

Killer cops in Akron, Ohio, cut body-cam audio after realizing Jayland Walker was unarmed

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Body-camera footage from the June 27 murder of 25-year-old Jayland Walker, a former Amazon worker and DoorDash delivery driver, has revealed that more than five minutes after gunning Walker down in a hail of bullets, officers from the Akron Police Department in Ohio were unable to locate a firearm.

The new body-camera tape, which is heavily blurred out to protect the identity of the killer cops, shows some of what happened after at least eight officers fired roughly 90 rounds at the fleeing and unarmed Walker. According to the medical examiner's report, Walker died after he was struck by 46 bullets fired by the Akron police.

On August 26, the *Akron Beacon Journal* posted an article revealing that it had been involved in an ongoing court battle with the police and the city of Akron to release all of the body-camera footage two months after the killing. After a recent court order, the police were forced by a judge to turn over eight video files to the *Beacon Journal*.

In its article, the *Beacon Journal* noted that “only five of the eight new videos released by the city on a thumb drive ... were fully play-able. City attorneys said they are working to fix the remaining three videos.”

In arguing for the footage to be released, attorney Lynn Rowe Larsen for the *Beacon Journal* argued that the police and city were violating their own recently passed police camera ordinance, which mandates that the cops turn over “the remainder of the Footage from City recording devices—including what occurs after the officer's use of force—within 30 days of each of these Incidents.”

The new footage shows that 12 seconds after police shot Walker dozens of times, the young African American man was still alive, however briefly. The *Akron Beacon Journal* wrote that while hard to discern, it appears that Walker raised “his right arm a few inches before dropping it.”

In response to Walker's last movements, the *Beacon Journal* reported that a thuggish Akron police officer yelled out: “Don't fucking reach for nothing.” After threatening Walker, the cop slowly walked towards him with his pistol still pointed at the dying man.

Within a minute of murdering Walker, the adrenaline-fueled police began to ask each other if they saw a gun. “Does anyone see the gun?! Does anyone see the gun?!” Another cop yelled, “Where's the weapon at?”

Another responded: “We can't see it. We don't see it. We don't know.”

None of the body-camera footage ever shows police locating a weapon,

either on Walker or in the front seat of his vehicle.

This is highly significant as one of the main pieces of evidence Akron Police Chief Steve Mylett has presented to justify his officers' egregious actions is the claim, which has yet to be verified, that Walker fired a pistol at police while he was fleeing in his vehicle. This, in Mylett's words, escalated the “traffic violation” to a “public safety” issue and thereby justified the police execution of Walker.

When Mylett presented heavily edited videos of police body-camera footage at a July 3 press conference, he first prefaced the presentation by showing what he alleged was a still-image obtained from the footage. The image Mylett presented showed a pistol, a shell casing, a clip with bullets not in the pistol, and a gold ring band on the front seat of Walker's vehicle.

More than 60 days since the killing of Walker, police have yet to release any body-camera footage that actually corroborates the image Akron police offered that day and the narrative presented by Mylett.

The newly released tape shows that as the police come to the realization that they just executed an unarmed man, a male cop, perhaps a supervisor or a sergeant, orders all the cops who shot Walker to come congregate with him.

“Anybody who shot, come over here for me.” That same cop can be heard reassuring the police to “take a deep breath.” Within seconds, all eight police officers who fired their weapons at Walker are making their way towards this cop.

ABC 5 noted that after the cops began to sequester themselves, on “four of eight officers' body camera, you can clearly hear officers say the phrase, ‘Go Blue.’ Shortly after, the audio is muted.”

In some of the footage released, cops are clearly heard telling each other: “Everybody go blue. Go blue.” One camera picks up audio of a cop saying, “hold on,” as the rest continue to command each other to “Go Blue.”

Within seconds of the command “Go Blue,” all the audio recording capabilities on the police body cameras have been turned off. The cameras continue to record visually, silently, for roughly two minutes, according to ABC News 5 Cleveland. During this time all eight officers who shot Walker are congregated in a circle behind a police cruiser.

Due to the missing audio, it is impossible at this time to determine what the police were talking about. The obvious guess is that they were discussing the legality, and potential fallout, of shooting the unarmed

Walker dozens of times as he was fleeing. No doubt some were stressing the urgent necessity of getting their “story straight” prior to giving their respective “official” statements to investigators following the shooting.

In an interview with ABC 5 Cleveland, former police officer and Associate Professor Kalfani Ture at Mount St. Mary’s University in Maryland offered his thoughts on what the phrase “Go Blue” means.

“What does ‘Go Blue’ mean? It means at this critical moment I need undivided attention because whatever we say or do can jeopardize the officers involved. The second thing it means is to cut off all surveillance equipment,” said Ture.

He continued: “Is this a moment where officers prevaricate, they square up their stories or justifications, or is this the moment where the sergeant explains more explicitly what is the protocol? We don’t know that and what it appears to mean is we are seeing evidence of a cover-up.”

That the killer cops congregated following the shooting goes against police protocol, according to Chief Mylett. In an interview with ABC News 5 last month, Mylett told reporters that all eight police officers who shot Walker were immediately separated from each other and paired with another cop who did not shoot their weapon. This was done, as Mylett and other police have explained, so that the cops who shot their weapons could give “clean” statements to investigators that were not been influenced by each other.

That this obviously did not happen points to the massive police cover-up underway and underscores that everyone seeking justice for Walker and other victims of police violence cannot put any stock in the US justice system or either of the big business parties to defend the democratic rights of the population. The entire class-based US justice system is designed to protect the financial oligarchy and its private property, while insulating police from any repercussions after they dispense lethal “justice” to workers and the poor.

In the over eight weeks since the killing of Walker, there have been dozens of protests and marches demanding “Justice for Jayland” and all victims of police violence. In response to the overwhelmingly peaceful protests, Democratic Mayor Dan Horrigan in coordination with Mylett sanctioned a police terror campaign that included the imposition of a nightly curfew, virtually outlawing protests and the First Amendment in the city’s core.

Even after the curfew was lifted, the Democratic mayor has continued to “back the blue.” Horrigan has joined Mylett in slandering protesters as “violent” while remaining silent as police teargassed journalists and assaulted protesters. While not a single killer cop has been charged in the murder of Walker, over 75 protesters have been arrested on trumped up charges for speaking out and demonstrating against unending police murder.

Perhaps in response to the release of the footage exposing the lying cops, this past Saturday night one of the more active participants in the “Justice for Jayland” movement was arrested and beaten by cops.

In order to protect his identity, his name is not being publicly revealed. However, this reporter has confirmed that he is facing multiple charges, including resisting arrest and disorderly conduct.

Social media video taken from the incident proves that the man never resisted police and was not causing a disturbance when he was plucked

out of a crowd and arrested. The video shows that prior to being arrested, one of the cops yelled out, “13,” and indicated to other police, “That’s him, 13.”

The man was wearing nothing on his person that indicated the Number 13. It is likely that the police had already compiled lists of prominent protesters whom they numbered.

In the over 14-minute video, at no point was the man significantly injured by police, even though footage showed that they did use a taser on him. When the man was placed in the police cruiser, the T-shirt he was wearing was white, and there was no blood on him.

However later Saturday morning, the anti-police violence protester was transported to a local Akron hospital due to injuries he had suffered, apparently while in police custody. While the social media video of his arrest showed that the man was not bleeding, after being released from the hospital, pictures showed the same man’s white T-shirt covered in blood, along with several significant scrapes and abrasions.

The targeted harassment and beating of anti-police violence protesters by police, coupled with the ongoing cover-up of Walker’s murder, obliterates any notion that the Democratic Party, despite its incessant posturing about “systemic racism,” defends any less slavishly the right of the police to murder and terrorize the working class compared to its fascistic “Republican colleagues.”

In the over eight weeks since Walker’s murder, Akron Mayor Horrigan has defended the Akron Police Department’s refusal to release the names of the officers involved in the slaying. All eight cops are on paid administrative leave as the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation continues its cover-up investigation which is not expected to be completed for at least another year.

Mayor Horrigan has backed Chief Mylett’s decision to allow Akron police, some of whom are actively involved in fascist paramilitary groups, to not wear their name tags while out in public on duty, further shielding them from any responsibility, while also endangering the community.

Defying the police reign of terror, on Sunday nearly 100 protesters, young and old, black and white, marched through Akron demanding “Justice for Jayland.”



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