

Brutal video depicts Huntington Beach, California officer killing Navy veteran

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25 September 2017

Outside a 7-Eleven convenience store Friday morning in Huntington Beach, California, a police officer shot unarmed Dillan Tabares, a white, 27-year-old veteran of the United States Navy. Later that day Chief of Police Robert Handy defended the brutal killing despite the posting of a bystander video on YouTube that clearly shows Tabares unarmed and not threatening the officer when he was shot seven times.

As of this writing important details remain unknown, including the name of the officer, a two-and-a-half-year veteran. The event was witnessed by multiple high-school students arriving at Marina High School directly across the street, where Tabares graduated in 2008 before enlisting and becoming an information systems technician stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

“That was actually basically seeing a person die. It’s not like the movies,” student Carmella Marshall told the *Los Angeles Times*. “It’s really real.”

According to preliminary information from his family, after being discharged from the Navy, Tabares lost his security clearance due to a positive marijuana test and had developed profound depression, which he self-medicated.

Some accounts have characterized him as “transient.” There seems to be no question that he was emotionally disturbed and in need of treatment.

A second bystander video, which starts about 15 seconds earlier than the first, shows Tabares advancing quickly toward the officer who, while backing up, fires a Taser that seemed to have no effect.

The video vividly illustrates a little-known fact about the Taser—a barbaric weapon designed to impale half-inch electrified darts into human beings—that it is useless to counter an aggressive person advancing on an officer. Taser darts fired into the chest generally have little effect outside of occasionally triggering

cardiac arrest through electrocution.

In any event, Tabares clearly swings at the officer a few times, and the two fall to the ground fighting. That is where the second video begins, providing a far better perspective on the shooting.

There was no call for service at the convenience store, and the reason for the officer’s initial contact with Tabares is unknown, though the 27-year-old acted as though provoked.

During the altercation on the asphalt parking lot, the officer put Tabares in a headlock and punched him repeatedly. Tabares removed a small black object from the officer’s equipment belt, perhaps an extra ammunition clip, but his hand was never near the officer’s gun. The officer unholstered his weapon as the two men separated and moved apart.

When shot, Tabares was standing straight up, unarmed and moving back from the officer. The officer appears in the videos to be at least 10 feet away when he fired without giving any commands or warning.

Despite the volley of six shots, Tabares remained standing, a gruesome image. The officer ordered him to get down as he fired a seventh round, and then Tabares collapsed against the side of the store. At least one bullet went through a window and into the store, where a worker was injured either by a bullet graze or shard of glass.

The Orange County Sheriff’s Department, a notoriously corrupt agency, implicated recently in the cover-up of widespread constitutional violations by planting informants at its jail, will supposedly investigate the case.

This is the seventh police shooting in Huntington Beach this year, and the second human fatality. One dog has been killed.

Earlier this month, two Huntington Beach officers

shot and wounded each other, along with a man they suspected of slashing tires. There were two shootings in March and three during one 25-hour span in January. None of the shootings involved a civilian with a firearm.

Huntington Beach is the fourth largest city in Orange County, with a population slightly less than 200,000. Predominately white and middle-class, Huntington Beach is known for miles of wide, sandy beaches and its annual surfing contest.

The fact that the national epidemic of police violence is now appearing with such virulence in communities such as Huntington Beach demonstrates that the fundamental causes are far deeper than racial discrimination. The historically unprecedented growth of social inequality domestically, coupled with imperialist aggression abroad, has increased the militarization of police agencies throughout the United States, and fomented homicidal behaviors among the “bodies of armed men” paid to maintain the capitalist order.



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