

# USA: Police killings, this time it's Chicago

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Late last month, a 13 year old boy named Adam Toledo was shot by Chicago police. Adam was a Latino. Immediately after the incident, Chicago police stated that there had been an "armed confrontation". They claimed that Adam Toledo tossed a gun to the side when confronted by officers, implying a clear justification for the use of violent force, as required by law. However, recently released body camera footage has seen the police retract. In it, Toledo is ordered to put his hands up. He did so, both hands were clearly empty. The officer still shot him.

Public officials originally claimed Adam Toledo was armed. Chicago police spokesman Tom Ahern tweeted, "Officers observed two subjects in a nearby alley, one subject fled on foot which resulted in an armed confrontation. One subject shot and killed. 2nd subject in custody. Gun recovered on scene". The police department's official statement read, "One armed offender fled from the officers. A foot pursuit ensued which resulted in a confrontation".

Attorneys for Cook County (the county in which Chicago resides) claimed that Toledo "had a gun". Mayor Lori Lightfoot echoed similar statements on April 5. She stated, "Toledo had a gun" and proceeded to lay the blame for his death on gang violence in Chicago instead of on the most notorious armed gang across the country, the police. The family was denied access to body camera footage then. It would take 10 days until it was made available.

Now, public officials have changed their tune. Their deceit cannot hide the facts. Adam Toledo is now characterized as being, "a child in contact with an adult with a gun". Now, there are no dog whistles appealing to "gang violence". Now he is not in possession of a gun. Police still claim that Adam tossed a gun to the side before showing his hands up in the air to police. However, doubt remains. Chicago officials lied once. Can we truly know if they are telling the truth now? After all, Biden's nominee to be the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, David Chipman, lied under oath during hearings about the Waco tragedy in 1993.

The shooter in this case is Officer Eric Stillman. Stillman has three complaints and four use of force reports according to the Invisible Institute, an organization that tracks and records police interactions. Allegations include improper search and seizures and use of force violations.

Chicagoans have taken to the street. Protests have erupted across the country. Such movements have been spurred on by the recent death of Daunte Wright and the trial of George Floyd's killer. We know that the police will respond violently and aim to terrorize us. They have already done so in New York and in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. Reports have indicated a photographer had his "head smashed into the ground" through a punch from police. Police in Brooklyn Center violated policy when they shot tear-gas at protesters. The pattern of police violence against the George Floyd Uprising will unfortunately repeat itself again.

Just as with the slaying of Daunte Wright, now is the time for action. Revolutionary socialists must stand in solidarity with protesters. We must see all organs of working class power, and those that would lay claim to such representation, standing in solidarity. Already, there are heartening indications. Transport workers in Minnesota refused to transport arrested protesters. The Twin Cities DSA chapter has begun to raise funds for medics and Daunte Wright's family. However, DSA chapters and unions across the nation must ratchet up their support. They must call for everyone out in the streets and in the workplaces. We must demand the abolishment of the police and their replacement with workers' and black and Latino community defense.

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