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New Jersey police officer placed on paid leave after fatally shooting 'unarmed' black father-of-two

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Body

- **Rashaun Washington**, 37, was shot dead by a police officer in Vineland, New Jersey on Saturday
- The cop, who has not been identified, has been placed on paid leave while the shooting is investigated
- Authorities say they were called to a home in the area Saturday morning for a report of a man acting suspiciously on a front porch
- A neighbor says Washington did not appear to know anyone at the home and refused to cooperate with police
- Witnesses recorded live video as Washington was shot three times when he started running at officers
- The witnesses said Washington was shirtless and appeared unarmed
- Washington leaves behind a son and a daughter

Prosecutors say a New Jersey police officer who discharged a weapon during a confrontation that ended with the shooting death of a man has been placed on administrative leave.

The Cumberland County prosecutor's office said Monday that one Vineland officer fired during Saturday's confrontation that ended with the death of 37-year-old **Rashaun Washington** of Bridgeton.

Prosecutors said the officer was placed on paid administrative leave by Vineland's police chief per departmental policy.

Officers were dispatched shortly before 11:30am Saturday after a report of an unknown man acting suspiciously on the front porch of a residence.

Neighbor Jose Pagan told CBS Philadelphia that Washington did not appear to know anyone at the residence, and would not surrender to cops, telling them 'ya'll gone have to kill me.'

Witnesses took live video of the incident on Facebook, which showed a shirtless man pacing in the front yard of a home before running towards officers with their guns drawn. Three shots were then heard.

Ryonna Maven, who took one of the videos, is heard describing how a police dog proceeded to chew on the man's face when he was down on the ground. Other witnesses say cops sprayed mace on the suspect as he bled out.

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Several witnesses at the scene told local outlets that Washington did not appear to be armed. His family have said he only had a water bottle on him.

Local cops have not said whether they believed Washington was armed. However, they said that he was wanted on outstanding warrants.

Washington's family say the warrants were for non-violent offences and that the videos show cops did not have to use deadly force.

'Y'all could've shot him in the leg and took him down in handcuffs,' Washington's mother, Georgette Washington, told CBS Philadelphia.

At least one protest has been staged since Washington's death, and another has been planned for Thursday.

Washington is survived by his parents, siblings and a son and daughter. His girlfriend Lahtefa Key was heartbroken at his loss.

'We was together all the time for the last couple of months. I don't understand how this could happen. How could anybody treat a human being like this,' Key said.

Washington's father, Reginald Miller, told Fox 29 that his son had drug convictions and had been released from a halfway house four months ago before the 'Camden streets got him'.

While his son had his struggles, he doesn't think what happened to him was justified.

'That was not deserved. He did not deserve that just to have a man gunned down, no weapon, no threat to police - that he deserves to be gunned down like that,' Miller said.

Miller has seen the videos of the shooting and is shocked at what police allegedly let happened to his dying son.

'He hits the ground and you release the dogs on him. You done shot him, where's he going? You let the dogs chew on him?' asks Miller.

County prosecutors are investigating and asking anyone with information to contact Det. Joseph Lowry at 856-453-0486 extension 11197.

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