

Five cops gun down homeless man in Milwaukee amid massive police presence for RNC

Kevin Reed
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A homeless man was shot dead in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on Tuesday afternoon by a group of five Columbus, Ohio, police officers who were brought to the city as part of a massive law enforcement presence for the Republican National Convention (RNC) this week.

The police shooting of 43-year-old Samuel Sharpe, Jr. took place near King Park, roughly a mile outside the security perimeter set up for the convention. Dozens of Columbus police officers had been dispatched to the park, where 50 homeless people live in tents, for “demonstration response” and to follow a group of protesters that had gathered before starting their march.

According to a report by Milwaukee Police Chief Jeffrey Norman, 13 Columbus officers were having a briefing when one of them saw an altercation between two men. He said one of the two was holding a knife in each hand and threatening the other individual.

Chief Norman claimed the officers demanded that Sharpe drop the knife and, instead of obeying their command, he suddenly charged toward the other person, at which point the officers opened fire. Norman justified the shooting on the grounds that “Someone’s life was in danger,” and that the officers “took upon themselves to act to save someone’s life today.”

Subsequently released and carefully edited bodycam footage was presented by police to bolster the official account of what happened. Officers are seen in a group discussing the protest when one of them says, “He’s got knife.” The officers then run toward the suspect yelling, “Drop the knife.”

With their guns drawn and still running, the police come upon the man who can be seen with what appear to be knives in both hands and he briefly approaches

the other person. The video then goes black as a hail of gunshots can be heard with the words, “The man was killed at the scene” appearing over the black screen.

Eyewitnesses and others who knew Sharpe expressed outrage and denounced the police for the brutal killing. They said Sharpe, who was known in the community as Jehovah, was never a threat to anyone.

One eyewitness told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that Sharpe turned toward the police and started to drop the knives before they shot him.

The sister of Samuel, Angelique Sharpe, spoke to CNN and said her brother lived in a tent across the street from where he was shot. She said on Saturday and Tuesday her brother had family members that some other men had been threatening to kill him and his dog.

She continued, “I saw the bodycam video. If they were concerned about him having a knife, then tase the guy and take away the knife and figure out what’s happening. When you’re in a physical altercation and you’re fighting for your life, you’re in that moment. They didn’t even give my brother time to react to their commands.”

Angelique Sharpe’s sister also told CNN, “He was a really loving and compassionate person. When he would get money, he would give it away to other people. He was a chill guy who loved God.”

Milwaukee officials estimate that there are 4,500 police officers present for the RNC from 85 law enforcement agencies in 24 states across the US. The Milwaukee Police Department claimed they would assign officers from out of town to positions that are not “public-facing.” The theme for the convention the night Sharpe was killed by police was “Make America Safe Once Again,” with the assembled delegates

chanting “Back the Blue!”

In advance of the RNC, downtown Milwaukee was essentially shut down with vehicle checkpoints and maritime restrictions on the Milwaukee River. This was done to prevent protesters from getting close to the event as the Republican National Committee demanded a large exclusion zone around the facility.

The RNC was able to win the support of District Court Judge Brett H. Ludwig, who was appointed by Donald Trump, to issue a ruling denying a lawsuit by the ACLU of Wisconsin that challenged the protest restrictions as unduly limiting the exercise of free speech rights.

So far in 2024, police have killed 641 people or an average of 3.23 per day, according to a database maintained by the *Washington Post*. Police shootings this year are on track to exceed the total number of 1,161 police killings in 2023, the highest annual number on record.



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