

Hundreds rally outside sheriff's office demanding justice for Missouri woman killed by police

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Hundreds of friends, family and community supporters turned out Thursday night in front of the Pettis County Sheriff's Office in rural Sedalia, Missouri, demanding justice for 25-year-old Hannah Fizer.

The young unarmed white woman had been recently promoted to assistant manager when she was shot and killed by a still unidentified Pettis County deputy during a traffic stop on her way to work at the Tiger Eagle Stop convenience store on June 13.

Family, friends, workers, youth and supporters are demanding the truth and the identity of the killer cop which state investigators and local police continue to withhold. Protests, which began on Tuesday, have swelled in size and frequency with more scheduled for today and Sunday. Signs carried by protesters demanded "Justice For Hannah," as dozens chanted "What's his name?"

According to a terse statement issued by Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) Sergeant Andy Bell Sunday, Fizer was pulled over for allegedly speeding and "imprudent" driving while on her way to work for her 10 p.m. shift. After she was pulled over by the unnamed deputy, the MSHP claims that Fizer became "non-compliant" and "threatened the deputy by stating she was armed and going to shoot him." The incident allegedly escalated to the point that the unnamed officer had to "discharge" his weapon, killing Fizer.

Tracie Karigan, whose daughter worked with and was friends with Fizer, questioned the officer's use of force and disputed police statements attesting to Fizer's alleged aggressive behavior in an interview with the *Sedalia Democrat*. "She was 140 pounds, she wasn't doing anything, she was going to work. Why'd they

have to end her life? They don't have that right, they're not God.

"It's just wrong. Everybody in Sedalia that knows, that knew who Hannah was as a person. That's why everyone is out here so angry and hurt and crying because this is wrong. It's not fair. Then you still tell us, 'Have faith in the law, believe in the law, stand up for your enforcement.' Why, whenever they take away everything we're supposed to believe in? How can we even do that?"

An unnamed witness, who wished to remain anonymous for personal safety, spoke to the *Kansas City Star* regarding what he saw on Saturday night. He states that he saw the police vehicle, with its lights on, follow Fizer's car off of US Highway 50 and pull over shortly thereafter; it didn't appear to the man that either vehicle was speeding or driving recklessly.

From across the street as he was approaching the vehicles, the man stated he heard a male voice shout "stop" twice, followed by five "pops." The man walked across the street to see what had happened; as he approached more police arrived to cordon off the area. "That's when I saw him covering her up with a sheet from head to toe."

The man observed Fizer lying face up, her body perpendicular to her car with her feet resting on the ground near her open driver's side door. By the time the man left the crime scene at 2:30 a.m., Fizer's body was still lying on the ground in the same position.

Fizer's family has maintained from the outset that she did not own a gun and was not armed at the time. They have questioned from the outset why the officer felt the need to shoot an unarmed woman and what were the circumstances that led to the "escalation."

For three days police investigators refused to state whether they had found a weapon in the vehicle as they combed Fizer's car and the surrounding area. On Tuesday investigators were forced to admit no weapon had been found in the car or the surrounding area, as the family had always maintained.

In addition to no weapon there is also no footage of the events to support the deputy's claims of a "threatening" Fizer.

Pettis County Sheriff Kevin Bond said in a video interview with the *Kansas City Star* that his office had issued body cameras for deputies and dashcams for their patrol vehicles several years ago. But he said that due to "technical difficulties" and "data failure" they have not been used by the department for over three years. Bond admitted that "defective devices haven't been replaced," and while the department "looked at a grant" Bond and his superiors didn't bother to apply for it, adding "if that grant had been applied for, we wouldn't have received it in time."

Bond's cavalier attitude to accountability is indicative of a wider attitude among law enforcement and exposes the folly of any calls to "reform" or "reimagine" the oppressive armed agents of the capitalist state.

The Pettis County Sheriff's Office has denied reporters' requests to release any more information pertaining to the cop that killed Fizer beyond the fact that the officer was hired in 2007 and has been put on "paid administrative leave." Bond personally refused a Freedom of Information Act request from the website copblaster.com for public records naming the officer involved in Fizer's slaying.

While declining to hold himself or his deputies accountable for Fizer's murder, Bond issued an "open letter" to the citizens of Pettis County in which he tried to cast himself and his fellow cops as the real victims of a "criminal social justice" element in the city of 22,000, while urging the community to "have faith in the American Way."

In his nearly 550-word letter Bond spent less than 20 words offering the Fizer family his "thoughts and prayers." Bond alleged that one of his deputies, who did not murder Fizer, was being "singled out and targeted for harassment." Bond went on to mischaracterize copblaster.com's FOIA request as an "extortion email" before threatening the entire

population of Pettis County.

"I am the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of this County. You have vested in me the authority to 'quell and suppress assaults and batteries, riots, routs, affrays, and insurrections...' I will carry this out to the best of my ability and continue to do what I believe is in the best interest of our community. I will not tolerate criminal behavior nor allow your properties to be damaged."

Bond implored the people of Pettis County not to let "Social In-Justice [sic] ... establish a stronghold here" and "to stand with me and not tolerate unreasonable behavior. I need you to step up to support and defend the rule of law."

By "rule of the law," Bond is referring to the "law" that allows a heavily armed agent of the state to gun down a 25-year-old unarmed woman because he "feared" she had a weapon and then walk free and collect a paycheck while doing so.

James Johnson, 22, Fizer's boyfriend of over six years and a production worker at a Tyson Foods facility, posted an impassioned Facebook video urging viewers that it's time to "get rid of these corrupt police," stating that anyone who considers themselves a "good cop" would "quit," before concluding, "There are no good cops."

Johnson also rejected the racist narrative put forth by the Democratic Party and pseudo-left that skin color is the primary factor in determining whether one becomes a victim of police brutality. "It's not about race! It's not about color. My mom is white, my dad is full black... Ok. So, I stand on both sides."

"It's not only black people that are targeted, you got Mexicans, minorities and whites, what it is, is the police. Those are the problems. They are targeting human beings, period."



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