Wikipedia
The Free Encyclopedia

Main page
Contents
Featured content
Current events
Random article
Donate to Wikipedia
Wikipedia store

Interaction
Help
About Wikipedia
Community portal
Recent changes
Contact page

Tools
What links here
Related changes
Upload file
Special pages
Permanent link
Page information
Wikidata item
Cite this page

Print/export
Create a book
Download as PDF
Printable version

Languages
Simple English
Edit links

Shooting of Laquan McDonald

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Coordinates: 41°49'04.7"N 87°43'26.4"W

The **shooting of Laquan McDonald** occurred on October 20, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois, when McDonald—a 17-year-old black male armed with a knife—was shot 16 times[2] by Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke from approximately ten feet (3 m) away.[3][4]

Video of the shooting, captured on one police cruiser's dashboard camera, was released to the public on November 24, 2015, over 13 months after the shooting. Van Dyke was charged with first-degree murder within hours after the video's release. After turning himself in to authorities, he was initially ordered held without bail at Cook County Jail,[5] but released on November 30 after posting bail.[6] There have been numerous protests denouncing Laquan McDonald's death.

Shooting of Laquan McDonald

A memorial from protestors of the shooting of Laquan McDonald, November 24, 2015

Time	9:57:36–9:57:54 p.m. (CST)[1]
Date	October 20, 2014
Location	4100 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.
Coordinates	41°49'04.7"N 87°43'26.4"W
Filmed by	Police cruiser dashboard cameras
Participants	Officer Jason Van Dyke (shooter) Laquan McDonald (death)
Deaths	Laquan McDonald
Accused	Jason Van Dyke
Charges	First-degree murder

Contents [hide]

1 Backgrounds
1.1 Jason Van Dyke
1.2 Laquan McDonald
2 Shooting
2.1 Medical report
3 Video and audio of shootings
4 Reactions to video
4.1 Protests
4.2 Black Friday protests
4.3 Threats by Jabari Dean
4.4 Other reactions
5 Legal proceedings
6 See also
7 References
8 External links

Backgrounds [edit]

Jason Van Dyke [edit]

Jason D. Van Dyke (born c. 1978) was born in Hinsdale, Illinois and graduated from Hinsdale South High School in 1996. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from St. Xavier University in Chicago.[7] A 14-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department with a salary of $78,012, Van Dyke is married and has two children.[8][9] At least 20 citizen complaints have been filed against Officer Van Dyke (Star #9465) since 2001, but none resulted in disciplinary action.[10][11] Ten of the complaints allege he used excessive force, and two involve the use of a firearm.[12] A jury awarded a Chicago man $350,000 after determining Van Dyke employed excessive force during a traffic stop.[13] One complaint involved verbal abuse.[14] Van Dyke may have also been involved in the coverup of a separate shooting in 2005.[15]

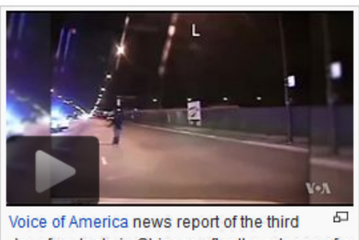
Laquan McDonald [edit]

Laquan McDonald (c. 1997 – October 20, 2014) was from the 37th Ward of Chicago. He was born to a teenage mother[16] and since the age of three, McDonald lived in different relatives' homes and foster care, because the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services determined that his mother did not provide him with proper supervision.[17] At the time of his death, he was a student at Sullivan House High School.[9][18][19]

Shooting [edit]

Shortly before 10:00 p.m., police were called to investigate McDonald at 4100 South Pulaski Road responding to reports that he was carrying a knife[7][9] and breaking into vehicles in a trucking yard at 41st Street and Kildare Avenue.[20][21] When officers confronted McDonald, he used a knife, with a 3 inch blade to slice the tire on a patrol vehicle and damage its windshield.[21][22] McDonald walked away from police after numerous verbal instructions from officers to drop the knife.[23] He was shot 16 times in 14–15 seconds, expending the maximum capacity of Van Dyke's 9mm semi-automatic[24] firearm.[23] After McDonald fell to the ground, Van Dyke stopped firing for a moment, then opened fire again when McDonald moved, knife still in hand.[25] Van Dyke was on the scene for less than 30 seconds before opening fire and began shooting approximately six seconds after exiting his car.[26] The first responding officer stated that he did not see the need to use force and none of the at least eight other officers on the scene fired their weapons.[27]

Laquan McDonald was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 10:42 p.m.[28]



Voice of America news report of the third day of protests in Chicago after the release of a video of the shooting of Laquan McDonald

Medical report [edit]

According to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office, an autopsy determined that McDonald was shot in his neck, chest, back, both arms, right leg and a graze wound to his left scalp.[20] Toxicology reports later revealed that McDonald had traces of PCP in his blood.[29][30][31] His death was ruled a homicide due to multiple gunshot wounds.

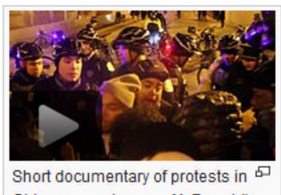
Video and audio of shootings [edit]

- Only two[32] of the dashboard video recordings have been known to exist, although there were five police Tahoe vehicles[33] with dashboard cameras on the scene. Chicago police officers are required to make sure that their video systems are working properly,[34] and that they should "submit a ticket if they are unable to download digitally recorded data".[32] There were no repair tickets requested by any of the three vehicles missing video on the scene that night.[32] According to a CPD video, "The in-car camera system automatically engages both the audio and the video recording when the vehicles' emergency roof lights are activated" and each vehicle has a front and rear camera and microphone.[32]
- The video footage that has been released does not contain audio,[33] although Chicago Police dashboard cameras automatically record audio.
- There was also a security camera at a local Burger King restaurant that may have captured the shooting, but 86 minutes[35] of that footage of the shooting is missing.[36] The manager of the restaurant has claimed that on the night of the shooting, five Chicago police officers gained access to the video and passwords on the equipment, and that by the time the Independent Police Review Authority requested to view the footage the next day, it had been erased.[37] FBI investigators later stated that the Burger King tapes had not been subject to tampering.[38]

Reactions to video [edit]

Protests [edit]

A few hundred people blocked the intersection of Roosevelt and Michigan avenue on November 24, 2015, in protest after the release of the video footage.[39] On November 25, 2015, more protests were held.[40] On the second night of protest, marchers tore off lights from a public Christmas Tree in Daley Plaza and multiple marchers were arrested.[41] On November 25, Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders released a statement sending condolences to McDonald's family and criticizing the Emanuel administration and the Chicago's police force.[42]



Short documentary of protests in Chicago over Laquan McDonald's shooting. Produced by TeleSUR

Black Friday protests [edit]

On Friday, November 27, a major day for shopping in the U.S., a group of protesters chanted "sixteen shots" and other slogans while marching on Michigan Avenue, the city's central shopping district. This caused some businesses to shut their doors and the police closed Michigan Avenue, a six-lane street.[43][44][45]

Threats by Jabari Dean [edit]

On Sunday, November 29, 2015, Jabari Dean, a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, threatened to kill 16 unspecified white males—one for every shot fired at McDonald—at the University of Chicago, as well as any white police officers who intervened. The University of Chicago announced that classes would be cancelled the next day.[46] The same day, the FBI arrested Dean, who was charged with "transmitting in interstate commerce communications containing a threat to injure the person of another."[47] Federal prosecutors stated they did not believe Dean had the means to carry out the attack he had threatened.[48]

Other reactions [edit]

- Chance the Rapper referenced the shooting on *Saturday Night Live* on December 12, 2015.[49]

Protest on November 24, 2015 Michigan Ave. In response to recent video footage showing 17-year old Laquan McDonald being shot and killed by a Chicago, IL police officer.

Legal proceedings [edit]

The FBI opened an investigation into McDonald's death, and the city of Chicago approved a five-million dollar settlement in April 2015, although no lawsuit was filed.[50] The police had originally claimed that McDonald had lunged at an officer. However, video footage contradicts that claim; McDonald made no lunges.[51]

When the existence of the dashcam video became known after the shooting, the city of Chicago denied at least 15 requests for its release. Brandon Smith, a freelance journalist, filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act on May 26. When his request was denied, he filed a lawsuit in August against the city. Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan sent a letter to the Police Department the day before a court hearing stating they cannot withhold the video and their claims that releasing it would interfere with an ongoing investigation or jeopardize a fair trial were unsubstantiated. On November 19, Cook County Judge Franklin Valderrama denied the city's request for a stay and ordered that the video be released to the public no later than November 25. The city did not appeal the judge's decision[52][53] and on November 24 after a press conference,[54] the video showing police killing McDonald was released.[5]

On November 24, 2015, Cook County State Attorney Anita Alvarez announced that Van Dyke was charged with first-degree murder, and Van Dyke turned himself in to authorities.[2] He was initially held without bail at Cook County Jail for six days.[55][56] If convicted of first-degree murder, Van Dyke faces a prison sentence of 20 years to life imprisonment.[57] Crowd funding website GoFundMe shut down a page that was set up to raise funds for his legal defense[58] shortly after it had raised just over $10,000.[59] On November 30, Van Dyke was granted bail, set at $1,500,000. He posted $150,000, ten percent of the bail, and was released from jail.[6]

See also [edit]

- List of killings by law enforcement officers in the United States, October 2014

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External links [edit]

- External video dashcam footage
- Coban, manufacturer of dashboard cameras used by the Chicago Police

V·T·E	Black Lives Matter [hide]	
People	Alicia Garza · Patrisse Cullors · Opal Tometi · DeRay Mckesson · Shaun King · Marissa Johnson · Nekima Levy-Pounds · Johnetta Elzie	
Events	Ferguson unrest · 2015 Baltimore protests · 20th Anniversary of the Million Man March: Justice or Else	
Deaths protested	**2009**	Oscar Grant
	2010	Aiyana Jones
	2011	James Craig Anderson · Kenneth Chamberlain, Sr.
	2012	Ramarley Graham · Trayvon Martin · Rekia Boyd · Jordan Davis · Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams
	2013	Jonathan Ferrell · Renisha McBride
	2014	Dontre Hamilton · Eric Garner · John Crawford III · Michael Brown · Ezell Ford · **Laquan McDonald** · Akai Gurley · Tamir Rice · Antonio Martin
	2015	Tony Robinson · Meagan Hockaday · Eric Harris · Walter Scott · Freddie Gray · The Emanuel Nine · Jonathan Sanders · Sandra Bland · Samuel DuBose · Jeremy McDole · Jamar Clark
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