

13-year-old Florida boy on dirt bike dies during attempted traffic stop by police

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A 13-year-old boy from Boynton Beach, Florida, died Sunday afternoon while riding his dirt bike after police chased the teen down during an attempted traffic stop. The young driver suffered fatal injuries after his bike tilted over on North Federal Highway following an effort by a police officer to pull the him over, according to the police report.

The victim remained unidentified by police until a local NBC news affiliate identified the teenager as Stanley Davis Jr., which was also confirmed by the teen's grandmother. Police said that the boy was spotted driving "recklessly" on the highway, which prompted the officer to make a pursuit. However, no evidence has been brought forward to substantiate the claim that Davis Jr. was driving in a reckless manner or presented a threat to others. Moreover, preliminary police reports have said very little as to the specific nature of the interaction between the police car and Davis Jr., let alone how the police chase led to him losing control of his bike.

A more extensive investigation into the dirt bike crash and the tragic death is currently being led by the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP). According to an FHP statement released Monday, the 13-year-old lost control of his bike near Northeast Eighth Avenue, just north of Boynton Beach Boulevard. The bike then hit a median curb on the side of the freeway, throwing him to the pavement and into a one-way street sign. Although the teen was wearing a helmet, he was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics.

Thus far, only one officer, whom police also did not identify, has been cited as being responsible for the crash. The officer has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of a series of investigations, including the probe launched by the FHP. In a news conference held at Boynton Beach police headquarters Sunday night, Police Chief Michael G. Gregory and Florida Highway Patrol Sgt. John Baker issued statements

but refused to take questions. FHP troopers responded at about 2:45 p.m. to assist Boynton Beach police with the preliminary investigation.

A surveillance-camera video captured by TV station WPEC-12 and published Monday shows a younger male believed to be Davis Jr. putting gas in a dirt bike shortly before the crash. He finishes and pulls out of the gas station headed west on Boynton Beach Boulevard as a city police officer's car enters the frame from US1 and follows immediately behind.

Moments later, the individual can be seen driving the bike east on Boynton Beach Boulevard and through the intersection onto North Federal Highway. He turns left, followed by the officer, who passes through the intersection five seconds later with his lights on. Neither is seen again in the 15-second clip. It was not immediately known if the individual in the video is the teen who died in the crash.

According to reports from local media, the horrific incident triggered a groundswell of anger and despair from family members and spectators who gathered around the scene. One local newscaster said the aftermath of the crash saw "emotions running very high" and reporters could hear many people "yelling" in and around the scene. On Monday, Boynton Beach police said the department has received numerous requests by furious residents for the release of a dashcam video showing the fatal crash.

Sensing the tension surrounding the teenager's brutal death, Police Chief Gregory made considerable efforts to calm public outrage in his remarks on social media. In comments posted on the department's Facebook pages, Gregory said: "That family is devastated and grieving. Our community is devastated and grieving." He continued: "There's nothing to make that pain any less. What we hope to do is do the best we can, conducting a thorough investigation to get to the bottom of the facts

and circumstances that led to it. “

In addition to the FHP investigation, the Palm Beach County Medical Examiner’s Office will conduct a separate investigation to determine the cause and manner of the teen’s death. After those investigations have concluded, Boynton Beach plans to conduct an internal review to assess if any department policies or procedures had been violated.

Tina Turner, the victim’s grandmother, denounced the police department in an interview and blamed the unidentified officer as solely responsible for her grandson’s death. “They chased him, chased him. He just panicked because he’s a kid. Chased him right to his damn grave,” Turner told local media. “[They] figured he’s just another Black boy, ain’t nothing is going to be done. That’s the prejudice of the Boynton Beach police that we’ve been having problems [with] for all these damn years.”

Highway Patrol Sgt. John Baker said the FHP investigation could take weeks or even months to complete and to determine if the officer should be held criminally responsible for the teen’s death. Despite receiving numerous requests for dashcam footage, the police department made clear that the police vehicle involved in the incident was not equipped with a dashcam. Boynton Police officials revealed Monday that they turned over all “video evidence to the Florida Highway Patrol” for the ongoing investigation in addition to interviewing witnesses from the scene.

In one provocative comment, Chief Gregory said there was a need to combat “false narratives and false information floating around” surrounding the deadly crash. Pointing to the department’s preliminary investigation, Gregory said he had “not seen any evidence or heard any witness testimony that states that the officer’s vehicle came in contact with the dirt bike,” or if any “additional, secondary-type crash” occurred at the scene.

Although little evidence and information have been presented to explain precisely what led to the teen’s death, none of the claims of “reckless driving” on the part of Davis Jr. are to be believed as a justification for either the traffic stop or as a reason for his dirt bike to dramatically crash. No drivers have come forward as witnesses to confirm the teenager was driving irresponsibly on the road or was a danger to public safety. The explanation offered by the police department is dubious at best, as it remains exceedingly doubtful that the bike and driver suddenly “went down” without any

intervention from the tailgating police car.

Countless other incidents of police brutality during traffic stops in recent years testify to the extent to which police will blatantly lie to cover up their criminal aggression against civilians. In August 2017, Ohio police violently beat Richard Hubbard III after he was pulled over in a Cleveland suburb. The incident escalated to violence when an officer tossed Hubbard to the ground and repeatedly punched him before making an arrest and issuing charges of driving with a suspended license and resisting arrest.

Euclid, Ohio, police initially said little of the incident, claiming that a “violent struggle” ensued after Hubbard refused the officers’ orders to “face away” after being told to step out of his vehicle. But dashcam footage revealed that seconds later, and without any provocation, the officer shoved Hubbard against the car and grabbed him by the arms. After slamming Hubbard to the pavement, the arresting officer can be seen punching him several times while he lies defenseless on the ground attempting to block the punches being thrown. The release of the dashcam footage tore apart the police narrative of Hubbard “resisting arrest” during the traffic stop.

One of the more notorious examples of violent encounters during a traffic stop was the 2015 killing of Sandra Bland in East Texas. Dashcam footage and a bystander’s cellphone video showed how state trooper Brian Encinia removed Bland from her vehicle and directed her out of range of his dashcam to begin brutally attacking her, slamming her head to the ground. The incident led to Bland’s arrest and she was later found hanging dead in her jail cell. In contrast to the police’s claims of “suicide,” many saw Bland’s death as a possible “lynching.” Nothing credible came from official channels about the circumstances surrounding her death.



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