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CRIME

Questions Raised Over Detroit Police Shooting Of Hakim Littleton

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July 14, 2020, 4:43 PM by [Violet Ikonomova](#)

Questions linger following the deadly **Detroit police shooting** of Hakim Littleton, who fired at officers Friday night on Detroit's west side.

While police have called the shooting justified, with public perception largely on their side, some have raised concerns over an officer firing a final bullet in the head of the 20-year-old while another cop held him down.

On Facebook, one man called it "murder."

"The man was subdued, the last cop had no business shooting him in the head," wrote **Damon Kirk**, an Air Force veteran and community activist in Detroit.

"It's no longer self defense once you're no longer in danger," Nick Charles Ryde commented in agreement.

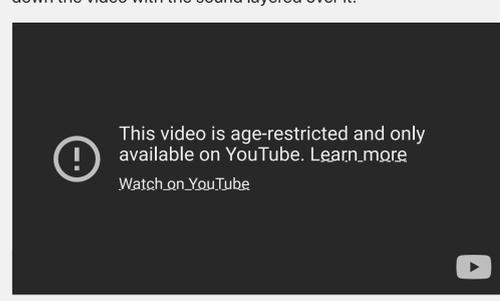
Attorney David Robinson, a former Detroit police officer who now brings misconduct cases against the department, said the final shot appeared "unjustified" and "punitive."

"The question becomes was it a kill shot. If he could have survived the other shots a case could be made that it was criminal," he said. "Nonetheless, it was excessive. In examining a use of force in a shooting case, each shot stands on its own."

Others, including Detroit police, have argued that the response was justified because the young man remained a threat. Littleton shot at police twice from the ground, Chief James Craig said Friday.

The incident is under internal investigation, and the officers involved have been taken off the streets pending the outcome, as is standard. The Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office did not immediately respond to requests for additional information.

In an effort to bring more clarity to what happened, Deadline Detroit matched the only available audio from the incident to a more complete video, then slowed down the video with the sound layered over it.



The department initially said a total of eight bullets were fired in the approximately six-second exchange, four by Littleton and four by three police officers. Chief Craig has since said Littleton fired five bullets.

The video appears to show Littleton turn toward officers from the ground; police said he fired at least two shots from there. As this happens, an officer jumps on top of Littleton and struggles restrain him. More shots are fired, though the view is obscured. An officer scurries behind a vehicle for cover.

Littleton is still being held down when another officer runs around his body to unload the final bullet in his head. That officer appears to fire the shot approximately three seconds after Littleton turned toward police from the ground.

The department declined to say whether Littleton was still holding a gun when he was shot in the head, citing the ongoing investigation. Craig said Friday that officers kicked a gun away from his body; this appears to happen when the confrontation ends based on the department video below.



Additional body camera footage from the officer who held him down might provide more clarity, but the department has not released it nor confirmed whether that camera was recording.

If the footage is available, the department told Deadline Detroit it would have to file a Freedom of Information Act request to access it. Those requests can take weeks to process.

This is the second time in recent weeks that Detroit police have voluntarily released dash camera and other video footage in an effort to add context to high-profile incidents that have come under scrutiny from the community.

While the footage has helped answer some questions, information gaps remain. Part of the issue is that because police departments are not required to immediately release video, they're able to decide which clips and audio to produce.

The first footage dump came in late June, after two police officers **drove through a crowd of demonstrators** that had surrounded their squad cars.

In that case, the department released silent video primarily, leaving viewers unable to hear protesters' screams as they were being driven into (these were captured in bystander videos). Sound came in midway through in only one of the videos, at a point when demonstrators had begun pounding a police SUV as it pushed into them.

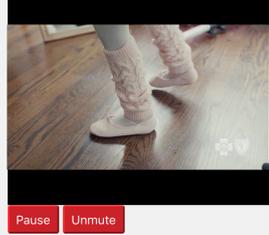
Had full sound on the ramming footage been provided, it may have shed more light on officers' claims that they thought they were being shot at before one floored it with demonstrators on the patrol car's hood. Officers typically radio "shots fired" in such instances.

In the case of the fatal shooting of Littleton, the department released only one video with sound. That was posted on Twitter and sent to reporters via email; the same video was silent when played during the news conference following the incident.

A spokeswoman for the department could not specifically say why some of the videos released in recent weeks were silent, but said that, generally, sound is sometimes unavailable.

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Pause Unmute

Photo Of The Day



A young girl shows her support at a Feb. 21 march against a KKK flag in Grosse Pointe Park.

By: **Michael Lucido**

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- Paul Petruccy**
A person with a half of brain can see in this video that the police did nothing wrong but made it home to there families that day great job to the Detroit PD
Like · Reply · 30w
- Anthony Alan**
Obey the police..None of this happens..NOT that complicated...Shoot at police..you should be dead..period..NOT that complicated.
Like · Reply · 1 · 31w
- Craig Brockman**
I didn't see one question mark. Here's a question - who in their right mind would protest this? And as another Air Force veteran, the one noted in this story is an idiot.
Like · Reply · 31w
- Fug Fugit**
Cops did their job, thug was killed. Only those that love thugs and crime are upset, and those opinions aren't important. Good job DPD.
Like · Reply · 31w
- Jayvon Jones**
That cop had no right shooting him in the head like that. He was already subdued , that's some bullshit, and everyone that has seen the footage knows this, only u racist people going to say it was justified. The threat was over once on the ground being held. They not getting away with this, police did everything right except shoot him in the head
Like · Reply · 31w
- David Valdez**
I'm confused, if he is "subdued" as you say then how did he fire a shot at officers from the ground just 3 seconds earlier? Also, where was the gun? Prove to me it was not in his possession still because you can not see it when he's on the ground, but he clearly still has it. It didn't just disappear into thin air.
Like · Reply · 31w
- Anthony Alan**
The dead guy could have been white and I'd feel same way..that is what you do NOT understand..we whites understand crime is crime no matter what race you are..You shoot at popo's you should be dead..no matter what race creed religion or who you identify as..period.
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