

Utah man shot and killed by Farmington police during traffic stop

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On Wednesday, March 1, 25-year-old Chase Allan was shot and killed by police in Farmington, Utah, following a traffic stop. Police report that Allan was pulled over for not having a license plate on his vehicle. He was killed when five officers fired up to 12 bullets into his car.

A statement from the Allan family says that they were not informed of Chase's death as next of kin by the police and only found out that he had been killed by reading local news articles. They described his death as "tragic and devastating" and a "brutal murder" that occurred with police "shooting him while he was still in his automobile and likely terrified for his safety. They shot 12 plus rounds at him while he was still inside the car with the engine running and lights on when reporters arrived."

On Friday, Farmington police Chief Eric Johnsen told reporters Allan was pulled over by an officer for having an "illegitimate" license plate but did not clarify what it was.

After being signaled by a cop, Allan pulled into the parking lot of a United States Postal Service office. He reportedly rolled his window down only a few inches and refused to comply with demands from the officer to present his license and registration.

Johnsen said in a statement, "The driver asserted his independence from the laws of the land as well as his belief that he was not required to provide information to the officer, nor was he required to cooperate." The officer called for backup, with a supervisor, two additional officers and a trainee arriving on the scene shortly after.

The officers then ordered Allan to exit his vehicle. When he reportedly refused to comply they attempted to pull him from the vehicle, at which point a struggle ensued that lasted "only seconds" before an officer

allegedly called out that there was a gun. The police report does not say how many times Allan was shot and only says that body camera footage confirms that gunshots can be heard.

The body camera footage has not been released, but the Farmington Police Department claims that it shows that Allan had an empty holster on his hip and that there was a handgun on the floor of the driver's side.

Without the release of the body camera footage the official police account of the incident cannot be verified. Photos of Allan's car show that there are at least eight bullet holes through the passenger side windows and Johnsen confirmed that there were officers on both sides of the vehicle.

The bullet holes in the passenger windows complicate the claim that Allan was engaged in a struggle with officers. The police claim of a struggle is reminiscent of the 2022 police murder of Richard Ward in Pueblo, Colorado. The release of body camera footage in that case a few weeks ago showed that the police report that he attacked officers was untrue.

However, there is a history of conflict between the Allan family and the Farmington police department that corresponds to some of the police story.

The Allan family are members of the Sovereign Citizen movement, a right-wing ultra libertarian ideology that holds that government authorities do not have the right to enforce laws on them. They are particularly known for denying the authority of police officers to enforce traffic laws, claiming that it is their constitutional right to travel without a license or vehicle registration.

Journalist photos of the scene show that Allan's car did not have a Utah license plate, and news reports state that there was a placard stating his "constitutional sovereignty" in its place.

Chase Allan's mother, Diane Allan, had a similar encounter with a Farmington police officer last year as well.

This past October, Diane Allan filed a lawsuit against the police department claiming that a police traffic stop was illegitimate because she had an "inherent right" to "access the public roads without her Liberty restrained" as "one of the sovereign people of Utah." The lawsuit claims that the police officer did not have any right to pull her over for an alleged expired vehicle registration because it was a violation of her constitutional rights. The suit also alleges that Diane Allan and her son, Chase, attempted to hand deliver a "Rescissioned citation" to the police department but Lieutenant Eric Johnsen crumpled up the citation and threw it in the trash.

This history of conflict with the police and his family's political views may be why Allan would refuse to comply with demands to present his license, but does not explain why he was forcefully removed from the vehicle and ultimately killed.

The Farmington Police claim that their officers were concerned for their lives and that they are prioritizing the release of the body camera footage.

Chief Johnsen said on Friday that "Video footage is only one part of complete comprehension of the incident, and we recognize that our understanding of the incident may change as more information and evidence is gathered and analyzed. We don't draw any final conclusions regarding the actions of the officers until the protocol investigation has been completed."

Allan is the third person to be killed by the police in the past three years in the city of 25,000, located north of Salt Lake City, and is the fourth in Utah so far this year. Based on previous years' averages, he is among the more than 1,000 people that will be killed by police in 2023. The fact that Allan is white cuts across the claim by the pseudo-left that police violence is a fundamentally racially motivated occurrence.

In 2022 the police fatally shot 1,232 people, more than any year in the past decade. People of all races and ethnicities are affected by police violence. While African Americans and people of Pacific Islander descent suffer proportionally more deaths at the hands of the police, deaths among those identified as white make up around 40 percent of all police shootings in the United States.

The main unifying feature among those killed by the police is that the vast majority are working class and are the victims of the increasingly militarized police, which draws upon the most reactionary sections of American society to enact violence against the working class on behalf of the capitalist ruling elite.



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