

Minneapolis police officer who fatally shot Justine Damond charged with murder

Anthony Bertolt
23 March 2018

Minneapolis police officer Mohamed Noor, who shot and killed Justine Ruszczyk Damond last summer, turned himself in on Tuesday after he was charged with murder and manslaughter. Noor has been charged with third-degree murder for “perpetrating an eminently dangerous act and evincing depraved mind” and second-degree manslaughter for “culpable negligence creating unreasonable risk,” according to official charging documents released on March 20.

Damond was shot on July 15 last year when she called the police to report a possible rape. Noor and his partner Matthew Harrity responded to the call and drove down the alley behind her home in their squad car with the lights off when they say they were startled by a loud noise. Both officers drew their weapons, and Damond, unarmed and in her pajamas, approached the vehicle shortly after. Noor then opened fire from the passenger seat, across his partner, hitting Damond.

Damond had called 911 twice before the officers arrived on the scene, where Harrity says they waited two minutes before Noor entered into their computer that they had investigated the incident safely and did not need any assistance. Both officers had their body cameras and dash cam turned off at the time of the shooting.

The Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman stated during the charges, “There is no evidence that Officer Noor encountered, appreciated, investigated or confirmed a threat that justified the decision to use deadly force. ... Instead, Officer Noor recklessly and intentionally fired his handgun from the passenger seat, a location at which he would have been less able than Officer Harrity to see and hear events on the other side of the squad car.”

Freeman also noted that he convened a grand jury to press charges due to the fact that other Minneapolis

Police officers would not cooperate with the investigation.

The shooting sparked anger throughout Minneapolis and the demand for Mayor Betsy Hodges to step down. Minneapolis’s then police chief, Janee Harteau, announced her resignation less than a week after the shooting.

Though Noor has been charged with murder and manslaughter, it is still very unlikely that he will be convicted. In fact, killer cops are rarely ever charged. From 2005 to April 2017, only 80 police officers have been charged with murder or manslaughter for killing a civilian, and of those, only 35 percent of them were convicted in the 12-year period. This is infinitesimal when compared to the approximately 1,000 police killings every year in the US.

Noor was the first Somali-American police officer in his precinct, and undoubtedly confronted difficulties as a young immigrant from a country devastated by years of war stoked by the US government. He had earned a business degree and worked in property management before joining the Minneapolis Police Department.

There is no indication that this was an individual likely to end up senselessly shooting and killing an unarmed person. However, his short time with the police department was evidently enough to turn him into a killer.

The ruling class confronts ever growing hostility to and anger at the policies of endless attacks on democratic rights and living standards, along with cuts to the social programs for those affected by lowering living standards. The fact is that the police, regardless of their skin color or national origin, have been trained to see the working-class population as a hostile force and themselves as part of an occupying military force.

Contrary to the narrative played out in the

mainstream media that the killing of Damond was an uncommon occurrence, where an officer reacts to a situation that isn't threatening them with deadly force, one can read countless stories of police opening fire and killing unarmed workers every day. Police have killed nearly 800 since Damond's death. In fact, just this Sunday, Sacramento police opened fire on 22-year-old Stephon Clark, killing him as he held a cell phone in his own backyard.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact