

Black Lives Remain in Danger Throughout the United States

Jayland Walker's killers are not indicted in Akron while 16-year-old Ralph Yarl is shot by white homeowner in Missouri

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Even after three years of mass demonstrations and urban rebellions in the United States, law-enforcement agencies and the entire legal system are still "justifying" the shooting deaths of African Americans and other oppressed peoples.

Jayland Walker, 25, was killed on June 27, 2022, after being chased outside his vehicle by the Akron, Ohio police. Walker was shot 46 times by eight different officers. All together the eight police officers fired 96 shots within 6.7 seconds. Walker had no criminal record and was employed as a delivery driver for DoorDash.

These police officers involved in the killing said they felt threatened by Walker who was running away after leaving his vehicle. The law-enforcement agents said that Walker had fired a shot at them during the chase.

At the time of his shooting death, Walker did not have any firearms on his person. A weapon was retrieved from his vehicle which he had abandoned in an effort to save his own life. It would take another ten months for a special grand jury to decide on April 17 that the killing of Walker did not warrant indictments against the officers.

The official story provided by the Akron police indicated that a state investigation collected evidence since the killing of Walker. The evidence from this state-directed inquiry was turned over to the grand jury appointed by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost which voted not to charge the police with any crimes.

People have been demonstrating in Akron since last June. Several high-profile activists were arrested while protesting the conduct of the Akron police in the weeks following Walker's death.

In the aftermath of the grand jury decision not to indict the police, there have been daily demonstrations in Akron. Hundreds took to the streets hours after the grand jury decision and the days that have followed.

Many drove their vehicles through the streets, stopping at strategic locations resulting in traffic being halted. Later on April 19, the Akron police and Summit County sheriff deputies fired pepper spray and tear gas in an attempt to disperse the crowds.

Nonetheless, activists regrouped and continued to protest in the city. The city administration has blocked off the area around the municipal headquarters downtown designating several blocks as a so-called protest zone.

In the immediate aftermath of the grand jury decision, the family of Walker announced that they would file a civil wrongful death lawsuit against the City of Akron. Community activists have made statements to the media saying that the culpability of the police officers in the killing of Walker was unquestionable.

In response to the firing of chemical irritants on the crowds demonstrating against the grand jury decision, one organization called the Akron Bail Fund announced it would file a civil lawsuit seeking a temporary restraining order against law-enforcement agencies preventing them from utilizing excessive force. Later in the week on April 21, the City of Akron announced that the police would refrain from using chemical irritants on peaceful protesters.

Akron police chief Steve Mylett was quoted by the [Beacon Journal](#) saying he would reserve judgment on his law-enforcement personnel until an investigation was carried out. Mylett emphasized that:

“I am waiting on video footage from a few of our partner law enforcement agencies to help clarify some confusion. Before I explain what happened, I need to be sure of the timeline of events. If information is released prematurely and without the facts, that misinformation could cause irrevocable damage. As soon as I can confidently determine the exact circumstances of how [Wednesday] evening unfolded, I will make that information available to the public. If we made mistakes, we would improve upon them, and if the officers’ actions were reasonable, we would share that information as well.”

Some local elected officials criticized the police for the attacks against protesters on April 19. Ward 5 City Councilwoman Tara Mosley refuted the police version of events which declared the demonstration as an unlawful assembly.

Mosley issued a statement on April 20 saying:

“There are no reports of any injuries or property damage before the officers declared the assembly to be unlawful. What, then, was unlawful about this assembly? The city claims that the officers issued orders to disperse because ‘officers were having bottles thrown at them from marchers.’ But, from the available evidence — and there is much of it online — the protests were peaceful before the officers ordered the people to disperse. The people were calling for accountability. Nothing more, nothing less. The people were protesting the Jayland Walker decision. They were crying out for healing. They were standing up for their neighbors and community and families and children. This assembly was not unlawful; it was demanding to be heard.”

The officers involved in the killing of Walker remain on administrative leave. The police department is now saying that since the grand jury investigation has concluded they will conduct their own internal probe into the circumstances surrounding the death of Walker.

African American Youth Shot Outside Kansas City Home

Ralph Yarl, 16, an honor student and member of the Missouri State Band, was trying to pick up his twin younger brothers in north Kansas City, Missouri on April 13 when he walked up to the porch of a home which was the wrong address. After ringing the bell and waiting, an 84-year-old white man, Andrew D. Lester, fired a shot through the exterior door striking Yarl in the head.

After Yarl was already down, the assailant then shot the youth again in the shoulder. Yarl stumbled away from the house seeking assistance from the neighbors. His family members reported that the youth was turned away from three homes before someone brought a towel out of a house and called the emergency medical services and the police.

Miraculously, Yarl did not suffer fatal injuries. The bullet fragments from a .32 caliber handgun failed to lodge into the critical areas of his brain which could have caused sudden death. Yarl was released after several days in the hospital and is recovering at home.

The Yarl family are originally from the West African state of Liberia. They immigrated to the U.S. several years ago.

This recent act of racist violence further fueled mistrust and fear throughout African American communities across the U.S. Yarl's family and their attorney demanded the arrest and indictment of the shooter.

Lester was initially brought to a police station on April 14 for questioning and was released without being charged in the shooting. Outrage over the incident, in all likelihood, prompted the filing of charges against Lester on April 18 although he has been released on \$200,000 bond. It was not immediately clear if Lester was represented by an attorney.

The 16-year-old's father, Paul Yarl, told the media that his son spent three days in the hospital and was able to walk out of the facility on April 16. The father, who lives in Indianapolis, after hearing of the shooting from Ralph's mother, drove immediately to Kansas City.

In an interview with CBS television on April 18, Cleo Nagbe, Ralph Yarl's mother, discussed the traumatic impact of the shooting of her son. According to an [Associated Press report](#):

"During an interview Tuesday (April 18) with 'CBS Mornings,' Yarl's mother, Cleo Nagbe, said her son is in good spirits but that the trauma remains evident. She said he is 'able to communicate mostly when he feels like it, but mostly he just sits there and stares, and the buckets of tears just roll down his eyes.' 'You can see that he is just replaying the situation over and over again, and that just doesn't stop my tears either,' she said."

The U.S. continues to be a place of danger for people of African descent. In fact, historically, the U.S. was built on the forced removal and genocide of the Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Africans over a period of 250 years.

Consequently, in order for racism and national oppression to be eliminated, the entire system of oppression and exploitation must be transformed. Countless local, state and federal investigations of similar incidents involving law-enforcement and vigilantes have failed miserably to end the violence and create a peaceful atmosphere for African Americans and the oppressed peoples living in North America.

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