

# OPINION

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## Police Who Don't Serve the Public

The following is a Portland Observer editorial:

We would be better served if officers involved in deadly shootings would have the courage to stand before the community and explain their actions. How about an apology when an unarmed motorist is killed under the mistaken belief that he was about to use a weapon he didn't

have. In both the James Perez and Kendra James deaths, the officers involved in the killings are so effectively being sheltered from public view.

Jason Sery, the North Precinct police officer who shot and killed Perez March 28 is going to court to block his testimony in a public inquest. Scott

McCollister, the police officer who shot James May 5 has never faced the public to explain his actions.

It's no coincidence that the victims were black and the officers were white. Racial profiling in our community and aggression by some police officers to the very people they serve are facts. Our African-Ameri-

can community is rightfully frustrated by this injustice.

Where are the good cops? In situations like these, we don't feel like we have any.

The uproar over the lack of police accountability does have one silver lining. It has galvanized our community. The rally downtown on Sunday, like the rallies for justice in the death of

Kendra James, drew a rainbow of support and showed that this deserved uproar is not just a black issue but a human rights issue.

We wholeheartedly support the Portland NAACP in its demands for a top and bottom Justice Department review of the Police Department while also supporting Chief Derrick

Foxworth.

Foxworth has shown bold, steady leadership while asking for patience to bring all of the facts before the public. He rightfully met with Perez' family to update them on the investigation. He deserves the chance to implement needed changes in the department.

### A Tragic Loss of Human Life

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is deeply concerned about the fatal shooting of an unarmed African American man, James Jahar Perez, on March 28 in north Portland. We regret the loss of human life and acknowledge the pain the Perez family and our community are experiencing. We offer our sincere condolences to the both the family and the community for this tragic loss of life.

This incident is especially disturbing in light of additional police shootings that have taken

place over the last couple of years, including the death of Kendra James that occurred under similar

*This incident is especially disturbing in light of additional police shootings that have taken place over the last couple of years.*

circumstances less than a year ago. EMO joins the many other voices pleading for a public inquest of the

recent police shooting by the Multnomah County District Attorney's office. This will be the first such inquest in nearly two decades and has the endorsement of Mayor Vera Katz, state lawmakers and Portland Police Chief Derrick Foxworth. In addition, EMO is very encouraged by and supportive of Chief Foxworth's ongoing dialogue between the Portland Police Department and the local community in order to respond to the concerns of the entire community.

### Letters to the Editor:

## Nothing Has Changed

I attended Sunday's inspiring rally organized by the Coalition of Black Men and am outraged over the unjustifiable killing of James Jahar Perez. Ten months ago, it was Kendra James, before that, Jose Santos Mejia Poot, a Mexican immigrant. Obviously nothing has changed.

If you are brown, immigrant or African American, things have gotten worse with respect to police use of deadly force. But I believe that things can improve; which compels me to speak out and get involved.

We need to defend ourselves from a police institution that maims or even kills us because

we are a threat to Portland's wealthy. We are a threat because we demand economic and political justice. Demands such as a well funded and quality education, a living wage, healthcare, and that big business pay up so that we aren't taxed to starvation.

We demand not to be racially profiled every time we drive our cars. We demand jobs, the right to organize, the right to reproductive choice, and the right to marry if we are lesbian or gay. As a socialist feminist, I think the only kind of system that can support anything different is a socialist economy, where hu-

man needs and equality, not profits are what matter.

The Freedom Socialist Party has long advocated an independent elected civilian police review board with the authority to discipline police. This board should be publicly funded but not connected to corrupt city government and big business interests. In the mean time, Multnomah County officials should open the grand jury process to the public so justice can be brought to the murderers of James Jahar Perez.

**Eduardo Martinez Zapata,**  
Freedom Socialist Party of north Portland

## Cops Killing Citizens Again

The natives are upset and it's the Kendra James thing all over again. As usual it's two sided, us versus them. An unarmed man reaches for his seat belt to finally comply with an order and is riddled with bullets, according to a woman coming out of the cleaners.

The cops admit they once again were not able to secure the scene before making choices again to shoot an unarmed man.

The irony is police knew the man, were curious about the newer version of car he was driving (profiling) and pulled him over with an excuse of not using his signal 100 feet before a turn. You'd have to be right on him from the get-go to know exactly

where that 100 feet started out! Sounds like profiling to me.

This was a shooting in cold blood. Why would a cop reach into the car after you tell them you have no I.D.? Why would a police officer try to pull a man out of a car while he still has his seat belt on instead of asking the man to take it off?

Portland police ignored the requests we made last year out of the Kendra James review hearings. We demanded proper police procedures when dealing with occupants of a car.

Again the deadly encounter involved one motorist and two Portland police officers. Again two officers were not able to extract a human being out of a

car without deadly force!

This morning, I happened to hop off a bus just as three Portland police officers were trying to capture three black male suspects. As I watched, a black man approached me and muttered something about keeping an eye on the police, so they don't kill another innocent man.

Well, the white cop came unglued. He tried to use his power to violate my freedom of listening and responding to what I saw. He told both of us to back it up, that we were interfering and threatened me with arrest. Ain't that the way it is with the guys with the guns. Tromping all over the Constitution!

**Teresa Teater**

## Police Shooting Breaks Heart

I woke up with my heart broken again. Another young person's life taken for what reason? A young man only 28 years old had been shot and killed by Portland Police. To me, it was another murder uncalled for because of poor training and no concerns for young black Americans in the city.

We need to get together and file a class action lawsuit against Portland Police for poor training of officers, es-

pecially poor training on traffic stops. I believe to many police officers are trigger-happy and abuse the power behind the badge. Even though the police department is led by a black chief, it does not change what is really happening on the street.

When I look back over the years of policing in Portland, one of the first things that comes to mind is when officers tossed a dead possum on a

black business. These men where still able to keep their jobs. What a joke.

I am afraid for my sons and your sons and daughters. It could happen to anyone. What a nightmare for any family. Murder is not something that just goes away.

Let's get it together Portland. We as a people need to make a stand and fight for better Portland Police.

**Reba**

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