

Protest the police murder of Stephon Clark!

Stephon Clark - March For Justice

Saturday, April 7, 6 PM at Westlake Park (401 Pine St.)

Called by *Black Lives Matter Seattle Original*

More than 1100 people are now killed by the police each year. Too often these are unjustified homicides or outright murders that the cops then justify by saying they feared for their lives. And the dead are disproportionately African Americans, other national minorities and immigrants; they're disproportionately members of the working class.

The gunning down of unarmed African American Stephon Clark in Sacramento

Someone had been breaking car windows but not stealing from the cars in Mr. Clark's neighborhood the night of March 18. Two investigating officers were soon in the area on foot, with a police helicopter with an infrared camera directing them from overhead. (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4eafRzWPiM>)

Before the filming starts, one of the helicopter cops radios that he's seen "the suspect" pick up a "tool bar" and break Stephon's neighbor's window. Shortly afterward the police video shows Stephon climbing over the side fence of the home where he stayed with his grandparents with nothing in his hands. Stephon then calmly walks over to look into the window of a car parked in the family driveway. But the cop in the air radios he's "running," and "he's looking into another car." The cops on the ground run to a corner of the house, one with his gun drawn and ready to kill even before he can see the suspect. They don't identify themselves as police, and at this point Stephon does run from the side to the back of the house. The cop in front yells: "Hey! Show me your hands! Stop! Stop!" When Stephon then walks back toward the cops one hears: "Show me your hands! Gun! Gun!

Gun!" This is immediately followed by the cops unloading a barrage of 20 bullets at Mr. Clark while they're hiding for safety at the corner of the house. The *Sacramento Bee* and *Washington Post* count that they fire 15 times after Stephon is down: pure savagery.

The doctor performing the private autopsy concludes they hit Stephon once in the side of the neck, probably spinning him, six times in the back, and once in the front of his thigh, probably as he was falling. But that's not all. Rather than rush to save their victim's life, the two cops fear for their lives so much that they reload and remain by the corner of the house for more than five minutes as medical help arrives and handcuffs Stephon. At this point neither a gun nor a tool bar has been found, only an iPhone, and one of the cops can be heard ordering their audio muted.

The daylight killing of unarmed African American Danny Ray Thomas in Houston

In recent years Mr. Thomas had lived a life of pain: three years in prison for possession of PCP; the murder of his two children while he was there. His sister says he suffered from depression, and on March 22 he obviously needed help as he wandered in the middle of a Houston street with his trousers around his ankles while talking to himself. And he was clearly no threat. A video taken by a bystander shows he has nothing in his hands and no place to hide anything. But after Sheriff's deputy Cameron Brewer arrived on the scene and an exchange of words ensued, Deputy Brewer shot Thomas in the chest and killed him. (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXKw1RXkI5k>)

Deputy Brewer had been trained in how to deescalate a mental health crisis. He also had a taser if you accept the Sheriff's story that Brewer was "fearing for his safety" from a man waddling with his trousers around his ankles. No, Brewer shot and killed Danny Ray Thomas with no cause, and this murderous act should not go unpunished.

Mass struggles for justice break out

In Sacramento, there have been almost daily street protests against the police slaughter of Stephon Clark. In one of these a Sheriff's Deputy struck and injured a woman with his car and then sped from the scene—a hit and run. Protesters have also essentially shut down two Sacramento King's games, with players and even management speaking out in favor of the protests and against continuing business as usual. And protesters have packed and disrupted city council meetings. Meanwhile, protests have been organized in many other cities, including Seattle this Saturday. Also, this week in Houston there have been protests against the murder of Danny Ray Thomas.

The average civilian will be tried for homicide if they kill someone. And claiming they thought their life was in danger would not be a free pass to avoid trial. This should apply even more so to the trained "professionals," the supposed public servants, the police. The killers of Stephon Clark and Danny Ray Thomas should be tried for murder. What's more, police policies that are often used to justify unnecessary killings and murders should be reversed. This includes policies like cops being instructed to always aim at center body mass, or to stand by waiting precious minutes for medics to arrive when a life can be saved with simple first aid. Furthermore, cops who pump lead into helpless victims on the ground should be fired and tried for first degree murder.

Not just some bad cops, but the entire system

The Sacramento Police Chief, one of the cops who killed unarmed Stephon Clark, and the cop who killed unarmed Danny Ray Thomas all happen to be African Americans. This lays bare that while African American police officers are often discriminated against in their departments, they remain tools of white supremacist institutions designed to enforce capitalist law and order. These institutions are fundamentally class institutions. And not only African American, but also liberal and Democrat police chiefs and city and county administrations preside over police murders. For example, last year in liberal Seattle and King County we had the racist police killings of Charleena Lyles and Tommy Le. Yet the liberal "defenders" of racial justice have fallen silent while the killer cops walk the streets as if nothing had happened. (see <http://communistvoice.org/DSWV-170713.html>)

But for a long time protesters all over the country have been correctly concluding that no faith can be placed in the capitalist institutions or politicians to rein in the police. Instead, with each new police outrage they've relied on themselves to mobilize the masses into the streets in order to bring pressure on the entire establishment. Furthermore, the Black Lives Matter movement has always been popular because it represents the interests of the entire working class and all oppressed people. So today, let's help to build the movement against police brutality as a component part of the general mass upsurge against Trumpian reaction that is developing. Spread the news about the killings of Stephon Clark, Danny Ray Thomas and other police atrocities! Join the protests!

Seattle Communist Study Group 4/4/2018 <>

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