

Notes on police violence

St. Louis, Missouri police kill sixth person since May

By Trévon Austin
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On August 22, police shot and killed Kiwi Herring, a black transgender woman with three children, ages 4, 7 and 8.

At about 8:00 a.m., police responded to calls about a stabbing. According to police, officers at the scene discovered an unidentified victim with “severe lacerations to his face, arms and torso.” The victim identified the suspect who stabbed him and told police the suspect was next door.

According to St. Louis Police Chief Larry O’Toole, when officers encountered Herring she took a kitchen knife “and slashed at the officers, slicing the one officer on the arm.” The officer and his partner both opened fire on Herring, striking her several times.

The injured officer was treated at a local hospital and released. Herring was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police also arrested Herring’s 28-year-old spouse. According to police, she “had some involvement in the assault” of the first stabbing victim.

“We don’t know why those charges have been filed,” said Crevonda Nance, Herring’s sister-in-law. “We’re trying to get a lawyer.”

Herring’s relatives blame excessive force by law enforcement and a homophobic neighbor for her death. “Kiwi was harassed and executed and it’s a horrible feeling.”

“The neighbor was homophobic and made fun of her,” Nance said. “We couldn’t understand why he was so angry and why he cared about Kiwi’s sexual orientation.”

Dozens of relatives and friends gathered on the streets outside Herring’s apartment Tuesday night for a candlelight vigil. Later, a group of about 50 people reportedly protested in the streets, joined by Nance.

She and the others questioned whether police had targeted the correct aggressor in the dispute.

Three protesters suffered minor injuries when they were struck by a vehicle attempting to drive through the demonstration. The driver, Mark Colao, 59, has been charged with a felony of resisting arrest, and lesser charges of careless and imprudent driving and leaving the scene of an accident.

The incident came approximately two weeks after a car was driven into a crowd of protesters demonstrating against a white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer.

According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Tuesday’s shooting was the sixth fatal officer-involved shooting in St. Louis since May.

- On May 10, Robin White was shot and killed by an officer after pointing a gun at police.
- On May 26, Jamie Robinson threatened to harm police and commit suicide and was fatally shot by an officer during an exchange of gunfire at his home.
- On June 7, SWAT officers shot and killed Isaiah M. Hammett, who police said opened fire on them with an AK-47 as they tried to execute a search warrant at a home.

· On June 13, an off-duty officer fatally shot a man, Chazz Brown, attempting to rob a gas station after the officer identified himself to the man as police and the man shot at him.

· On July 20, Isiah O. Perkins, who fled from a stolen vehicle being pursued by police, was fatally shot by an officer after he pointed a gun at police.

Nationally, at least 792 people have been killed by police so far this year, according to a tally kept by killedbypolice.net. Fifteen police killings were

recorded in the five days between Monday August 21 and Friday August 25, averaging three killings every day.

On Monday, there were two unrelated police shootings in Wisconsin. As is typical in most cases of police violence, few details have emerged and only the police version of events has been publicized.

Tyler Whitmer, a 22-year-old Marine, was shot and killed by a Kewaunee County sheriff's deputy in the Town of Franklin. Police officials claimed that Whitmer, who was a white man, had been threatening people with a knife before the sheriffs arrived and gunned him down. Police are withholding dash-cam video of the incident.

Across the state, in Pardeeville, Columbia County, Sheriff's officers killed 64-year-old Thomas Selje while responding to a call of a domestic incident. According to police officials, Selje opened fire on the deputies forcing them to shoot back, striking him dead.

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