

# Family of Reginald Clay Jr., 24-year-old Amazon worker killed by police, protests at Chicago City Hall: “You can’t just keep shooting people, it has to stop”

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Last week, the city of Chicago released the body camera footage of the April 15 police killing of 24-year-old Amazon and Doordash gig worker Reginald Clay Jr. The video makes clear that the officer, Fernando Ruiz, began chasing Clay despite having no suspicion of criminal activity and then shot him while he was attempting to surrender his weapon.

The city, with the assistance of the media, is attempting to cover up the murder by blacking out coverage of the story and running stories slandering the victim. Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson as well as the pseudo-left Democratic Socialist Caucus of aldermen on Chicago’s city council have been totally silent on the shooting.

On Wednesday afternoon Clay’s family held a protest outside of Chicago’s City Hall to demand justice for the killing and to demand answers. Originally planning to hold their demonstration inside the city hall building, the grieving family members were barred from entering by dozens of police who refused to let them enter. The demonstration continued on the sidewalk outside the city hall doors.

Leading the protest was Clay’s mother Tara Henderson who told WSWs reporters that she is still fighting to learn the most basic details of the police activity leading up to the shooting. “We have body camera footage but there is no sound, I don’t know why they approached him in the first place... that’s why we are here today. I want to ask the people who are supposed to know what happened ‘What happened to my son? Can someone help me find that out?’ I just want someone to help me.”

Henderson and other family members carried pictures of Clay, who they lovingly refer to as “Lil Red” as well as protest signs with slogans calling for justice.

“He was energetic, funny, had a big heart. He was a beautiful person; my son had a beautiful spirit. He was a good brother, he was a good person, and he did not deserve this,” Henderson said.

“His daughter is only three years old. She has to go the rest of her life without her father,” Henderson continued, “and I have to go the rest of my life without my son. I can’t see him come up and say ‘Mamma whatchu cooking’ none of those things anymore... and for what? He was on his way to a funeral.”

She explained that it wasn’t long after 9:00 a.m. when the shooting occurred and that the video shows he had done nothing wrong. “There is a law in place where police are not supposed to carry out a foot pursuit like this. He had not broken any laws and now he’s dead... all I have left is an urn with his ashes.”

Henderson remains resolved to continue fighting until she receives a full explanation for her son’s death. “I am not going anywhere until I get those answers and these police are held accountable,” she said, “You can’t just keep shooting people, it has to stop.”

When asked if any elected officials had reached out to her, she responded, “None, nothing.”

Clay’s Cousin, Crystal, also attended the demonstration with portraits of the slain young man. “My little cousin would still be here if those officers would have never jumped out of that car,” she said.

“He was on his way to a funeral and then we had to plan his own funeral a week later. That’s not right,”

Crystal added, “This has to stop. We have rights as people to walk this earth and be as free as anyone else.”

“There was no crime, that’s what we want them to understand, there was no crime, and he was surrendering. It could be anybody’s friend, daughter, or cousin. We want justice nothing else,” she said.

“People need to understand that this is bigger than what happened in that backyard. They had no right to jump out of that car on him. What crime was being committed when those children were out there for a funeral?”

There has been a total silence from elected officials on the shooting, including from the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) who hold five seats on the Chicago City Council. The DSA and other pseudo-left organizations have thrown all of their efforts behind the incoming administration of Democratic mayor-elect Brandon Johnson.

To Johnson and his backers in the DSA the police killing of Clay is an inconvenience that might dampen their victory parade as Johnson prepares to take office on May 15, exactly one month after Clay was killed. Johnson’s administration will make no serious attempt to bring the killer cop, Fernando Ruiz, to justice or to make any significant changes to the policies of the Chicago Police Department.

An indication of what to expect of the CPD under the new administration was shown last week when Johnson announced that Fred Waller will serve as the interim police superintendent once he takes office. Waller was a long time Chicago cop before retiring as third in command from the force in 2020.

During his tenure Waller was a close associate of Ronald Watts, a Chicago cop convicted of corruption charges in 2012. Watts ran an extortion racket demanding residents of the Ida B. Wells housing project in Bronzeville pay him and his team “protection money.”

Those who refused would be terrorized by the police and arrested on bogus charges. At least 220 people were falsely sentenced to prison because of Watts.

Soon-to-be police superintendent Waller worked alongside Watts in the CPD Public Housing Section before it was disbanded in 2004. Then, from 2010 to 2013 Waller was the commander of the 2nd District with Watts and his team of gangsters under his

command.

When asked about this relationship by a reporter at the press conference announcing Waller as the new superintendent Johnson refused to answer saying only, “I am confident that Chief Fred Waller is the best person to serve as the interim police superintendent.”

Also at Wednesday’s demonstration outside city hall was Clay’s father, Reginald Clay, Sr. He expressed total disgust with the city government and the media who he felt were not accurately reporting on his son’s murder.

“When we have done interviews, they have either misrepresented what we have said or edited out what we are trying to say. They are trying to cover up his death.” He added, “My son had aspirations, he had goals. He was working to get his CDL so that he could become a truck driver like me.”

“We are here trying to get answers and they won’t even let us in the building. The police told us that Mayor Lightfoot herself ordered them to keep us outside city hall,” Clay Sr. said.

The Clay family has opened a lawsuit against CPD charging that, “There were no facts to make anyone believe that he was committing a crime or breaking any laws.” The suit states that the police used “unprovoked and unwarranted” force and violated the department’s own foot-chase policy.



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