

Notes on police violence

Minneapolis police break up protest over killing of 24-year-old Jamar Clark

By Niles Williamson and Stuart Winter
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Twenty-four-year-old Jamar Clark died Monday night after his family decided to remove him from life support. Clark had been in a coma since November 15, when a Minneapolis police officer shot him in the head. According to witnesses the unarmed black man was handcuffed and pinned to the ground when he was shot.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) announced on Wednesday that the two officers involved in the killing, Mark Ringgenberg and Dustin Schwarze, have been placed on paid administrative leave pending an official investigation. Both men reportedly have seven years' experience as police officers and have been employed by the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) for the last 13 months.

According to police officials, Ringgenberg and Schwarze were responding to a man interfering with paramedics in a neighborhood in north Minneapolis. When they arrived on the scene they confronted Clark who, they claim, was still attempting to interfere with the paramedics.

While police officials have admitted that Clark was unarmed at the time of the shooting they dispute the claim that he was handcuffed, despite the insistence of numerous witnesses.

In a further attempt to justify the execution style-killing, Minneapolis Police Union president Lieutenant Bob Kroll told reporters on Wednesday that Clark had been reaching for one of the officer's guns.

A protest tent encampment set up outside the MPD precinct station near where Clark was killed was broken up by police officers on Wednesday. Protesters were also driven out of the building's atrium while metal barricades manned by police were erected around the building. Video of the scene shows a number

officers dressed in military style fatigues, and armed with riot gear confronting protestors.

Protestors from Black Lives Matters Minneapolis set up the camp to demand that the police release video of the killing and identify which officer shot Clark. While the BCA admitted that it possesses videos of the incident it says it will not release the videos until it concludes its investigation, which may take more than two months.

Following the shooting on Monday night, approximately 300 protestors marched onto Interstate I-94, blocking traffic for several hours. Police arrested 42, among them 8 adolescents.

The FBI has opened a separate civil rights investigation into the killing. Such federal investigations have routinely cleared police officers of any wrongdoing, including the clearing last year of Ferguson, Missouri police officer Darren Wilson for the murder of Michael Brown.

Dozens protest killing of Idaho rancher by sheriff's deputies

Dozens of people marched on the Adams County Sheriff's Office on Saturday to protest the shooting of rancher Jack Yantis, who was white, by two sheriff's deputies on November 1. The protest was a significant event in the rural county in northern Idaho with a population of only 3,900.

"We want to do this protest to show that we support the Yantis family. We want everybody to know that we all deserve to live in a safe, peaceful environment where police are there to protect us," protest organizer Becca Barrow told the *Idaho Statesman*.

Yantis and his wife Donna were responding to a

report that one of their bulls had been struck by a vehicle when they encountered the deputies already on the scene. The 62-year-old rancher approached with a bolt-action rifle which he had planned to use to put the injured animal out of its misery.

As Yantis prepared to euthanize the bull one of the deputies reportedly grabbed the gun causing it to go off. The deputies then opened fire, killing Yantis at the scene.

Donna Yantis, who suffered a heart attack after her husband was shot, told reporters she “saw them murder my husband.”

Asked what led to Yantis’ death, Rowdy Paradis, a nephew of Yantis’ wife, told the *New York Times*, “Nobody knows, he was leaned over the bull, then one cop grabbed him and it happened.”

While they have released few other details, including the names of the officers involved in the killing, police officials have stated all three men discharged their weapons in the course of the shooting. Officials have so far refused to say whether or not they have dash cam footage of the incident.

Both deputies have been placed on administrative leave while the Idaho State Police and FBI complete separate investigations.

Police shooting kills driver, injures two, in Albuquerque, New Mexico

One man was killed and two others injured in Albuquerque, New Mexico, when Bernalillo County Sheriff’s Deputies opened fire on a truck on November 11.

The driver of the vehicle, Joseph Jaramillo, was killed. Two women were in the car with Jaramillo. One was shot in the leg, while the other sustained minor injuries. They were subsequently treated at a local hospital and released.

The shooting occurred in Albuquerque’s South Valley neighborhood, one of the poorest parts of the city.

This is the fifth time county sheriff’s deputies have fired on a suspect this year. “Three deputies fired multiple rounds, striking and killing the driver of the truck,” Sheriff Manny Gonzales said. “Once the deputies have been interviewed we will provide additional information.”

At a press conference called in the wake of the

shooting, Sheriff Gonzales was asked if lapel camera footage might help in documenting such events. He responded by claiming that the department could not afford them. Gonzales suggested that instead of deputies wearing lapel cameras, “offenders” should wear them.

New Mexico was the state with the highest rate of police killings in the United States in 2014. Among New Mexico’s police departments, the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) has the highest rate of fatal police shootings, as well as one of the highest in the country. More than 20 percent of all homicides in Albuquerque in 2014 were committed by police officers.

Over the past five years Albuquerque cops have been involved in at least 50 shootings, with 32 resulting in death. The coldblooded murder of James Boyd in 2014 ignited protests that led the US Department of Justice, which had already been carrying out an investigation of the APD’s history of violence, to step forward last year with a settlement intended to implement a series of cosmetic “reforms.”

Signaling its real intentions however, the APD announced in the summer of 2014 that it would purchase 350 military-style AR-15 rifles—the very type of weapon used to kill James Boyd—and two armored vehicles costing over \$600,000. The APD Police Officers Association president defended the purchases and has publicly called on police trainees to receive assault weapons training.

At 22.2 percent, New Mexico has the highest poverty rate of any state, according to the US Census Bureau. At the same time it is rated as the third most expensive state for raising a family. According to a report by *Albuquerque Business First*, despite soaring poverty rates families face housing costs close to the national average.

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