

# Family demands investigation after 23-year-old shot three times by police in Columbus, Ohio

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On Friday December 4, 23-year-old Casey Goodson, Jr. was fatally shot in Columbus, Ohio by sheriff's deputy Jason Meade. Deputy sheriffs in Columbus are not required to wear body cameras. It is unclear if there is video evidence of the shooting.

According to a statement released by the family's legal representation, Walton & Brown, Goodson was returning from a dentist appointment and had picked up deli sandwiches for his family on the way home. He parked, walked across his yard and unlocked the front door before being shot as he entered his home. His grandmother and two young children were standing near the door and witnessed the killing.

Goodson was transported to the Ohio Health Riverside Methodist Hospital, where he later died.

Goodson, who was black, had no criminal record and was not being investigated for any crime. Deputies were in the area wrapping up an unsuccessful fugitive search when they claim they spotted Goodson drive by waving a gun in the air.

Goodson was then followed by the deputies to his home where he allegedly failed to drop his weapon as ordered and was then shot three times. Goodson's family reports the gunshot wounds were in his back. An autopsy report is pending.

While Goodson did own a gun, his family finds it very unlikely that he waved his gun at officers. Sean Walton, the family's lawyer, stated, "He was very safe and respectful when it came to guns, he was a licensed gun holder," he said. "That allegation does not line up with who Casey was, just because of the level of gun safety he tried to maintain."

Goodson was the oldest of 10 siblings and loved spending time with his family. After losing his job as a commercial truck driver due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

Goodson began working at the Gap clothing store.

The family's GoFundMe page #JusticeforCaseyGoodson has raised close to \$50,000 for Goodson's mother, Tamala Payne.

Meade, who is white, has worked as a sheriff deputy for 17 years and at the time of the shooting was assigned to the US Marshals Service fugitive task force. Meade has been temporarily pulled off duty.

At a press conference Friday following the shooting, Peter Tobin, the US marshal for the Southern District of Ohio, stated that the shooting was "justified," before promising that there would be a "thorough and transparent investigation."

An executive order issued in June by Columbus mayor, Andrew Ginther, requires all fatal police-use-of-force cases and cases of death in police custody to be investigated by the state's Bureau of Criminal Investigations (BCI).

BCI, however, refused to take the Goodson case since it was not brought to the bureau's attention until three days after the incident. Steve Irwin, from the Ohio Attorney General's office, told Columbus Public Radio: "Not knowing all the reasons as to why so much time has passed before the case was referred to BCI, we cannot accept this case."

"BCI is the first call because we cannot be the subject matter experts unless we're on scene from the beginning to document the evidence of what happened from the start," Irwin said. "Three days after the crime scene has been dismantled and the witnesses have all dispersed does not work."

On Tuesday, US Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio David M. DeVillers announced that federal investigators would review the case to determine if any federal civil rights laws were violated.

Forty people attended a vigil for Goodson, hosted the night after the shooting by a group called the People's Justice Project. On Facebook, the same group posted a graphic listing the Goodson family's demands: 1. Release of Body Camera Footage, 2. Release of Police Reports, 3. Independent Autopsy Report, 4. Independent Prosecutor Investigation.

Another rally is planned for December 12 in front of the state capitol building in downtown Columbus.

Goodson's murder occurred on the same day that vague and noncommittal police reforms were announced by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board, created in the wake of protests over the summer triggered by the killing of George Floyd in Minnesota. The new policy bans chokeholds unless those chokeholds are used to protect an officer's life. Ohio police departments will have to adopt this policy when seeking recertification by the state.

The advisory board has also called for new law enforcement training in handling mass protests. The board suggests that, "Law enforcement should engage with demonstration leaders to understand the intent of the demonstration and to discuss how they can work together to achieve the demonstrators' desired outcomes while preserving order and preventing conflict."

Both the pseudo chokehold ban and the call for more holistic officer training are toothless political maneuvers designed to provide cover for governors and mayors who have overseen brutal police attacks on protestors. They are also aimed at containing and dissipating social protest by workers and youth against not only racism but social inequality, repression and poverty that are fundamental to the capitalist system and have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

According to MappingPoliceViolence.org, 213 people in Ohio have been killed by police between 2013 and 2019. Included in these statistics are 12-year-old Tamir Rice and 13-year-old Tyre King, shot and killed while holding toy guns in 2014 and 2016, respectively.



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