

# Breaking down the YouTube video of the Christian Hall shooting by the Pa. State Police

The Bethlehem Gadfly Christian Hall, George Floyd killing April 2, 2021

 *Latest post in a series on Christian Hall* 

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

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

There's the sacred and the profane.

Gadfly has spent most of his Good Friday in profane activity.

The Monroe County D.A.'s office has provided us with the ability to just about witness the entire episode that ended with suicidal Christian Hall shot to death by the Pa. State police.

“Suicide by cop.”

You have seen Gadfly complain about our lack of knowledge of exactly what kind and how much training our police officers receive.

We are told they receive ample “de-escalation” training. But exactly what is de-escalation training? Don't know.

Well, here's a situation in which perhaps the best trained officer that we could expect on our State Police force was in charge of an event that needed to be de-escalated.

The officer is described as a 25-year veteran, with 15 years as a “PSP SERT negotiator,” as a “trained crisis negotiator,” who in this instance used “recognized crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies.”

Now de-escalation failed in this instance. We will want to talk about that, yes. That happens. Can't win 'em all. We live in a fallen world.

But Gadfly's first goal was to see if a close look at the D.A.'s video would enable him to determine precisely what de-escalation strategy is.

So he broke down the video into its parts.

Gadfly doesn't expect any of you to follow his lead here (well, he hopes for Michele and Bud). But this was a necessary first step in forming his thoughts. Going to the primary source as he always says.

Maybe the next post, after he has gathered his thoughts, will be more user-friendly.

<https://youtu.be/YJxFrZXpAxc>

**Two officers: the first five minutes of contact with Hall. Hall is standing on top of a safety barrier on an entrance bridge over a major highway. Officers move slowly, arms raised non-threateningly, talking constantly, gradually moving closer and closer to Hall. The officers repeat and repeat requests 1) to come off the bridge to talk and 2) repeat and repeat assurance he's not in trouble. Also briefly offered by the officers are 3) assurance they will do him no harm, 4) an inquiry into what his problem is, and 5) an offer to find someone to help with his problem. When it's noticed he's carrying something, the officers repeat requests he tell them what it is, and when the thing is identified as a gun, they request he put it down. Finally, the officers take cover.**

*[First two officers, from a distance, slowly moving closer, officers separated, arms in air stretched out] [Hall is on safety barrier.] How ya doin', Sir? How ya doin'? Can you come here? Can you come here? Can you come here? Just come off. Come off. We can talk. Come off. We can talk. We can talk. Hey sir, we can talk. Come off the bridge. C'mon, man.*



Sir, we can talk. We can talk, c'mon. What's goin' on? C'mon, what's goin' on? Can you step down and talk to us? You're not in any trouble. You're not in any trouble. You're ok. C'mon, man, you're not in any trouble. Can you get off? It's ok, let's just talk. Just step off for us, man, c'mon. You're not in any trouble. You're not in any trouble. It's ok. It's ok. C'mon man, we don't have to . . . just . . . Can you step off? Step off. You're not in any trouble. You're not in any trouble, sir. Let's talk, c'mon. C'mon, you're ok. We're not here to harm you. We're not here to harm you, sir. Can you step off? Just relax. C'mon. Take a seat. C'mon. We'll sit with you. We'll talk to ya. Come sit down, man. Take a seat. Sir, we'll talk to ya. You're not in any trouble. You're not in any trouble. (You got your mic on?) Sir, just have a seat. You're not in trouble. What's goin' on, dude? C'mon, man. You're not in any trouble. We'll talk to you. (Just watch his left hand. Watch his left hand.) If you're goin' though a lot, we can have someone talk to ya. (Watch his left hand.) [*Hall starts moving away from the officers, smoking marijuana, unidentified object in left hand.*] [*Hall stumbles off safety barrier, then gets back on.*] [*Object in left hand is identified as a gun.*] Lift your hands up for me. (Watch his left hand.) What's in your . . . What's got in your hands, man? What's in your hand? Whatta ya got in your hands, man? C'mon, put your hands up. Hands up, dude. [*Officers put their hands up as example.*] Whatta ya got in your hands? (Get back, get back, get back.) [*Officers retreating to safety.*] (He's got something in his hand. He's got something in his left hand.) He's got something tucked in his pants, in his left hand. C'mon, man, we can talk to ya. What's goin on? (Seems like he has something in his left hand maybe.) (Were you guys in the same car. No?) (No, he's, it looks like he may have something in his hand, did you see anything, I saw black in his left hand. I don't know what's he's doing. Yeah, he's got something. Back up. Back up. He may have something on his . . . Something could be in his left hand, Corp.) (We've got an audience down below.) (We think he has a phone.) (Could be something

in his hand. I don't want to rush at him then . . . ) [*Hall backs off the barrier then gets right back up on it*] (Hey, hey, hey, he's got a gun. Gun! Gun! Gun! I've got a rifle.) [Hall is still on the safety barrier.] C'mon, man, drop the gun.

**Negotiator #1 arrives (start min. 10 of video) 5 minutes after the first contact by the two other officers and maintains contact with Hall via a PA from behind police vehicles. This officer has a BA in psych, an MA in clinical health psych, and has previously worked in the mental health field for 5 years. He is said to use "recognized crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies." He repeats 1) the previous requests to come off the bridge to talk and repeats 2) assurance Hall is not in trouble. He adds 6) that the police are there to help 3) not to harm, but that their help depends on him talking with the police about what's bothering him, and 7) confidence that their help will definitely have a positive outcome. The desire to help is manifest in 9) concern for his physical state/welfare at the time. The repeated offers to help are a pronounced difference in this interaction. This negotiator 8) addresses Hall by name, 4) asks what his problem is, and succeeds in convincing Hall to sit on the barrier and then to sit on the roadway, but it is not clear when in this interaction this happens, and we don't hear the verbal interaction that successfully gains Hall's consent and compliance. Hall faces the officer for a time, as if listening. When #1 is replaced by negotiator #2, Hall is sitting in the roadway. This negotiator #1 is replaced after about 13 minutes of interacting with Hall. Negotiator #1 doesn't mention the gun at all.**

You're not in any trouble right now. Just step off that over pass and come talk to us. C'mon, man, let's just talk this out. You are not in trouble. What's your name? You are going to have to say it real loud. CJ, is that your name? CJ, let's let's talk this out. But it's hard to do that when I'm on a PA and you're all the way over there. C'mon, CJ, take a step back. We're here to help you, man. We want to help you, but you gotta tell us what we can do to help you and get you down from there and get you feelin' better. CJ, nobody wants to hurt you here. You are not in any sort of trouble. We are here to help you. You gotta let us know what we can do

to help you. CJ, what's goin' on today, what happened, man? You gotta, you gotta fill us in. But it's hard to do that with you standing up there. We want to help you, man. We don't want to see this go down like this. We're here to help you, Bud. There's nothing goin' on right now that we can't help you with, that we can't get past. I see that you're looking at me [*Hall faces the officer*]. Why don't you just step down there, and we'll come talk to ya [*Hall does step down, sits on the barrier, then sits on the roadway, but it is not clear what he responds to, at what point in their interaction this happens, or why the officer doesn't go to meet him as he indicates*]. We'll get ya something to get warm, a coat, a blanket, we'll figure this out, man. Whatever you need, we'll help you get there, we'll figure this out.

**Negotiator #2 arrives (start min. 12:20 of video), he is a 25-year veteran, with 15 years as a “PSP SERT negotiator,” as a “trained crisis negotiator,” who, like negotiator #1, also uses “recognized crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies.”** Conversely, this guy is consumed by the gun. He asks Hall 13) to put the gun down over 40 times, stressing 14) that it's an easy thing to do. Hall is sitting on the ground when Negotiator #2 starts. Hall is mainly unresponsive but does talk to the officer at least once, and at the officer's successful urging, he does for a time put the gun on the safety barrier. The officer 16) minimizes Hall's problem to him. This negotiator 10) tries empathy — I see your pain. He offers 3) freedom from harm, 6) help, 7) the assurance of a good outcome, 9) physical comfort/welfare, 5) contacting someone for him, 17) reminds him of the impact of his death on loved ones, and 18) tells him suicide isn't what he wants to do. The officer asks him 15) to name something he needs. He 11) comes out from behind the car for a time. At some point, this officer and another 12) advance behind a ballistic shield in an effort to separate Hall from the gun. Their actions fail, and Hall retrieves the gun. After further negotiation, Hall, very slowly and with very short steps, gradually moves toward the officers. The officer repeatedly asks Hall to drop the gun. When Hall positions the gun — which has been mainly invisible to us in front of him as if his hands are in his jacket pockets — facing down on his left leg, an officer shoots at him several times and misses.

**Physically unfazed by the shots, Hall raises his arms in a “T” with the gun in his left hand pointing out to the side. Still with gun in hand, Hall raises his arms, transitioning into an “I give up” position, and officers shoot him.**

[Hall is sitting on the road] Put that gun down on the concrete for me, ok? Put that down and I’ll come over there and talk to you, alright? We’ll get a nice warm cup of coffee and get some place warm to talk. [Hall asks if officers are trained to shoot if shot at and asks several times that they make it quick.] Am I trained to shoot? No, we don’t do that. I’m here to talk to you, that’s all. We’ll let you talk to whoever you want to . . . family . . . friends . . . whoever. Ok? You just have to put that gun down for me. You already did it once. Believe me, I have been doing this now for a very long time. There’s nothing we can’t work out for you. I can



see you’re hurting, I see that. I’m here to listen to you, but I can’t do that from this far away, and I can’t come down there while you have that gun. I’ll meet you right there at that line. But you gotta leave that gun where it’s at, ok? I promise, no one will hurt you. You have my word. We’ll talk about anything that’s goin’ on here today, alright? You getting cold? Put that gun to the side. I’ll come down and talk to you. I’ll get you a jacket and stick you into a warm car, ok? Tell me what I can do for you, CJ. [The officer comes out from behind the car, can be seen full body for a time.] [Hall gets up, leans on barrier, remains unresponsive.] CJ, is there somebody I can call you want to talk to? No? You have to talk to one person and that’s me. I can’t carry on this conversation by myself. You gotta talk to me., Ok. You’re not in trouble. Nobody wants to hurt you. You gotta tell me what’s goin’ on, though, ok? CJ, what is it that I can do for you? What is it you want? You ok? Do you need an ambulance? [Hall handles his gun, goes to a backpack, gets and puts on a jacket, gets cell phone charger, and marijuana pipe., complies with request to put the gun down and moves

*toward the officers.] You get further away from that gun, they just will put their guns away, I promise. [Which means the police guns must be drawn at that time, which he can see, is aware of.]*

Let me know when it's good to come down, alright? You wanna come up a little further to me now? We'll meet right up there, and we'll talk, ok? Can I come down and talk to you? Cj, I'm not going to hurt you, I promise. Can I come down there? My partner and I are going to come to you, ok? Don't run, no sudden moves, ok? I'm just gonna come talk to you, I promise. Stay right there for me? I have your word? *[Two officers try to circle around Hall while holding ballistic shield trying to get between Hall and the gun. After 10 mins, Hall picks up gun again and moves back.]*

CJ, what can I do for you? C'mon, CJ, you were doing so well before. The longer it goes, the worse it looks for you. Yeah, like I said, this is not the end of the world. I'm not sure what's going on in your head, but this is not the end of the world, just a little bump in the road. Put that gun down, walk up here, and we'll talk like men. I promise. Put that gun down and walk up here toward me. That's all you gotta do. Then it's done. It's very easy. *[Hall sending suicide messages to x-girlfriend throughout, starts to take short, halting steps toward officers, ignoring 30 pleas to put gun down. When Hall extends left arm along leg with gun in hand, one officer shoots at him but misses. Hall does not flinch. When shooting stops, Hall stretches arms out in "T" — crucifix? — position with gun in left hand. Then raises arms above his head, ignoring more commands to drop the gun.]*

Put your gun on the ground and walk up here towards me. . . . I don't think you want to stay out here all night, right? . . . Put it down and walk up here toward me. That's all you got to do. . . . You did it before, you can do it again [that is, you can put the gun down as you did before] . . . You're not getting any warmer, neither are we. . . . Whatever's going on inside your head, we'll deal with it . . . Put the gun down for me, ok? . . . There's somebody out there that loves you. . . . You can do it. Put the gun down right at your feet. . . . It's been an awful year, let's not end on ?? . . . It's only going to get colder. . . . You can do it. . . . We're not going to hurt you. . . . Easy to do. . . . All you gotta do. . . . Put the gun down for me, alright? . . . Put it right down, c'mon man. Nobody's going to hurt you. . .

. I didn't lie to you, did I? . . . Just drop it right there, seriously. That's all you gotta do. . . . We're not going to hurt you, put it down. . . . CJ, you don't want to do this. . . . It's not what you want to do. . . . We're not going to shoot you, put it down. . . . You don't need it. . . . CJ, put it down, [*Hall all this while advancing very slowly toward the police, taking about 24 baby steps over 4 minutes*] {*Hall dangles the left hand with the gun at the beginning of the walk and dangles it briefly during the walk, so it looks like he had the gun in hand the whole way, not as the narrative has it, which indicates a transfer from waist band to hand that triggered the police shots.*} Just a bump in the road, a minor hiccup that's all [*Hall extends left hand with gun along his leg pointing down*]. . . . CJ, put it down, put it down, put it down now, CJ [*vehemently, adamantly*] [*Police shoot and miss.*] [*Hall doesn't flinch.*] Drop it, drop it, drop the gun [*Hall immediately raises his arms in a "T" after the shots.*] [*Brief pause, still holding gun, Hall lifts arms in air in "I give up" or touchdown position.*] [*Brief pause, then police shoot Hall mortally.*]