

Multiple police officers cleared of charges in several recent killings

By Trévon Austin
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Within the past week, multiple officers have been cleared of criminal charges for shooting deaths in three separate cases. On May 24, San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón declined to file criminal charges against the officers who killed Mario Woods in 2015 and Luis Góngora Pat in 2016. Meanwhile a grand jury in Georgia declared police officers would not face criminal charges for the January killing of Ricky Boyd.

In a previously unreported statement, Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle also ruled that undercover officer Eduardo Pares was justified in fatally shooting unarmed Anthony Ford in 2017. According to the *Miami New Times*, Rundle has not charged a single officer for shooting someone while on duty since her appointment 25 years ago.

In all of the cases, the killer cops used excessive force and failed to make any effort to deescalate the situation.

Boyd, 20, was fatally shot outside his grandmother's home in Savannah, Georgia as officers were trying to serve a warrant for his arrest. The case immediately drew scrutiny due to conflicting claims on whether or not Boyd was holding a weapon at the time he was shot. Initially, officers claimed that Boyd fired at the officers, but a later statement stated he only confronted officers with a gun. Afterwards, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation claimed Boyd held a BB gun at the time he was shot.

However, William R. Claiborne, the civil rights attorney representing Boyd's family, highlighted many inconsistencies in the official reports, stating Boyd's family felt they had been lied to. Claiborne pointed out that the officers who shot Boyd had never been named and certain details had never been made clear, such as how many times he was shot. Furthermore, no

identifiable DNA was found on the BB gun Boyd allegedly threatened officers with.

In San Francisco, Gascón stated the five officers who killed Woods and the two officers who killed Góngora Pat would not face charges because both men had knives and there was insufficient evidence to prove the officers acted unreasonably in defending themselves and others. In a sop to public anger Gascón feigned frustration, stating he did not believe the officers should have killed the men but he was bound by the law not to press charges.

Cellphone videos showed Woods was not directly threatening the officers with the knife when they fired 26 rounds at him. Before he was shot, Woods was obviously distressed and told officers, "I'm not going with you" and "You're gonna have to f—ing shoot me."

Officers formed a semi-circle around Woods as he stood against a wall, sprayed him with pepper spray, fired bean bag rounds at him, and eventually shot him. Less than two minutes elapsed between initial contact and the shooting.

The shooting of Pat unfolded in a similar manner, with only 30 seconds passing between initial contact and the shooting. Officers were responding to reports of a homeless man waving a kitchen knife. According to the police report, two officers sped to the scene and asked him to drop the knife. Officers fired four bean bag rounds at Pat before shooting him after he reportedly charged at officers.

Ford was shot by Pares in Miami-Dade after reportedly sticking his hand near his waistband. According to the report, Pares "saw Anthony Ford place his right hand inside his waistband as he turned around. Sergeant Pares then saw Anthony Ford make an abrupt movement upwards with his right hand, at which time Sergeant Pares discharged his firearm

multiple times, fatally striking Ford.”

Rundle stated Pares was reasonable to feel threatened even though Ford was unarmed because he stuck his hand near his waistband. “No firearm was located on or near Mr. Ford following the shooting,” the report reads.

The routine exoneration of killer police officers is connected to efforts to suppress the growing militancy of the working class.

Last month, the US Supreme Court established an interpretation of qualified immunity that essentially grants police impunity to use lethal force at will. In *Kisela v. Hughes*, the Supreme Court stated whether or not force is deemed “reasonable” must be judged by the officer on the scene. Meanwhile, it was recently revealed that Amazon is providing police facial recognition and video tracking technology to conduct mass surveillance on the population.

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