

Chicago police shot at 26-year-old Dexter Reed 96 times in 41 seconds

Kristina Betinis
10 April 2024

On Tuesday, Chicago's Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), an official oversight agency, released video of the street execution of 26-year-old Dexter Reed in the west side neighborhood of Humboldt Park on March 21 during what police report was a "traffic stop" by Chicago police.

The videos released included bodycam footage showing plainclothes officers in a car pulling up alongside Reed's car. Police then surround Reed's car with guns drawn, shouting at him to unlock the door and to roll his window down.

The officers involved are the 11th District tactical team, Alexandra Giampapa, Victor Pacheco, Thomas Spanos, Aubrey Webb and Gregory Saint Louis.

In the video, as police have Reed surrounded with their guns drawn, Reed appears to fire a shot that hits Saint Louis in the arm. The officers surrounding his car let loose a hail of bullets—96 in total in just 41 seconds. Three cops stopped to reload. Reed can be seen exiting the car while being shot, then stumbling and collapsing underneath it. Police shot at him at least three more times as he lay dying on the ground.

The extreme violence of the trigger-happy police reveals an extreme level of hostility to the lives and the rights of all citizens characteristic of an occupying military. It is well known that many US police forces, including Chicago's, have for decades received regular "counterterrorism" training with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and that police forces recruit heavily from veterans of America's neocolonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last week, in a letter to Chicago Police Superintendent Larry Snelling, COPA Chief Administrator Andrea Kersten raised questions about the reason why Reed was stopped, indicating "evidence

raises serious concerns about the validity of the traffic stop." She shared "grave concerns about the officers' ability to assess what is a necessary, reasonable, and proportional use of deadly force.

"The incident lasted more than 40 seconds, giving three of the four officers time to reload their firearms. This provided the officers with ample opportunity to reassess the situation."

A footnote in the letter reads "Additionally, COPA also notes that [sic] has an open investigation into another traffic stop involving the same five officers which occurred less than a month prior to this incident and was purportedly also based on a seatbelt violation." This report is not currently available on the COPA website.

The letter, which was circulated to political and religious leaders last week well in advance of the release of the video, also calls for the officers involved to be removed from active duty.

At a brief press conference with Kersten on Tuesday, Mayor Brandon Johnson unleashed a stream of platitudes while underscoring his support for the Chicago Police Department (CPD). He said, "I'm personally devastated to see yet another young black man lose his life during an interaction with the police."

Speaking to the public, Johnson said: "remain peaceful and [do] not lead our city down a path of division. ... Shooting a police officer can never be condoned. ... I will never stand for that, and neither will the city of Chicago."

While Johnson said nothing about the long history of violence and corruption of the CPD, or the allegations raised by Kersten's letter, he credited himself and his administration for releasing videos of the brutal murder: "Previous administrations have not always

moved with expediency ... But this administration, my administration is committed to transparency, justice and the rule of law.”

On October 20, 2014, Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke fired 16 shots in 15 seconds into 16-year-old Laquan McDonald, who had his back turned and was walking away on 40th Street on the city’s southwest side. The street execution of McDonald was falsified by police and covered up by city officials, including then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel, with the Chicago city council paying the teen’s family an unprecedented \$5 million in blood money.

Reed’s family led a protest of 100 or more people outside the 11th District police headquarters on Tuesday evening to demand accountability for the cops involved and the disbanding of the tactical teams. Reed’s sister, Porsha Banks, spoke of her brother as a kind person who loved his family and basketball. Reed led the Westinghouse College Prep basketball team to a championship in 2016.

Protesters were soon outnumbered and surrounded by police armed with batons.

The fascist leader of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 9, John Cantanzara, denounced Kersten as “corrupt” and defended Reed’s killers, declaring there was “nothing absolutely legally wrong with the shooting.”



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact