

Second fatal policing shooting in Columbus, Ohio in less than a month sparks outrage

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Andre Hill, 47, was fatally shot by a police officer on Tuesday in Columbus, Ohio, sparking outrage in the state capital. The killing comes just three weeks after the fatal police shooting of 23-year-old Casey Goodson Jr. in his driveway ignited protests in the city.

Hill, who was African American, was shot and killed early Tuesday morning by Adam Coy, a 19-year veteran of the Columbus Division of Police (CDP), within seconds of their encounter. Coy was relieved of duty and told to turn in his gun and badge pending an investigation.

According to the description of events provided by the police, officers responded to a “non-emergency call” from a neighbor at 1:37 a.m. on December 22 about a man in an SUV repeatedly turning his car on and off for an “extended period of time.” The call was little more than a noise complaint, with officers arriving to the scene to find a man inside a garage with the door open.

Disturbingly, the officers did not have their body cameras on, in violation of department policy, and only turned them on after the shooting occurred. However, the body cameras were designed to record 60 seconds of footage prior to operation.

The 60 seconds of playback footage that was recorded shows Hill walk out of the garage with a cell phone in his left hand and his right-hand out of sight. One of the officers almost immediately opened fire on Hill as he began to approach the officers.

The playback footage shows that about five seconds passed between when Hill became visible and when he was fired upon. He was walking slowly and calmly, making no sudden movements. His left hand is carrying a cell phone held in a manner that suggests he was filming the police himself, though no footage from Hill’s phone is known. His right hand makes no

movements at all, appearing to be tucked inside his coat pocket.

The footage also shows a delay in any provision of medical treatment to Hill as he bled out on the pavement. Several minutes passed before he was given any attention. Hill was even handcuffed before any medical care was provided. He died less than an hour later at OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital.

No audio was recorded from the playback, preventing any knowledge of verbal exchanges between Hill and the officers.

Potentially the most striking moment of the video is when Coy turns Hill over to search for a weapon as Hill moans out his final breaths. Finding none, Coy cursed with the resigned expression of a person fully aware that they have just wrongfully killed an unarmed person. Despite this, Coy made no attempt to help Hill himself or to get another person to help. Coy barely spoke a word and instead left Hill to bleed out and die.

Throughout the rest of the video Coy is audibly disturbed, continuously coughing and possibly restraining himself from vomiting for several minutes. When additional officers arrive and he exits the scene, both he and the other officers refuse to speak on the matter, clearly afraid of saying anything while his body camera is still rolling. Coy even asks the reporting Sergeant multiple times if he can turn it off.

The only discussion of the shooting in the 13-minute video comes briefly from Coy, who tells another officer “I need to find out what I missed,” presumably referring to how he mistook Hill as an armed threat or how he might claim that there was some object that could be construed as a weapon.

Preliminary investigations have determined that Hill was indeed unarmed and that he was visiting someone he knew at their house.

According to the *Columbus Dispatch*, DiLoretto, whose bedroom overlooks where the shooting took place, said that he heard an “angry exchange of words” from outside. He decided to go downstairs to see what was going on when he heard gun shots.

"As I'm going down the stairs, I heard the gunshots — bam, bam, bam."

Another nearby neighbor interviewed by the *Columbus Dispatch*, who wished to remain anonymous, said that they spoke with Bill Wadley, the owner of the home, before the shooting. The neighbor said that Wadley's adult niece was living with him, and that an acquaintance of hers was going to come by early on Tuesday to deliver money for her to buy Christmas presents for her children.

"You feel devastated that a person has died in your neighborhood, the way he did," the neighbor said. "We need to remember that this was a human being that's dead."

Coy's quick trigger-finger is indicative of a long-term record of violence and harassment over the course of his tenure. The *Columbus Dispatch* reported that Coy had nine complaints brought against him in 2003, four coming in a single month, for which he received “written counseling.”

In 2012 the city paid \$45,000 to settle a lawsuit involving excessive force by Coy. Dashboard footage showed him punching a driver, slamming him to the ground and bashing his head against the hood of his car four times during a stop for drunk driving. An internal investigation determined that the driver was not resisting arrest and Coy's actions were deemed “excessive for the situation,” resulting in a 160-hour suspension.

Hill's murder is another in a long line of police killings this year. As of December 22, 989 people have been fatally shot by the police this year according to a tally by the *Washington Post*. As 2020 draws to a close, it will be the eighth year in a row that police have killed more than 1,000 people total.



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