

Notes on police violence in America

US police on track to kill over 1,100 people in 2022

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According to two separate databases maintained by the *Washington Post* and Mapping Police Violence, US police have killed over 600 people so far this year.

As of July 16, 2022, Mapping Police Violence has confirmed that 633 people in the United States have been killed by police, 10 more people killed compared to the same time last year. According to the database, there have been only eight days in 2022 where police did not kill someone.

The *Washington Post* has tracked 614 police killings as of July 26, 2022. Both the *Post* and the Mapping Police Violence figures represent an average of just over three people killed by police every day in the United States, a number that has remained steady through Democratic and Republican administrations alike under Obama, Trump and now Biden. This is despite years of protests and demands by millions of workers and youth for an end to police violence.

Capitalist politicians routinely hail the police as heroes, “defenders of democracy,” and the epitome of impartial justice. These lies are told to the American people in order to obfuscate the class role of the police and the vital function they play in capitalist society.

The police are not given billions of dollars and lethal military-style weaponry every year by bourgeois politicians to defend the interests of everyone; the police are the front-line soldiers of capital, they exist to defend private property and enforce social inequality—nothing else.

New York City, New York

Raymond Chalusant, 18, was playing with a water pellet gun when he was murdered by off-duty New York City corrections officer Dion Middleton, 45, after midnight on Thursday, July 21. In a statement to the *Washington Post*, a New York Police Department spokesperson said that Chalusant was found unconscious and unresponsive with a gunshot wound to his face

around 1:35 a.m. A clearly plastic, orange and gray, “Orbeez” water pellet gun was recovered at the scene.

After shooting the 18-year-old in the face, Middleton clocked into work without reporting his crime to anyone. In the exception that proves the rule, Middleton was arrested at work last Thursday and charged with murder, manslaughter and criminal possession of a weapon. While Middleton has not been fired, the NYC Corrections Department did suspend him without pay.

Speaking to the *Post*, the police said that there was no evidence Chalusant ever fired his water gun at Middleton. In an interview with the *New York Daily News*, Chalusant’s older sister, Jiraida Esquilin, 29, said that her little brother was trying to stay cool on a hot summer night by joining his friends in a water gun fight.

“They were just having fun,” she told the *Daily News*. “It’s a new Nerf gun that shoots water. The whole neighborhood was having a water gun fight. It was 90 degrees.”

“I can’t believe a corrections officer killed my brother,” Esquilin said. “Everything nowadays is a rage thing.”

Los Angeles, California

Witnesses say 39-year-old Jermaine Petit, an ex-Air Force emergency medical technician, was shot in the back multiple times as he was fleeing from Los Angeles police officers on July 18. Video footage taken by local residents shows police handcuffing Petit after shooting him and leaving him on the pavement.

Petit was taken to a hospital and is expected to survive after undergoing major surgery.

In statements given by police following the shooting, they claimed that Petit had a weapon, implying that it was a pistol of some kind, and thereby justifying the shooting. However, the cops have been forced to admit that Petit was only “armed” with a “black metal latch actuator” which was recovered by

police at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and South Bronson Avenue at the time of the shooting.

Deshonay Howard told the *Los Angeles Times* that she was parked in front of her house when she saw police trailing Petit as he was walking near a bus stop. “We all heard him say, ‘I don’t have anything,’ and he started to run.” She told the *Times* that she saw police shoot him in the back three times.

A *GoFundMe* has been started by Ashlyn Petit, the daughter of Jermaine. She wrote that “LAPD shot him even though he was UNARMED. He’s currently in the hospital in critical condition.”

Chicago, Illinois

Security camera footage has confirmed that an unarmed 13-year-old African American boy had his hands up when Chicago police officer Noah Ball shot him on May 18 this year. The boy survived the gunshot wound but is now paralyzed from the waist down.

Police have claimed they were pursuing the teen because he was a passenger in a suspected stolen vehicle. The boy has not been charged with any crimes.

A witness told ABC affiliate WLS that police clearly shot him while his hands were up. “His (the boy’s) hands were up and I seen the cop run up to that boy and just start shooting that boy did not have no gun or nothing.”

Ball, who has yet to be arrested, claimed through his attorney that he thought a cell phone the boy had was a gun. While the security footage shows the boy’s hands were up when he was shot, Ball did not activate his body camera until 40 seconds after shooting the young person.

Lawyers for the family of the young paralyzed child said he can no longer walk, “... he can’t get up, he can’t go to the bathroom, he can’t get his own food ... his life is changed forever.”

Cincinnati, Ohio

Rose Valentino, a Cincinnati police officer for the last 14 years, has been relegated to desk duty after admitting to using a racial slur while on duty following an internal investigation. The investigation uncovered body camera footage of Valentino expressing her hatred for “niggers” while she was driving in a police car outside a local high school.

On a rainy April 5 afternoon, body camera footage shows Valentino driving her vehicle towards the police station which

is located next to Western Hills University High School. As Valentino is pulling into the police parking compound, several cars are seen on the side of the road waiting to pick up students.

While the footage does not appear to show any vehicles blocking her path into the compound, she nevertheless turns on her lights and sirens, activating the body camera in the process.

“You’ve got to move. Fucking ridiculous. Fucking assholes,” Valentino says as she is driving. As Valentino continues to get more agitated, local ABC station 9 WCPO reported that a “black teen” gestured at the cop, allegedly giving her the middle finger, which sent Valentino into a rage.

“I fucking hate them. Oh, I fucking hate them so much. Fucking God. I hate this fucking world. Fucking hate it.” As the cop waits for the police security fence to open up to the cop parking lot, she continues her tirade. “Fucking niggers. I fucking hate them.”

WCPO reported that Valentino has received positive employee evaluations from her superiors who have noted her “positive attitude” and “great work.” The report noted that Valentino “trains officers who recently graduated the academy.”

While Valentino has received high marks from her bosses, and was granted a pivotal role training new graduates, WCPO found that she has been “reprimanded multiple times for not turning on her bodycam,” and that April’s incident was not the first time Valentino expressed racism.

In November 2018 Valentino was one of three cops involved in an incident that resulted in the city paying out a \$151,000 settlement after Valentino pulled out her gun and aimed it at two unarmed black men. Neither of the men were committing a crime; one of the men, a real estate agent, was showing a property to the other man, a prospective renter.



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