

Chicago teen dead after police chase, family disputes official report of suicide

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On Friday, August 17, Chicago police officers pursued Steven Rosenthal, 15, in the westside Chicago neighborhood of Lawndale up the stairs at his grandmother's home. Thirty minutes later, the teen died at Mount Sinai Hospital. The Chicago Police Department (CPD) claims that the teen shot himself and that a handgun was found at the scene. Police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi stated neither officer involved fired their weapon.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's office ruled August 18 that the teen's death was a suicide. But witnesses, the teen's family and their attorney, mentors and friends are disputing that Rosenthal killed himself. As of this writing, neither the teen's body, the alleged weapon, ballistics information, nor any police body camera footage have been released. According to police statements, it is unclear whether the incident was captured by bodycam.

On Sunday, August 19, more than 120 of Steven's family and friends marched to Mount Sinai Hospital, and then on to the Chicago Police Department 10th District, to demand the release of the boy's body and the bodycam footage of the events.

Calling for a "full, independent and transparent" investigation, the teen's family and friends cast doubt on the veracity of the police statements and the ruling of the death as a suicide. They are demanding that all evidence be released to the public, including the teen's body, the police body camera footage, ballistics analysis, and the weapon alleged to be involved.

Rosenthal's aunt and guardian spoke to address Mayor Rahm Emanuel directly: "My 15-year-old nephew Steven was shot and killed by the Chicago Police Department. I need the attention of Mayor Emanuel. I need to see evidence. Bodycams. They need to release the video. My nephew would never commit

suicide, ever. ... If he [Emanuel] even had the smallest compassion for our family, he'd get those videotapes released."

Andrew Stroth, a civil rights attorney retained by the Rosenthal family, told the media: "There are several eyewitness reports that dispute the police account of what happened," and that in Chicago, "There is a history of a pattern and practice of unjustified use of excessive lethal force."

The Chicago Police Department has little credibility in the working-class neighborhoods of Chicago, which view them as an occupying force that kills with impunity.

Rosenthal was a student at Crane Medical Preparatory High School and a member of the basketball team. Alonzo Crowder, the teen's coach, expressed his skepticism of the police version of events: "I stand with the family. ... Steven was a really good kid with a ton of potential despite challenges. He was NOT suicidal! Fun & energetic is how I remember him. Good student. Hard worker. Ultimate teammate."

Speaking to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, a 16-year-old friend of Rosenthal's said, "He's been my homie since the sixth grade. ... I don't believe he would shoot himself. He just wouldn't do something like that."

Rosenthal's mother died last March, and he lost his father when he was aged 6. He has two younger brothers.



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