

# Internal investigation launched after Florida infant injured while in police custody

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An internal affairs probe has been launched within the Pensacola, Florida police department to investigate the wounding of a 1-year-old infant while in police custody. Images of the wounded child have elicited shock online, raising questions of foul play and demands for a criminal investigation.

The child's injuries were reported after officers attempted to execute a search warrant for the child's father, 24-year-old Corey Joseph Marioneaux Jr., on the morning of February 3. The search warrant was in relation to a shooting near downtown Pensacola on January 22. The downtown Pensacola shooting reportedly took place at Palafox and Garden Streets, where police say two people were shot "by an unknown perpetrator" as they were sitting in their car while at a red light.

Pensacola Police SWAT decided to execute a search warrant last Thursday morning at the residence of Marioneaux, based on suspicions that the home was "in direct relation to the investigation of the incident at Palafox St. and Garden St." Marioneaux has since been charged with attempted murder of a law enforcement officer as the SWAT team forced their way into Marioneaux's home.

Marioneaux allegedly fired a shot at an officer after the team of police rammed through the front door and barged into his home. The shot fired by Marioneaux hit the head of one officer but only struck a protective shield that the agent was wearing. The officer shot back at Marioneaux but did not hit him, according to police, and no one suffered any injuries. Marioneaux eventually surrendered and was taken into custody. The family argues Marioneaux shot at the officers because he feared they were intruders.

Marioneaux was booked into Escambia County Jail that same day but was eventually released on a \$50,000 bond.

Marioneaux's two young children—1-year-old Caion and 3-year-old Cylen—were inside the home sleeping at the time of the shooting. The children's mother, Moiya Dixon, was informed of the incident while at another residence.

Marioneaux's family relayed to Dixon all that had happened. Among this information was that her 1-year-old was injured. A picture taken by the family shows the 1-year-old's nose and lip swollen, a scrape on his lip, scratches on his nose and several bumps on his forehead. Dixon's first thought after seeing Caion was—"Who did this?" Dixon told WEAR-TV, "I get my

baby and I see his face—and it's almost unrecognizable compared to how he looked when I left him last."

The department has thus far stuck to an incredible and highly suspicious explanation for the infant's gruesome injuries. The police claimed in a statement Monday that both kids were in the back seat of a car with an investigator. The investigator got out of the car and upon returning, Pensacola Police said, did not notice the child leaning on the car's door. When the investigator opened it, police say Caion simply fell out of the car and scraped his face on the street pavement. Police say the child was checked by EMS for injuries and both children were later released to family members.

Escambia County officials told Channel 3 news that EMS was called out at 6:40 a.m. for a hemorrhage and laceration on a toddler. The county, however, could not specify what EMS saw or what was said. The toddler was reportedly not taken to the hospital by EMS—so Dixon took him herself. Dozens of pages of paperwork from the hospital document the child's injuries after CAT scans and X-rays.

The Pensacola Police Department has now launched an internal affairs investigation into the circumstances surrounding the child's wounds, as a result of the furious demands of Dixon and the child's family for answers. When asked by WEAR-TV what she would like to say to the police department, Dixon replied: "How could you?" Dixon also said: "It's been very disturbing and overwhelming not knowing the truth of what happened to my 1-year-old."

The brutal aggression displayed by the Pensacola police officers who targeted Marioneaux, nearly killing him and leading to his toddler being gravely injured in their custody, is yet another example of the unending epidemic of police violence in the United States. The continuing wave of deadly encounters with police is a product of the rotten social conditions that prevail throughout the United States. Police are used as instruments for enforcing historic levels of social inequality by meting out violent repression against working-people and youth, devastating countless numbers of individuals and families.

More than a week after the near-fatal police-involved shooting, Marioneaux still faces a charge for attempted murder of a law enforcement officer and has reportedly lost his job

over the incident.

Marioneaux does not have a criminal record and the Pensacola Police Department said he is not even a suspect in the January shooting investigation that led police to his home last Thursday morning. Dixon also says she has no idea why police would want information in his home.

The raid on Marioneaux recalls the brutal police murder of Breonna Taylor in her Louisville, Kentucky home in March 2020. Kentucky's Republican Attorney General Daniel Cameron, who acted as a special investigator in the case, announced no charges could be brought against the two officers who inundated the home with bullets that killed Taylor, because her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, fired first. Walker maintained he was acting in self-defense against police who stormed into the home without ever identifying themselves.

In the Pensacola case, it is certain that every attempt will be made to whitewash the culpability of the officials involved in approving the search warrant and hold none of the officers seriously accountable for the tragedy.

### **North Miami, Florida**

Elsewhere in Florida the state court of appeals ruled Wednesday to overturn the conviction of a former North Miami police officer who was convicted for shooting at an autistic man holding a toy truck, and his caretaker in July 2016.

Former officer Jonathan Aledda fired three times at Arnaldo Rios Soto during a standoff in a North Miami street, but hit and wounded Charles Kinsey, an unarmed behavioral therapist who was lying on the ground with his hands in the air, begging police not to shoot.

At his trial in June 2019, Aledda testified that he believed Soto had a gun and was holding Kinsey hostage, while a motorist had called 911 to report a man she believed might be holding a gun to his head.

Aledda recklessly fired his gun, ignoring a radio dispatch from another cop who had determined the toy was not a weapon. The jury acquitted him of two felony counts of attempted manslaughter, but convicted on the misdemeanor. A Miami judge sentenced him to probation, and granted him a "withhold of adjudication," meaning no conviction appeared on his record.

The appeals court, however, ruled that the conviction was tainted because the court refused to allow Aledda's SWAT commander to testify about the "special training" he had received on dealing with hostage rescues.

The argument of the prosecution was that the SWAT commander was not considered an "expert," however, and the North Miami hostage situation was not being handled by the SWAT unit. Nonetheless, the court ruled Wednesday the testimony about Aledda's SWAT training "would assist — rather than confuse — the jury in determining whether Aledda's response to the circumstances he encountered was criminally negligent."

Kinsey's attorney, Hilton Napoleon, pointed to the ominous

implications of the ruling in emboldening an already largely unaccountable police to commit even more acts of brutality without any fear of repercussion.

"I will say their ruling affords police officers greater latitude than common defendants ... they're creating a double standard between police officers and regular defendants," Napoleon told the *Miami Herald*. The efforts to whitewash the crimes of police have found repeated expression in Miami-Dade itself. At least nine officers from three different police agencies in Miami-Dade County are awaiting trial for cases of police brutality, while officers have been acquitted at trial in three recent cases under the State Attorney's Office, according to the *Miami Herald*.

The case of Aledda once again demonstrates how all institutions of the capitalist state are directed towards shielding law enforcement from serious criminal punishment, despite the massive wave of police killings and brutality that continues to sweep the country. A report from the *Washington Post* found police shot and killed at least 1,055 people nationwide in 2021, the highest total since the *Post* began tracking fatal shootings by officers in 2015. The new count is up from 1,021 shootings the previous year and 999 in 2019.

All the pretenses of the Democratic Party and President Joe Biden that his administration would spearhead a campaign for "police reform" came to an ignominious end late last year when all bipartisan negotiations on legislation the Democrats promised would implement significant change in policing collapsed. The American ruling elite felt compelled to make noises about police reform amid the eruption of an unprecedented wave of multiracial and multiethnic protests against police violence and racism that involved millions of people across the US and internationally in 2020.

The failure of police reform advocates to pressure sections of the ruling class to enact any changes proves that outside a unified struggle of the working class to overturn the entire capitalist system, all talk of police reform represents fruitless pipe dreams. There is no faction of the political establishment which is willing to weaken an institution that defends the profits and property of the capitalist ruling elite.



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