

Notes on Police Violence

Unarmed man with pants down fatally shot by deputy in Houston, Texas

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Brutal police violence is a feature of daily life in America. This year has seen a rise in protests against police violence as part of the resurgence of class struggle, particularly in the wake of the murder of Stephon Clark in Sacramento earlier this month and the announcement that the officers involved in the murder of Alton Sterling will not face charges. So far this year, the police have killed more than 308 people of every race, ethnicity, gender and age. What follows is just a sampling of those killed in the last two weeks.

Unarmed man with pants down fatally shot by deputy in Houston, Texas

Last Thursday, Danny Ray Thomas, a 34-year-old man, was shot and killed by a Harris County deputy in Houston, Texas.

According to the *Houston Chronicle*, witnesses said Thomas was “walking in the middle of the intersection of Imperial Valley and Greens Road with his pants around his ankles, talking to himself and hitting vehicles as they passed by.”

One of the drivers of the vehicles then exited their vehicle and confronted Thomas, starting a verbal and physical altercation. A Harris County deputy witnessed the incident and stopped his car to get out and intervene.

Thomas reportedly did not respond to the officer’s commands and approached the officer, who then shot him once. Thomas died later that day at the hospital.

The Harris County deputy who shot Thomas said he did so “fearing for his safety” despite the fact that Thomas had his pants around his ankles. The deputy also claimed Thomas had “some object” in his hands, despite no weapon or objects having been found on the scene.

Thomas’s family members confirmed that he was the father of two children who had died in 2016 when their mother allegedly drowned them in a bathtub. Marketa Thomas, Danny Ray Thomas’s sister, said that she had relied on her brother for support as they both suffered from depression. So far this year, there have been two people killed by police in Harris County.

Columbus, Ohio police fatally shoot woman during SWAT standoff

Police say they responded to a report of gunshots early Saturday morning before 4:30 a.m. in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio.

Officers arrived at the residence to find 25-year-old Kaitlin Marie Demeo, who had barricaded herself inside the house with a rifle alone.

The police then called the SWAT and Negotiation Team, who arrived on the scene and attempted to negotiate with Demeo, but were unsuccessful. Nearly four hours later, Demeo reportedly fired at the officers from inside and was killed by two SWAT officers who returned fire. Police identified the two officers as Glenn Thivener and Keith Kise, both veterans of the police for over 20 years.

Demeo’s killing was the fourth police shooting in Columbus so far this year.

Phoenix, Arizona police shoot and kill man after tasing him 3 times

Police in west Phoenix received a report of a vehicle break-in last Friday around 11 a.m. When they arrived on the scene, they found 23-year-old Kevin Robles, holding a knife and “acting agitated.” They initially deployed a Taser, shocking Robles three times. However, police say it had no noticeable effect, which is when police say that Robles attacked them with the

knife.

Police then shot Robles, who was later pronounced dead at a local hospital.

Polk County, Florida deputies shoot and kill man with a history of mental health issues

On Tuesday, March 20, 20-year-old Chance Haegele was killed after he was shot 17 times by police in Winter Haven, Florida.

Police arrived at his home after his mother, Christina Haegele, made an emergency call to prevent her son from committing suicide.

When they arrived he allegedly pointed an unloaded shotgun at the officers, who then opened fire, shooting Haegele 17 times. Prior to the barrage of bullets, Haegele's mother had told the officers that the shotgun was not loaded and that he was not a threat.

Haegele had been admitted to the hospital seven times under the Baker Act in Florida, which allows for certain individuals to be examined or admitted to hospitals involuntarily if deemed necessary by judges, doctors, lawyers or other professionals.

He had attended Florida State University pursuing a degree in business finance, earning a 3.7 grade point average. Haegele suffered from depression, which had reportedly intensified after his father discontinued financial support for Chance while he attended college.



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