

No charges filed against officer who shot Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin

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6 January 2021

Kenosha, Wisconsin District Attorney Michael Graveley announced Tuesday that no charges would be filed against Officer Rustin Shesky, who was caught on camera shooting 29-year-old father of six Jacob Blake seven times in the back, in front of three of his children, paralyzing him from the waist down. The decision sends a clear message that police are free to maim and summarily execute people with impunity.

Graveley stated in a press conference on Tuesday that “it is my decision now, that I announce today before you, that no Kenosha law enforcement officer in this case will be charged with any criminal offense based on the facts and the laws, as I will describe them to you now. So it is our decision that no charge will be filed.” The DA also cynically stated that “no charges” would be filed against Blake.

Shesky had previously been the subject of five internal police investigations, including pulling a gun on and handcuffing a misidentified suspect, as well as thousands of dollars in damage to police property.

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, a Democrat, announced Monday the mobilization of 500 National Guard soldiers ahead of the decision to aid the police in the suppression of expected protests. Humvees and military transport trucks could be seen driving into the city and soldiers could be seen outside the Dinosaur Discovery Museum and the Kenosha County Administrative Building on Tuesday in photos posted by the *Kenosha News*.

Following the decision, Evers made a statement complaining vaguely about the ruling, stating “and yet, when presented the opportunity to rise to this moment and this movement and take action to provide meaningful, commonsense reform to enhance accountability and promote transparency in policing in our state, elected officials took no action.”

The “elected officials” include himself, and the Mayor of Kenosha, John Antaramian, also a Democrat. Killings by police actually increased from 2018 to 2019 in Wisconsin following Evers’ election, with the Associated Press reporting that killings increased by at least three. Antaramian has been in office since 2016 and presides over a city where nearly one in five residents live in poverty.

The only difference between the Kenosha District Attorney’s approach and Evers is how open it is about its intentions to continue state violence. Evers immediately called on the National Guard in response to protests over the shooting of Blake in August and before protests even developed Tuesday, signaling that any opposition to state violence will be met with greater and greater state violence, whether a Democrat or Republican is in charge.

During his speech Tuesday, Evers called on those who would “exercise their right to assemble tonight and in the days ahead to please do so peacefully and safely.”

Before any protests even developed Tuesday night, buildings could be seen with their windows boarded up, with journalist Martenzie Johnson reporting on Twitter that “There are more police and national guardsmen than citizens near the Kenosha Co. courthouse.” At 8:20 pm a small crowd of protesters numbering about 30 could be seen filing down a road in a picture chanting “Wake up Kenosha.” At 8:44 p.m. protesters could be seen near a line of National Guard soldiers in front of a Humvee and a military truck near the Dinosaur Discovery Museum. At the end, Johnson commented that the protest was “maybe 50 protesters marching across the city, a dozen or so cars trailing behind them” as opposed to “hundreds of police and national guard.”

On the same day that the decision was announced not to charge Shesky, Kyle Rittenhouse, the fascistic Kenosha shooter who killed two protesters and injured a third during protests against the shooting of Blake in August 2020, entered a not guilty plea. Rittenhouse has been charged with the first-degree intentional homicide in the death of Anthony Huber, 26, first-degree reckless homicide for the death of Joseph Rosenbaum, 36, and attempted first-degree homicide for the shooting of Gauge Grosskreutz, 26.

Rittenhouse's defense attorney, Lin Wood, an open supporter of the fascistic QAnon conspiracy theory and lawyer leading President Donald Trump's unconstitutional attempts to overturn the election, argued that Rittenhouse acted in self-defense. The killings Rittenhouse carried out have been endorsed by Trump, who claimed the armed militia member was acting in "self-defense." Rittenhouse has expressed that he viewed protesters as "rioters" and "monsters."

Rittenhouse, who was in Kenosha as part of a group of a right-wing militia group called the Kenosha Militia, was released on \$2 million bail in November after receiving donations from Republican and far-right groups. Unlike anti-police violence activist Michael Reinohl, who was hunted down and summarily executed by gunfire in his car, Rittenhouse was allowed to pass through police lines un-harassed, given water and thanks, and allowed to leave the scene after killing two people and injuring another while illegally carrying an AR-15 rifle.



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