

RECENTLY NEW YORK CITY POLICE (NYPD) INVITED THE PUBLIC TWEETS TO THEIR SITE. THEIR OWN TWEET SHOWED POLICE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

HOWEVER, THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES WERE GRASSROOTS CLASH WITH MASS MEDIA "FIRST RESPONDERS" MISINFORMATION.

INSTEAD, THE COMMUNITY TWEETED REAL WORLD COPS BEATINGS; MACKING; SHOOTINGS; AND AD NAUSEAM!!

UNTIL NYPD TOOK IT DOWN. OSTENSIBLY NYPD CAME TO BELIEVE THEIR OWN MANUFACTURED "STORE BOUGHT" PUBLICITY!!!!

LEON,

TAPPING ARTICLES ON PAPER. SHOULD BE DONE SOON? 4 PAGES ENCLOSED. YOU MAY ACKNOWLEDGE THE ENCLOSED THE NEXT TIME YOU RECEIVE SOMETHING FROM ME.

TAKE CARE.

LIFE GOES ON,

~~LEON~~

<http://occupyriverwest.com/us/why-was-dontre-killed>

Witness Tells Different Story About Wednesday's MPD Killing of Man at Red Arrow Park

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This story was submitted to Occupy Riverwest by guest writer Kelly R. Brandmeyer. Kelly, while working at the Starbucks in Red Arrow Park, was an eyewitness to the killing of Dontre Hamilton by a Milwaukee Police Department officer on Wednesday. After reading this account it seems there are more questions than answers in the death of Hamilton:

Even though this only happened three days ago, I've recounted this story more times than I can count. But that's okay, because this is a story that needs telling. This story has been told in multiple places, multiple times and almost always slightly different than how I actually remember it happening. This story will not just be a retelling, but a discussion, and a realization of what is happening to not just this city, but to our American society on the whole.

This story is about Dontre Hamilton, a 31-year-old black man that lived in the



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Milwaukee area. I didn't know him before this incident, but it's clear to me that his passing leaves many friends and family in its devastating wake. On Wednesday, April 30th, Dontre lost his life in an event that was totally unnecessary and preventable.

I work as a barista at Starbucks, Red Arrow Park in downtown Milwaukee. I was working that Wednesday from 12-7:30pm, and there was nothing to indicate that this day would be out of the ordinary. Our current building is being renovated, so we were serving coffee out of a mobile café trailer designed by Starbucks.

Around 1pm, my coworker and I noticed a man sleeping fairly close to where we have set up shop. He lay sleeping next to the big, stone red arrow: the landmark and namesake of the park. As per Starbucks policy, if we are uncertain or uncomfortable around a sleeping individual (or somebody that may be passed out), we are to call a non-emergency line to prevent any potential conflict - and that is precisely what was done.

A short while later, I took my first break of the day. I sat outside of the trailer, on a bench that was behind the trailer and the arrow. I had full view of Dontre merely sleeping underneath the arrow. To be clear, I never saw Dontre get up, walk around, panhandle, or even speak to anyone. A few minutes later, two officers approached him on foot to check him out. I could see them speaking with Dontre, who sat up to address and answer their questions. From the body language of both parties, nothing seemed out of place, nobody was tense, things were seemingly frictionless. It was probably a five-minute conversation, then the officers walked away. They didn't escort him out or forcibly move him. To me, this indicated that there was no problem, no issue, and that there was no conflict here.

Once my break was over (approximately ten minutes), I walked back inside the trailer. I immediately was told by my coworker that they had called the non-emergency line a second time because Dontre was still there. At this moment, I was extremely frustrated with this. It was so obvious to me that Dontre was doing nothing illegal by being there, so calling the cops was only a waste of their time and resources. In that moment, I was heated enough to make a comment to my coworker about their persistence in this issue - I totally disagreed with heavy-handedly removing people that just want a place to exist.

About five or so minutes later, the same two officers approached our trailer café and asked if we were the ones calling them. My coworker informed them that it was them who called, and that they were worried about the presence of Dontre so close to our café, condiment bar, and the possible negative impact on the business. The officers informed them that Dontre was doing nothing illegal, there was nothing for them to enforce, and that we should stop calling. My coworker, obviously unsatisfied with the result, reluctantly let the issue drop. After that, there was some minor squabbling among ourselves because I didn't like the way the issue was dealt with. I'm not a believer in removing things from my environment just because I'm uncomfortable with it, especially if we're talking about another human being - and doubly especially for one that is doing absolutely nothing to anyone else.

I was wholly caught off guard for what would occur next. I didn't see the entire event unfold. I was only alerted to the presence of another officer, after trouble had already started.

Around 3:30pm, I heard a man yelling something to the effect of "HEY!", and then I moved to the window to see what was happening. At that moment, I saw a white police officer standing off against Dontre, who was holding the officer's own baton in a defensive posture against said officer.

I didn't see the beginning of the fight or how it broke out, but I never once saw Dontre strike the officer with the baton. Again, I never witnessed the baton in Dontre's hand make contact with the officer. I've seen it reported that Dontre struck the officer's head repeatedly with the baton-and it may have happened near the beginning of the fight-but I never saw it and neither did my coworker. During this fight, I hear my coworker exclaim "That's Chris," who is our beat cop for the area. He is better known among the employees that have been at that location for longer.

Chris, currently unarmed since he lost his baton, lunged at Dontre to retrieve his weapon but missed. I never witnessed Dontre attack Chris. Dontre only reacted to Chris' lunge, in what appeared to be, a purely defensive way. After missing, Chris was frozen for a second, then reached down for his side arm. When he pulled this weapon out, I had a sickly feeling about what was going to happen next. Chris didn't say anything to Dontre. Nothing like "calm down", or "back away", or anything of the sort, with his brandished firearm. He had his gun pointed at Dontre from about 10 feet away for a couple seconds. That's when I heard the shots.

I counted the shots as they happened. I guess I expected Chris to just disable him, so I didn't know how many shots to expect. I counted 3...then 5...then 7...then 10 all in very quick succession. Surely a trained police officer could have disabled Dontre without putting 10 bullets into him. With the rapid, rhythmic fire, there was no way Chris was stopping to check if Dontre was still alive. Count to 10 in your head in a fast-paced, rhythmic manner and ask yourself if you're shooting to kill. While my cynical side knew what was going to happen to Dontre and compelled me to turn away, my coworker didn't. They saw the whole thing play out. They will tell you the same thing about how once that gun was pulled out, it was Dontre's end.

So here we are, a few days later, still wondering how something like that could happen. Why is it that two officers previously were able to arrive on the scene, talk to Dontre, establish that nothing was wrong or required their intervention then be able to leave peacefully? I didn't get the name of those two officers, but I wish I could tell them that I appreciate them for doing their job as a protector of the people involved that day.

I still have questions: Why was Chris there? Was he called out to triple-check the situation since there were two previous calls in the area? Also, why didn't he come talk to my coworker or me first? I don't understand why we weren't alerted to his presence. Maybe that's not our right, or that we are not owed that from a police officer on duty, but we are the ones that made the call to begin with.

Why did Chris not say something to Dontre to try to diffuse the situation? The situation went from baton to a firearm. Was there no other option to subdue Dontre? He didn't even try using his words before pulling out a gun. Why didn't he just try to disable Dontre? I never saw where the officer shot, but my coworker told me he started at the ribcage and moved upward. If that's true, why did it take 10+ shots?

These seem like reasonable questions that anyone not familiar with police protocol would ask. My coworker is the one who recognized that it was Chris, and once I realized who that was, I felt horrible. In asking myself these questions, it dawned on me that I had experienced something unsavory with this particular officer before.

It was November of 2013, and I had just recently transferred to the Red Arrow Park Starbucks. Since our building is connected to a park building, some of the facilities are actually owned by the city (such as the bathrooms). We often have people coming in to warm themselves by the fireplace in our store - including homeless people. A few of them try to do illegal substances in the bathrooms where they think we can't do anything about it, but we are often calling authorities when there is any kind of illegal activities going on in our bathroom. On one such evening when a

call was made, Chris and another officer reported to the scene. As Chris went to move out any non-paying customers, I made a comment about how homeless people were just trying to keep warm and weren't a problem. I felt bad that he was kicking them out for no reason. He responded with something along the lines of how the people in that position are homeless by their own doing and are now laying in the bed they've made.

That isn't a direct quote. I don't remember exactly what was said, as at the time I didn't think I'd need to recount it as something relevant. I just remember getting a dark vibe from Chris that night.

I realize my anecdotal evidence alone doesn't prove anything about the incident last Wednesday, but it makes me skeptical. It gives me enough to reasonably question it. With all of these factors combined, I ask myself if it was someone who was looking for a fight, if it was someone looking to "clear out the trash".

We capture more cases of police brutality now than ever. I only learned recently that Dontre suffered from mental illness, specifically schizophrenia. Dontre had been awake for days before the incident Wednesday and had been walking a long distance before finally resting underneath our arrow at Red Arrow Park. He was sleeping because he was exhausted, and he was only waiting for a ride from his brother.

It's extremely hard to speculate about a police officer trying to do his/her job, but this isn't the first case of this happening. In 2011, Fullerton police officers beat a schizophrenic man named Kelly Thomas so badly that he died from his injuries. Despite extensive video evidence from multiple sources, the police officer involved was acquitted.

This is an extremely similar case: a man with schizophrenia meets an untimely end, with no clear answer as to what provoked the situation or why it was allowed to progress to the state it did. The ACLU made a statement inferring that the DA that was in charge of the case regarding Kelly Thomas was incapable of impartially handling it. In Wisconsin, there is a new law requiring two outside agencies, aside from the DA, to investigate a case when there is a shooting involving a police officer. This may aid the impartiality that can exist in a department the ACLU cited, but this is the first case that the new law has been applied to. I gave a statement to the DA and a table-full of agency heads, but I hope it was worth something. I hope this is different than the case with Kelly Thomas, where somebody ended up dead and the department scrambled to protect their own.

I've seen and read some terrible things regarding Dontre's case when discussing it with people. There has been a lot of support for him, but also a lot of opinions from people that don't fully understand the story or the way you've never had a friend or loved one with a mental illness. They make the assumption that the officer approached the situation with a clear head, therefore not making a mistake. Why do we assume that the victim deserved their fate if they ended up dead in a confrontation with a police officer?

At the end of the day, what were Dontre's crimes? He was a man taking a rest in a public park on a warm afternoon. He was doing nothing wrong. This is reinforced by the fact that TWO officers before were able to communicate and check him out without issue. So what happened the third time? How many things could have happened differently? What he was doing was not illegal. Was Chris incapable or unable of handling this situation differently? Or has this become a place where we award mental illness with the death penalty?

SEE ABOVE ACCOMPANIED: [HTTP://OCCUPYRIVERWEST.COM/US/WHY-WAS-DONTE-KILLED](http://occupyriverwest.com/us/why-was-donte-killed)

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