him.

The officer has been suspended not for the murder of a 15-year-old child playing in his neighborhood but because it is a violation of policy for an officer to deploy a Taser from a moving vehicle.

Detroit Police Department Chief James Craig defended the officer in a press conference, saying, “In no way should this be an implication of criminality but in any incident whether it’s a Detroit Police officer, in this case a Michigan State Police officer, our actions are scrutinized.” He went on to reiterate that the opening of an investigation does not mean that the trooper’s actions were wrong or even unlawful.

While the name of the officer has yet to be released, reports have surfaced from those familiar with the case that he had been previously accused of excessive force in two separate lawsuits.

Grimes was in the ninth grade. His older sister told the *Detroit Free Press* that her brother had never been in trouble with law enforcement and always had good grades. “He didn’t deserve what happened to him. He was a good kid. A loving, happy kid.”

According to *Killedbypolice.net*, at least 808 people have been killed by police so far this year, outpacing last year’s deaths by 20 victims.

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