

After shouting “I’m pregnant,” woman fatally shot by Texas police officer

By Marcus Day
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A Texas police officer shot and killed a 44-year-old African-American woman Monday night at an apartment complex in Baytown, Texas, a suburb of Houston. Police later identified the woman as Pamela Shantay Turner. According to family members, she had two children and three grandchildren.

Video recorded by a bystander and posted to Snapchat quickly went viral overnight, prompting widespread outrage at the horrific killing.

The video begins showing a single officer attempting to arrest Turner, who protests, shouting, “I’m walking! I’m actually walking to my house!”

As she attempts to free herself, she repeatedly yells, “You’re actually harassing me!” The officer, who remains silent throughout the video, then seemingly fires a Taser at Turner, who falls to the ground.

As he nears and tries to restrain her, she pleads, “Why? Why? I didn’t do nothing to you,” and then shouts, “I’m pregnant!”

After a brief struggle, the officer pulls back several paces and immediately begins shooting, firing five times in rapid succession as Turner remains on the ground.

Police Lt. Steve Dorris said Turner was struck by at least one of the shots and was subsequently pronounced dead at the scene.

According to police, the officer had previously had exchanges with Turner and attempted to arrest her Monday night allegedly knowing that she had active warrants.

Dorris and the department have cynically attempted to justify the shooting by claiming that Turner grabbed the Taser away from the officer and turned it on him, which is not at all evident from the video. Dorris told the media that Turner “actually tased the officer,” which “forced” him to “fire multiple rounds” at her. At

the same time, he admitted that the officer did not require hospital treatment for any injuries.

The department has made clear its anger that Turner’s killing was independently videoed and shared on social media. Dorris has issued thinly veiled threats, saying that they are searching for whoever filmed it and denouncing them for posting the video to social media.

“It’s unfortunate that somebody takes a tragic incident like this and starts posting it on social media,” he said. “That’s extremely disrespectful for everybody involved, but that’s the day and age we live in with social media.”

The officer involved, who is Hispanic and has been placed on three days of paid administrative leave, has yet to be identified by the Baytown Police Department. Police have indicated that he was wearing a body camera, but as of yet have refused to release the footage.

In a further effort to justify the killing, the department has rushed to claim that an autopsy by the Harris County medical examiner showed Turner was not pregnant. However, a spokesperson for the medical examiner’s office itself declined to comment to the Associated Press.

Antoinette Dorsey, Turner’s sister, told local KPRC-TV that Turner suffered from mental illness and had been on medication for schizophrenia. She added that Turner had previously complained about the officer harassing her, and said he lived in the same apartment complex.

Jonathan Little, a neighbor, said “all she did was walk her dog and pick up trash. She didn’t mess with anybody.”

Another resident, James Edison, told KPRC, “If you know she has mental illness, why not ask for backup first before you try and detain her?”

“He got up and she was barely getting up off the ground and he shot her like a dog. That’s wrong. And he needs to pay for it.”

Protesters demonstrated outside the Baytown Police Department Tuesday, holding signs reading, “Harassed and Executed, Disgraceful,” and “5 Shots and She Died.”

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Texas issued a statement calling for the release of the officer’s body camera footage. “The escalation seen on bystander video from a simple stop to the use of brutal deadly force is shocking and raises serious concerns,” the statement said.

Not counting Turner, there have been at least 323 people killed by police in the US in 2019, according to killedbypolice.net. Thirty-eight of them have been killed in Texas, second only to California, where police this year have already slain 41.

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