

Protests continue in Pittsburgh over police killing of unarmed teen

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Hundreds of people have continued to hold daily protests and vigils to express their outrage over the murder last Tuesday of Antwon Rose, Jr., an unarmed 17-year-old Woodland Hills High School honors student, by an East Pittsburgh police officer.

Hundreds of people attended a viewing service Sunday to pay their respects, and the Woodland Hills School District has made one of their middle schools available to be used for the funeral today.

Along with large daytime protests last Wednesday evening outside the East Pittsburgh police headquarters and Thursday outside the Allegheny County Court House, evening protests have taken place outside sporting events and have blocked traffic on major Pittsburgh highways.

On Friday, police dressed in riot gear allowed a car to drive through the demonstration, nearly striking protesters who had to scramble to get away. Four people were arrested as marchers blocked traffic on the Homestead Grays Bridge and converged on PNC Park.

Rose, who was African-American, was shot three times in the back by white East Pittsburgh police officer Michael Rosfeld as he ran from a car he was riding in after it was stopped by Rosfeld and the driver pulled out of the car to be arrested.

Shauny Mary, who witnessed and recorded the shooting on her cell phone, told ABC News that the officer “was taking target practice on this young man’s back.”

Referring to Rosfeld, Mary said, “He was very harsh. He was screaming and he was very aggressive. I didn’t understand why.”

“The [officer’s] gun is pointed toward the vehicle and you see two kids flee from the car,” Mary told ABC News. “Then three shots. My heart fell out of my chest. What was that for? Why was that needed?”

The police are working to cover up the murder, delaying the investigation and spreading false stories with the help of the local media in an attempt to justify the shooting by painting Rose as a dangerous gang member. It is standard operating procedure for the police to plant fake stories in the media in order to turn public sentiment against the victim.

Local news station WPXI reported last week that they were told by an unnamed police source that a short time before Rose was murdered he was the shooter in a drive-by shooting in the neighboring town of North Braddock. According to WPXI, the police source told them they had video showing this.

Two days later, Allegheny County Police confirmed that they do have video of the earlier shooting, but that Rose was not involved. WPXI also reported that gun residue was found on Rose’s hands, but the Allegheny County Police have said that they are testing his hands for gun residue, but that the tests have not yet come back.

WPXI has not released the name of their police source who gave them the false information.

Allegheny County Police, the agency which is conducting the investigation into Rose’s killing, only took their first statement from Rosfeld on Friday, three full days after the murder, giving him ample time to get his story straight and rehearse it with his lawyers. Workers and youth who interact with police are never accorded such privileges, instead being placed under tremendous pressure to talk immediately, if possible without a lawyer present.

While the media has been flooded with false statements about Rose, very little information is being made available about Rosfeld and his record as a police officer. Rosfeld was only sworn in as an East Pittsburgh police officer 90 minutes before the shooting

and had only been employed the department a few weeks.

Since becoming a police officer in 2011, Rosfeld has worked for three different departments, most recently the University of Pittsburgh police.

Rosfeld was allowed to resign from the University of Pittsburgh department in January of this year after it was revealed that he filed false statements in a case against three men the previous month. The District Attorney's office dropped any charges against the men.

The University of Pittsburgh police department has refused to release any further information about Rosfeld's record even though they are subject to Pennsylvania's "Right to Know" laws. Nor is the East Pittsburgh police department releasing what they knew regarding his work history when they hired him.

Making false or misleading statements in an investigation is considered a crime. Many people who are charged with a crime are also charged with making false and misleading statements to investigators as a means of boosting the charges and jail time.

Yet when a police officer does it, there are no ramifications. In allowing Rosfeld to resign he could be hired by another department. This is in fact a routine practice which allows officers guilty of misconduct to move to a new department.



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