

Akron police release body-cam video in fatal shooting of Jayland Walker

Officials brace for fresh protests after 25-year-old Black man was killed running from officers during a traffic stop



Demonstrators have gathered for four straight days this week, demanding police accountability after Walker, 25, was killed early Monday.

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Authorities in Akron, Ohio, have released chilling police body-camera video in the shooting death of Jayland Walker, a Black motorist who was gunned down after running from officers during a traffic stop on Monday.

The video, which shows a fast police chase of Walker's vehicle, culminates with several officers surrounding the 25-year-old in a parking lot, attempting to Taser him and then opening fire. Walker was accused of firing a handgun at police from his vehicle before leaving the pistol in the driver's seat and trying to run from officers.

The family's attorney says the video shows officers fired 90 times, but police investigators say they have not determined how many shots were fired. Akron's medical examiner spotted about 60 wounds on Walker's body.

Demonstrators have gathered for four straight days this week, demanding police accountability. But as the video was released, Akron law enforcement and political officials called for calm as they warned of its graphic nature.

“The video is heartbreaking, it’s hard to take in,” said the city’s mayor, Daniel Horrigan.

“For many reasons, it is difficult to watch,” Akron’s police chief, Steve Mylett, said. “At the request of Mr Walker’s family we have blurred Mr Walker’s body” in the video.

Video from the scene also showed a gun on the front seat of Walker’s car, and Mylett said traffic camera footage – which was also publicly released – did appear to show the flash of a gun from the driver’s window of Walker’s car during the chase. Up to 10 police cruisers followed Walker at times during the pursuit.

Mylett said eight officers were directly involved in the shooting and have been placed on administrative leave. The Ohio criminal investigations bureau is reviewing the shooting at the request of Akron police.

“I’m not going to pass judgment” until that investigation is completed, Mylett said.

Akron officials’ anxiety over Walker’s killing and the response to the release of the body-cam video has been palpable. The police chief thanked Walker’s family in their appeals for calm in a situation, he said, that had a potential for “aggression and violence” between officers and demonstrators.

Horrigan had earlier cancelled the city’s Rib, White and Blue festival for the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

“Independence Day is meant to be a celebration and a time of gathering with friends and family, the mayor said. “Unfortunately, I feel strongly that this is not the time for a city-led celebration.”

On Saturday, Walker family attorney Bobby DiCello described what he’d seen on the body-cam video, saying it was “brutal” and how officers’ gunfire sounded “like a whole brick of fireworks going off”.

“We’re all bracing for the community’s response, and the one message that we have is the family does not need any more violence,” DiCello said. “They just want peace, dignity and justice for Jayland.”

According to reports, Walker was involved in a chase with law enforcement less than 24 hours before leading police on a high-speed pursuit.

Monday’s deadly confrontation began when officers tried to stop Walker for an equipment violation. A four-and-a-half-minute pursuit ensued. When Walker stopped and ran officers chased him on foot.

Seconds later, two officers initially used Tasers before eight officers open fire. Mylett later said that stills from the incident appeared to show that Walker had moved his hand toward his waistband, and forward. Soon after the gunfire from officers erupts.

“Actions by the suspect caused the officers to perceive he posed a deadly threat to them,” police said. “In response to this threat, officers discharged their firearms, striking the suspect.”

When the medical examiner reached the scene, Walker was found lying on his back while in handcuffs. Walker had been shot in the face, abdomen and upper legs, the report said, adding that a weapon was recovered from his vehicle.

Akron police earlier claimed that Walker presented a “deadly threat” and was wearing a black ski mask when he got out of the car, police said.

During Sunday’s press conference, Mylett said offers had attempted to resuscitate Walker.

DiCello had initially questioned the police narrative that Walker, an Amazon employee before becoming a driver for Doordash, had fired a gun while driving away from the traffic stop.

DiCello also emphasized how the video showed Walker running with his back to officers when they fired.

Television station WJW-TV said a preliminary report from the medical examiner’s office found Walker sustained multiple gunshot wounds to his head, torso and legs.

Ohio congresswoman Shontel Brown, whose district includes Akron, said in a statement: “I am gravely concerned about the killing of a young Black man at the hands of police, especially as it happens all too often across this country.”

Brown urged “the city of Akron and its police department to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation to fully inform Mr Walker’s family and our community and ensure accountability”.

As they braced for protests after the release of the body-cam video, authorities strategically positioned snow plows and other large trucks so as to serve as street barriers.

The shooting was the third fatal one by a police officer in Akron in the past six months. On Saturday, a crowd of more than 100 gathered outside the city courthouse and chanted: “No justice, no peace, prosecute the police.”

On Saturday, Roderick Pounds Sr, pastor of the Second Baptist church in Akron, said that “protest is a way of crying” after seeing the video prior to its public release.

Pounds said the body-cam footage was “shocking” and showed that Walker posed no threat when he was shot in what he described as a “massacre”