

Federal agent kills 20-year-old Detroit man in front of family

By Shannon Jones
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In yet another brutal police shooting, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer shot and killed 20-year-old Terrence Kelom on the west side of Detroit Monday afternoon.

The ICE agent was part of a fugitive task force team and in the company of Detroit police officers. There was no immediate explanation for why a federal officer was accompanying city police. Both the victim and the ICE officer were black.

The action sparked outrage among family members and local residents who said the shooting was little more than an execution. The officer shot Kelom 10 times inside the family home on Evergreen Road.

Police knocked on the door of the home to serve an arrest warrant to the young man, known as “TT” to friends and neighbors. Police were allowed inside and claimed that Kelom charged at them with a hammer. He was shot in front of his parents and sister.

Family members disputed the claim that the youth offered resistance. Larry Watkins, Kelom’s uncle, told a local television news station that the shooting was totally unjustified. “He was reaching for his father when they killed him. That boy did not have anything in his hands. They just straight out executed him. Ten shots? Come on! That’s execution.”

Lakeisha Watkins, Kelom’s cousin, told Fox 2 Detroit, “They say they came for him on an old warrant. That boy was changing his life around. He has a son, he has a little girl due any day now.”

Detroit Police Chief James Craig attempted to calm tensions in the wake of the shooting, claiming there would be an internal investigation. He said that the police would hold a neighborhood meeting within the next two days to work on building relationships with residents.

A crowd gathered at the scene following the

shooting. Video footage shows angry neighbors and family members facing off with police, who had the street cordoned off and extra officers on hand.

The shooting in Detroit follows the release of video showing the brutal beating of an autoworker by police in the Detroit suburb of Inkster last January. Floyd Bent, 57, was pulled over by police after allegedly rolling through a stop sign. The video shows police dragging the unresisting man out of his vehicle with guns drawn and then pummeling him on the head with their fists. He was also kicked and shot three times with a Taser.

One Inkster police officer, William Melendez, was eventually charged in the beating. Charges of resisting arrest and drug possession against Dent have now been dropped.

Melendez was formerly employed by the Detroit Police Department. Dent gained a reputation for brutality, earning the nickname “Robocop.” In 1996 Melendez, along with another officer, shot an unarmed man multiple times in the back while he was lying on the ground. Melendez was never charged, but the city was forced to pay a \$1 million civil settlement.

In 2004 Melendez was acquitted, along with seven other Detroit police officers, on federal charges of lying, falsifying reports and planting evidence. They had been accused of leading a conspiracy to violate the civil rights of residents.

In January of this year, a Wayne County Circuit Court Judge dropped all remaining charges against a Detroit police officer accused of shooting 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones in 2010 during a raid on the family home.

Officer Joseph Weekley shot Stanley-Jones in the head with his automatic weapon during a no-knock swat raid in May 2010. The raid was being filmed by a

camera crew as part of a reality TV show. Police ignored warnings that there were children inside and hurled a flash-bang grenade into the house where Aiyana-Jones was sleeping on the couch. During the trial, the prosecution presented evidence that the officer's gun could not have been fired accidentally, and that police are trained to keep their fingers off the trigger.

The shooting of Stanley-Jones evoked intense anger in Detroit, and thousands attended the funeral and viewing.

The latest police shooting follows the lifting last year of a federal consent agreement entered into by the Detroit Police Department in 2003, after an investigation revealed rampant abuses by the department. The probe documented the regular use of excessive deadly force and the failure of police to seriously investigate brutality cases.

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