

Several first contact cases in the news

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing December 31, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd murder*



“The rampant police mentality to shoot first and ask questions later when it comes to a Black person is incontrovertible evidence that Black lives don’t matter to

too many law enforcement officers.”

Benjamin Crump, lawyer for the Hill family

ref: **Yet another “first contact” gone bad**

Gadfly keeping an eye on this Andre Hill case. The officer was fired. Still nothing put forth to explain or justify the shooting. But more details now about the shooting officer’s poor past disciplinary record. Gadfly says again that he would like to hear more about how our department handles misconduct. He can remember Chief DiLuzio saying that he had fired officers, so our disciplinary process may be just fine in weeding out “bad apples.” But Gadfly thinks we should hear more about it. Stories of such incidents very often show bad signs in an officer’s record and the role that police unions play in protecting them.

We should also note the 12-year-old **Tamir Rice** and killed-in-her-bed **Breonna Taylor** cases also made news recently, and not in a particularly good way.

selections from Andre Welsh-Huggins, “Police observed no threats from Andre Hill before shooting.” Associated Press, December 29, 2020.

An officer on the scene of the fatal shooting of Andre Hill in Ohio’s capital city last week didn’t perceive any threats and didn’t see a gun, contrary to a mistaken claim by the fellow officer who killed Hill, according to records released Tuesday.

The city fired Coy on Tuesday, accusing him of incompetence and “gross neglect of duty,” among other charges.

Coy asked Hill in a “normal tone of voice” to exit the garage and Hill complied but without responding, Detwiler said.

As Hill walked out, Detwiler “did not observe any threats from Mr. Hill,” nor did she see a gun, the internal affairs report said.

“Officer Detwiler stated Officer Coy observed a firearm and yelled, ‘There’s a gun in his other hand, there’s a gun in his other hand!’” the report said. “Officer Detwiler heard gunfire at this moment.”

No gun was found at the scene, police said.

Reports also indicate that Police Chief Thomas Quinlan felt something was off about the shooting as soon as he arrived, saw the officers and then saw the body cam video.

“I have responded to many officer-involved shooting scenes and spoken with many officers following these critical incidents,” Quinlan wrote in a Dec. 26 report. “There was something very distinct about the officers engagement following this critical incident that is difficult to describe for this letter.” He did not provide further details.

Coy's handling of the shooting "is not a 'rookie' mistake as a result of negligence or inadvertence," Quinlan said in his recommendation that the 17-year veteran be fired. Quinlan added that Coy's actions were "reckless and deliberate."

A review of Coy's personnel file shows more than three dozen complaints have been filed against him since he joined the department in January 2002, mostly for rude or abusive language with a dozen for use of force. No details about the allegations are contained in the sparse summaries the city provided from the department's internal affairs bureau. All but a few were marked "unfounded" or "not sustained."

Quinlan noted that he had first raised concerns about Coy in 2008, when Quinlan was his patrol lieutenant.

"If sustained improvements are not fully realized a decision whether Officer Coy is salvageable must follow," Quinlan said, quoting from a letter he wrote.

Coy was fired Monday hours after a hearing was held to determine his employment.

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