

Chicago police refuse to give answers about killing of 28-year-old Turell Brown

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Chicago Police Department (CPD) officers shot and killed 28-year-old Turell Brown in his apartment in the South Side neighborhood of Englewood late Sunday morning, according to CPD officials. CPD officers were called to the apartment where Brown stayed for a domestic incident, according to police. Brown had just finished a program to become a welder and had celebrated his 28th birthday the Monday before he was killed by police.

His mother, Angela Waide-Brown, was alerted to her son's death soon after by his girlfriend, who was in the apartment when police killed him. "She said, 'You need to come out here because the police just shot your son,'" Waide-Brown told CBS 2 News, recalling what his girlfriend told her.

According to CBS 2, CPD would not explain to Waide-Brown the events that led to them killing her son. Her son's girlfriend allegedly told her that she and Brown had an argument in the lower floor of the apartment building, then moved upstairs where Brown shut the door to the bedroom, and his girlfriend called the police.

Both Brown's girlfriend and police claimed that Brown was holding a knife at the time police arrived. When the police opened the door to the bedroom, they told Brown to put the knife down and then opened fire and killed him. Afterward they blocked off the street where he lived.

Waide-Brown spoke out against the use of deadly force by the police in a domestic incident. "Even though he and his girlfriend may have had their arguments or whatever, it wasn't a cause for him to lose his life," she told CBS 2. "They didn't have to shoot to kill him," she continued, holding back tears. "They could have shot him in the arm so he would drop the weapon. They could have shot him in the leg. But they shot him and killed him."

The latest police murder in the third largest city in the US has garnered relatively little press coverage. In spite of this, working-class residents of Chicago have for the most part expressed their support for Brown's grieving mother on social media and have condemned the rash of police violence that overwhelmingly plagues the poorest working-

class neighborhoods in the city, which include Englewood.

The cops involved in Brown's killing have been placed on 30 days of administrative leave. According to the website BlockClubChicago.com, city officials are urging neighbors and witnesses to come forward with any information regarding the shooting and the incident on Sunday which led to his killing.

CPD has kept obstinately quiet since Sunday's killing. That they have even refrained from any attempt to justify their actions to the public likely points to the conclusion that the use of deadly force was indeed entirely unjustified.

A press conference with CPD on the shooting scheduled for Sunday afternoon was canceled. Police addressed the killing in a press conference on Monday afternoon, during which they remained tight-lipped and deflected questions about the incident, telling reporters that the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) was investigating it and that the CPD had no further comment on what took place.

At the press conference, CPD Superintendent David Brown stated, "officers have yet to give statements. ... it was a domestic incident that we got called to, our officers responded to in a timely fashion and both the victim and the offender of the domestic [call] were still on scene, and we really have to stop there. But all the things that happened in sequence between when officers got there ... that's for COPA to investigate. We do know our officer discharged a weapon, we do know the offender is deceased, that's the extent we can go into, because it's the purview of COPA to investigate." He concluded, "The final decision about the outcome of this investigation is the Police Board's."

The record of COPA and the Chicago Democratic Party has been to shield CPD officers from the consequences of their deadly actions, including the deliberate withholding of evidence from the public. It is not likely that the outcome of the COPA investigation will present the entire truth about Brown's death nor bring adequate justice to his family nor will there be consequences for the cops who killed him.

After Chicago police killed 13-year-old Adam Toledo during a foot pursuit in Chicago's Little Village

neighborhood in March of this year, COPA essentially shielded the officers who killed him from facing serious consequences. The main outcome of Toledo's murder was a proposal for Chicago Democratic Mayor Lori Lightfoot's office to review CPD's foot pursuit practices. While Superintendent Brown said changes to the policy would be made by summer 2021, such police reform proposals, like most of those supported by the Democratic Party and protest groups like Black Lives Matter, proved to be totally empty as CPD missed the deadline to do so without explanation.

Appeals to Lightfoot are especially bankrupt, given her own history of covering up police brutality and protecting criminal cops in the city, while unleashing police brutality on anti-police violence protesters in the wake of George Floyd's murder in 2020.

Lightfoot touted herself as a "police reform" candidate before her election as mayor in 2019 and has overseen a vast expansion of systematic police brutality. She was promoted by sections of the Democratic Party as the "progressive" candidate against Cook County Commissioner Toni Preckwinkle in the 2019 mayoral race because she is an openly gay African American woman, characteristics which would supposedly curb police violence and growing social inequality in the city.

A former corporate lawyer, Lightfoot was brought in by former Democratic Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2015 to serve as president of the Civilian Police Board and to head a task force aimed at damage control for the CPD and the mayor's office over the cover-up of the fatal 2014 shooting of black teenager Laquan McDonald by a white cop, Jason Van Dyke, on Chicago's southwest side. During the McDonald investigation, Lightfoot's team produced a report that did not reveal anything other than what was already a known fact, that the CPD routinely acts with lethal violence and racism.

One of her recommendations to Emanuel was to replace the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA) with the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), essentially a new name for the same discredited organization. Lightfoot served as the head of IPRA's predecessor, the Office of Professional Standards (OPS). OPS was replaced by IPRA after it was badly discredited for failing to act against police implicated in the torture ring led by deceased CPD Commander Jon Burge.

Across the US, police kill over 1,000 people every year. The vast majority of victims of police killings, no matter what their race, are working class and poor, like Turrell Brown.

Under the Emanuel and Lightfoot administrations and in the wake of the economic crisis sparked by the pandemic, the wealth inequality gap in the city of Chicago has widened

and the living standards for working-class residents have become even more desperate.

The 2020 U.S. Census shows that the median household income in the city between 2015-2019 is \$58,247, far lower than the state of Illinois median at \$65,886 and the US as a whole at \$62,843. The poverty rate in the city of Chicago is also incredibly high at 18.4 percent, compared to the state of Illinois at 11.5 percent and the US at 11.4 percent.

The predominantly African American and working-class Englewood neighborhood, where Brown was killed, is considered "very low income" with an average per capita income of under \$28,712 a year, according to data from a University of Illinois at Chicago study published in 2019.

Subsequent Democratic Party administrations have stripped funding for vital services for working-class communities over the past several decades, creating an immense amount of stress for families, while at the same time shifting vast sums of money to corporations and toward police funding. In 2013, following a strike by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) teachers and staff, the district and the Emanuel administration, with the support of the Chicago Teachers Union, sanctioned the closure of 49 public schools, which included many on the city's South Side. The year before that, Emanuel closed half of the city's remaining mental health facilities, which resulted in Chicago's Cook County Jail becoming one of the largest providers of mental health services in the city.

Under these conditions of growing wealth inequality, the Democratic and Republican parties alike are preparing for a massive upsurge of working-class resistance by pouring funding into law enforcement across the country, arming the police with military-grade weapons and training police as killers. It is essential that workers and youth oppose the system in which police carry out brutality with impunity with the understanding of its origins in the capitalist state. Police brutality arises as a form of state-sanctioned violence against the working class by the ruling capitalist class. It can only be ended through the fight for a socialist program that unites workers and youth of all races and ethnicities in a fight against the capitalist system.



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