

Footage shows Minnesota man raised gun before - Associated Press State Wire: Minnesota (MN) - August 17, 2018

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ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Police in St. Paul released body camera footage Friday that shows a man was armed with a gun before officers shot and killed him during an early morning confrontation.

Officers Matthew Jones and Vincent Adams shot **William James Hughes**, 43, on an apartment building porch Aug. 5. Hughes' family has questioned why he had to die.

State investigators are still reviewing the incident but Police Chief Todd Axtell took the unusual step of releasing the officers' bodycam footage before the probe is complete. Axtell said during a news conference before showing the video to reporters that the shooting has generated "widespread rumors and falsehoods" that could erode public trust in police and place officers in danger.

The footage shows Jones and Adams enter the enclosed porch and knock on a door. Hughes emerges from another door with a pistol in his right hand. As the officers yell at him to put his hands up, he moves the gun toward the ceiling. The pistol momentarily points toward the officers as he swings it upward and one or both of them open fire.

A search warrant application the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension filed this week indicates the incident began when Hughes became angry and fired two or three shots into a wall and then pointed his gun at his roommate's head. The roommate fled and called police.

Hughes was a member of the White Earth Nation, an Ojibwe band based in northern Minnesota. Relatives told investigators he had been suicidal over a terminal illness that limited his quality of life, according to the warrant application.

Axtell said he had watched the footage with Hughes' family. He held up two envelopes at the news conference saying they contained cards Hughes' sister asked him to deliver to Adams and Jones.

"This is the first time in my 30-year career that I've ever seen such grace by a family met by such a tragedy," Axtell said.

Ramsey County Attorney John Choi issued a statement saying the video is hard to watch but is just one piece of evidence in the case. The BCA is relaying information daily and he plans to analyze all the data before deciding whether the shooting was justified, Choi said.

John Gordon, executive director of the Minnesota chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, issued a statement questioning whether officers truly had to fire.

"Having a gun, in and of itself, is not reason enough for someone to be shot," Gordon said.
"Officers need extensive training on how to secure an area and de-escalate dangerous situations

so that shootings are a last resort, not a routine practice. That, unfortunately, did not happen for William Hughes."

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter issued a statement saying the footage is "heartbreaking" and the city wishes the shooting had never happened.

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