

Sacramento, California killer cops return to work 18 months after murdering 22-year-old Stephon Clark

Dan Conway
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The two Sacramento, California, police officers who fatally shot 22-year-old Stephon Clark in March last year returned to work Thursday after no federal civil rights charges were brought against them.

The two officers, Terrence Mercadel and Jared Robinet, opened fire on Clark shooting him 20 times in his grandparents' backyard. Released video and audio footage showed police firing on the young man without provocation and then shouting "show us your hands" as his lifeless body laid on the ground. They and the officers who later arrived on the scene refused to provide any medical attention for several minutes as they claimed the young man was only playing dead and might fire back at any time.

At the time, the officers absurdly radioed for a body bunker or bullet-proof riot shield to approach Clark's corpse. Once they approached him, the officers only found a white cell phone in his hands.

The killing sparked massive demonstrations in the city and around the region. Tens of thousands shut down Interstate 5, a main freeway which runs through the state's capital, while another march led to the arrests of 84 non-violent protesters when they walked through the wealthy 45th Street area of East Sacramento. Police and residents of the neighborhood allege that several cars in the area had been keyed while protesters claim that only leaflets had been put on the parked cars in question.

Sacramento police chief Daniel Hahn said the following regarding the officers' return to work this week: "This incident," he said, "has been thoroughly investigated by law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal levels. Every one of these independent examinations has reached the same finding—the use of deadly force in this case was lawful. Our internal investigation concluded that there were no violations of department policy or training."

The announcement was made less than three minutes after US Attorney McGregor Scott and the FBI announced the closure of their own investigation into the circumstances of Clark's death. Their report claimed to have found "insufficient evidence to support federal criminal civil rights charges against the officers involved."

Members of Clark's family also attended a meeting with Chief Hahn and Scott prior to the announcement and expressed their outrage that the young Clark's killers would be let off the hook and allowed to return to work as police officers. Stevante Clark, brother of Stephon, wrote on his Facebook page after the meeting, "I'm not surprised or shocked, we've been denied justice for generations. The only thing that caught me off guard, was Chief Hahn is letting one of the officers back to patrol the streets. That is f—ed up. Our streets are not safe with a murderer on the streets."

In June, the city of Sacramento reached a \$2.4 million settlement with the guardians of Clark's two surviving children but also decided not to prosecute the two officers who murdered their father in cold blood.

Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert earlier announced that the county would not criminally charge the two officers. The action, in Schubert's words, was justified due to an alleged domestic violence incident between Clark and his girlfriend two days before the killing. Schubert in the same press conference noted that knowledge of the domestic violence incident was found after examining Clark's cell phone, i.e., after the young man had already been shot and killed.

Mercadel and Robinet were in fact responding to a report of automobile vandalism and not a domestic violence call in the first place. Schubert and the district

attorney's office further attempted to sully the dead young man's reputation with allegations that traces of illegal narcotics were found in his blood during his autopsy.

After the FBI announcement clearing the two officers once again on Thursday, Clark family attorney Dale Galipo told the media he was "disappointed but not surprised because I think with few exceptions in the last 10,000 police officer shootings there's been no criminal prosecutions."

In fact, since 2005 only 35 police officers have been convicted of a crime related to an on-duty fatal shooting. According to killedbypolice.net, police have killed 2,915 since the start of 2017 alone making the conviction rate a statistical anomaly. The refusal of federal and local politicians, Democrat and Republican alike, to hold any killer cops accountable is in fact a green light for such barbarous practices to continue and intensify.

In California, Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom, who postures as a progressive alternative to the Trump Administration, has said nothing whatsoever about the exoneration of the two officers. This is after the governor sponsored a fraudulent bill this year heralded by the *Sacramento Bee* as "one of the toughest laws in the country regulating when police officers can use deadly force." Assembly Bill 392 was ostensibly inspired by Clark's shooting.

Underscoring the toothless character of the bill, however, was the rescinding of opposition by law enforcement groups after the rollback of any criminal provisions in the bill for killer police. Rick LaBeske, president of the California Association of Highway Patrolmen, praised the bill for providing "our officers with the tools and training they have requested and deserved." The bill makes no changes to use of force laws or penalties, only recommending that police use force only when "necessary" rather than "reasonable," a distinction without a difference.



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