

Video of Arkansas police viciously beating unarmed man sparks mass anger

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A 34-second video posted on Twitter on August 21, showing three police officers punching, kicking, kneeling and slamming an unarmed man's head into the pavement outside a gas station in rural Arkansas, has provoked popular outrage across the US and internationally.

The video was recorded this past Sunday morning by bystanders at the Kountry Xpress in Mulberry, Arkansas. The small rural community is located about 140 miles north of Little Rock. According to data from datausa.io, roughly 20 percent of the approximately 1,600 people who reside in Mulberry live below the United States' meager poverty line.

The graphic video has been viewed over 7.7 million times and retweeted nearly 65,000 times as of this writing. It begins with three cops already on top of and pummeling a man later identified by police as Randall Worcester, 27, of Goose Creek, South Carolina.

As the frenzied police officers bash and beat Worcester, he reflexively tries to protect himself from the repeated blows by covering his head.

"This is bad," observes the eyewitness videographer from inside a nearby vehicle. She films the police using Worcester's body to balance themselves as they deliver potentially crippling knee strikes to his back and spine.

As Worcester continues to writhe in agony on the pavement under the barrage of police fists and boots, one of the cops is observed grabbing Worcester by the head and slamming it into the pavement.

Another cop, assuming a similar position to that of convicted murderer and former Minneapolis cop, Derek Chauvin, uses his body weight to pin down Worcester, leaning on his upper back and neck, while another punches Worcester in the torso.

Throughout the entire video recording, Worcester is never once observed striking or hitting the police. He does not attempt to grab any of the cops weapons or equipment. He does not appear to be "resisting" in any fashion.

A different young person than the one filming observes the beating

in progress and yells out to the police to stop assaulting the unarmed man: "Don't beat him! He needs his medicine!"

One of the officers responds "Back the fuck up!" Another cop tells the person to "get in your car" and points menacingly at them with one arm while his other hand is pushing down on Worcester's skull, grinding his face into the pavement as the video ends.

Within hours of the video going viral on social media, Republican Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson released a statement on Twitter attempting to tamp down mass anger. He wrote that he had "spoken with Col. Bill Bryant of the Arkansas State police and the local arrest incident in Crawford County will be investigated pursuant to the video evidence and the request of the prosecuting attorney."

Like nearly every other time the police investigate themselves, this investigation is not an exercise in transparency, but an attempt to provide the facade of "accountability" where none exists.

Forced to respond to mass anger, a Facebook post from the Crawford County Sheriff's Department identified the police who carried out the beating as deputies Zack King and Levi White. The third cop was identified as Thell Riddle of the Mulberry Police Department. As of this writing, CNN has confirmed that all three cops have been placed on paid leave pending the results of state and federal investigations.

While none of the police involved in the vicious assault have yet to be charged, Worcester is facing eight serious charges including second degree battery, resisting arrest, refusal to submit, possessing an instrument of crime, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, terrorist threatening, and second degree assault.

While it is not clear exactly what precipitated the police assault of Worcester, the police have claimed they were initially called to the area after a clerk at a different gas station reported that Worcester had threatened and spat at them, before leaving the gas station on his bicycle before police arrived.

After he was beaten and arrested by police, Worcester was taken to a nearby hospital where he was treated before spending the night in jail. On Monday afternoon, he was released from jail; upon

exiting the facility with his bicycle and what appeared to be a lawyer, Worcester was asked by reporters how he was doing, to which he replied, “I’m doing pretty good today, we are just walking to the car.”

While it is not confirmed at this time, it appears that Worcester is neurodivergent and possibly homeless, two factors that are shared by a significant share of police violence victims in the US. A study conducted by the Ruderman Family Foundation from 2013-2015 found that “almost half” of the people killed by police in the US had “some kind of disability.”

In a press conference Monday, Crawford County Sheriff Jimmy Damante said that the Crawford County deputies, King and White, had been police “for some time” and that Riddle had also been a cop for “many years,” leaving little doubt that this was not the first time that these police had engaged in such violent behavior.

Damante said that investigations into the police officers’ actions would be forthcoming. He admitted that had a bystander not filmed the police assault, it is likely he would have never known about the assault or questioned his deputies.

Expressing more sympathy for the police who beat Worcester than Worcester himself, Damante bemoaned the fact that his officers were caught brutalizing a man on camera, saying that it was “very hard on the whole department.”

“Morale does take a dive when things like this happen,” said Damante. He claimed, unbelievably, that the type of violence caught video was “not what we stand for.”

Despite the fact that multiple police officers participated in the beating, and it appears that they had all been officers for several years, Damante claimed that this was simply a case of a “few bad apples.”

“We’ve got bad apples in every profession in this country, everywhere, every job,” said Damante. “Sometimes,” lamented Damante, “those people do slip by. [It] [d]oes take time to weed them out, unfortunately.”

This pathetic excuse of a “few bad apples,” which has been proffered by violent and murderous police departments for decades, ignores the systemic character of police violence in the United States.

The notion that it is only a “few” rotten cops ignores that the entire US class-based “justice” system is designed to provide legal immunity to police to use overwhelming violence whenever they deem it necessary in service of the capitalist ruling elite.

Amid rising levels of inequality, exacerbated by the worst inflation in over 40 years, war with Russia in Ukraine and provocations against China, and growing militancy in the working class, most consciously expressed in the campaign of Will Lehman for UAW

president, the police continue to be showered with military-grade weaponry, and billions in funding by Democratic and Republican Party politicians alike.

President Joe Biden and the Democratic Party, rejecting demands from the millions of workers and youth who protested following the 2020 murder of George Floyd, have tried to outdo the Republicans in their support for the police, with Biden promising to spend another \$37 billion on the police. Of this, \$13 billion will be used to hire 100,000 more cops to harass, beat and kill workers and the poor.

That Worcester appears to be white and the officers who assaulted him are also white, also exposes the racist lies advanced by the Democratic Party and their pseudo-left apologists who claim that police violence in the US is the result of racial animus or ingrained “white supremacy.”

While racists and fascists are cultivated within local, state, county and federal police and military agencies across the country, the police are not enforcers of a racial caste system, but the capitalist system. While African-Americans are disproportionately killed at a higher rate compared to white people, overwhelmingly the number one factor in determining if one is going to be a victim of police violence is one’s socioeconomic standing.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* noted in a 2018 study on police violence in the US: “Police violence is focused overwhelmingly on men lowest on the socio-economic ladder: in rural areas outside the South, predominately white men; in the Southwest, disproportionately Hispanic men; in mid-size and major cities, disproportionately black men. Significantly, in the rural South, where the population is racially mixed, white men and black men are killed by police at nearly identical rates. What unites these victims of police violence is not their race, but their class status (as well as, of course, their gender).”

Since police violence is fundamentally a class question, the only solution to the crisis requires a class response. The working class, through the abolition of capitalism, the source of inequality, can end police violence and appropriate the resources of society to provide for the basic needs of all, instead of paying thousands of police thugs to uphold the unearned privileges of a tiny parasitic few.



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