

Christian Hall: the case for the prosecution

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Christian Hall](#), [George Floyd killing](#) May 4, 2021

🔗 *Latest post in a series on Christian Hall* 🔗



Full Monroe County D.A. press conference

You know that Gadfly is compelled by such recognizable “first contact” situations between police and young people.

One of the things he’ll miss most when he folds his wings is talking these situations out with you.

And you also know he’s been wishin’ for a Public Safety meeting where we could have some discussion of police training for these situations.

First above is **Adam Toledo**. March 29. All of 13. He’s got a gun. The officer is chasing him down an alley for a decent distance shouting at him to drop his gun. All of a sudden Toledo turns around. Bam! The officer kills him. He doesn’t have the gun. But legitimate, right? Fraction of a second decision. No fault by the officer.

Then there’s **Ma’Khia Bryan**. April 20. All of 16. She’s got a knife. When the officer arrives on the scene, she’s winding up to deliver. Bam! The officer kills her. Legitimate, right? Time only to react not think. The officer may have saved a life. No fault by the officer.

But then there’s Christian Hall. December 30. All of 19. Classic “suicide by cop.” For all intents and purposes, he had a real gun. The officers could tell no differently. This is a 90 minute episode. At the end Hall slow walks toward the officers. He ignores dozens of commands to drop the gun. Holding the gun, he raises his arms in an “I surrender” (touchdown!) pose. Bam! The officers kill him. They felt threatened. No fault?

Gadfly clutches on this one, which is why he said he found it so discussable.

But the Monroe County D.A. had no trouble exonerating the officers from any *criminal* wrongdoing.

And he tries the case right in front of us on **the video** (begin min. 45:30) of his March 30 press conference.

Be the jury. Let’s outline his case:

- by law, deadly force only justified when officer perceives threat of death or serious bodily

- was it reasonable for the officers to believe there was such an imminent threat?
- hindsight cannot be used
- Hall's actions presented such imminent threat
- Hall's fault: his mental state and his desire to end his life
- he had what legitimately appeared to be a real gun
- Hall's intent to commit "suicide by cop" indicated by the fake gun (chosen to be realistic), his 911 call, his prior visit to the scene, the fact that he didn't jump from the bridge, prior social media, and etc.
- told to put the gun down over 100 times
- realistic gun consciously chosen to provoke deadly force
- clear intent to end his life by intermediary
- said hardly anything but did say to officers "make it quick"
- had a record in juvenile court, probation officer was trying to find him as this incident unfolded
- Hall brushed aside all efforts to de-escalate
- provoked the use of deadly force by moving closer and taking the gun out
- doesn't even stop when shot at by officers
- testament to/commendable of the officers' patience that they didn't shoot sooner
- threat was imminent as soon as Hall put his hand on the gun, even before he pulled it out
- "the imminent threat would have been very apparent the moment he had his hand on the gun"
- law wouldn't require them to wait as long as they did
- "In the circumstances they were faced with, there was only one outcome, and he made sure what that outcome was going to be"
- Hall ignored dozens and dozens of calls to drop the gun
- "persistent and well established" techniques to de-escalate were used by officers
- Hall escalated the threat, coming closer, "brandishing" the weapon

- initial rounds fired at him did not persuade him to relinquish his weapon
- officers: “clearly articulated commands”
- he was holding the gun in his hand when shot
- must not use hindsight when judging
- officer believe in imminent risk therefore reasonable
- Hall had means, opportunity, and motive
- “he was a muscle-movement away from opening fire on the troopers”
- “not a lot of time to react” — “it is the blink of an eye”
- employed de-escalation for 90 minutes: assurance of no trouble, offer of physical comforts, willingness to talk
- “troopers displayed much professionalism and empathy”
- “I’m astounded that they let him get so close”
- “It was clearly the last thing they wanted to do, to open fire on him”
- professionalism. well-regarded de-escalation techniques, calm demeanor, non-threatening behavior
- arranged trucks under bridge to break his fall should he jump
- desired a “peaceful resolution” to protect the public and get Hall the mental health help he needed
- officers were highly qualified, highly trained, experienced
- no requirement for an officer to wait till a firearm is pointed directly at him before responding
- case law would support the application of deadly force when Hall has his hand on the gun in his waistband
- too far away to use taser
- officers stuck with a situation that Hall placed them in
- “the law would support the use of force by threatening to go for a gun let alone having it pointed directly at you”
- human muscle memory reaction time: Hall played with the gun in the air and at some point kind of moved the muzzle over in the direction of the officers before he raised it upward

- no adequate time for officers to respond if wait till he pointed to gun at them
- pointing the gun at the officers is “not the measure”

Ok, so Gadfly has done it again. Beat an issue to death.

But this is how he characteristically operates, trying to slow down and get everything on the table.

So chew on the the D.A.’s presentation for a while.

to be continued . . .

ref: **Case Study of police shooting of Christian Hall ripe for good discussion**

ref: **Have you done your Christian Hall homework yet?**

ref: **Breaking down the YouTube video of the Christian Hall shooting by the Pa. State Police**

ref: **“CJ is responsible for his own death”**

ref: **Past time for the City to have “The Talk”**

ref: **The de-escalation strategy of the Christian Hall event**

ref: **Getting back to Christian Hall**

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