

# Protesters block freeway after videos show Sacramento police firing 20 shots at unarmed black man

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Sacramento police released a body cam video of the fatal shooting of an unarmed black man they believed had a gun. He was carrying his cell phone. USA TODAY

(Photo: Renee C. Byer, The Sacramento Bee via AP)

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SACRAMENTO — Hundreds of people rallied Thursday night to protest the fatal shooting this week of an unarmed black man by police, disrupting rush hour traffic and delaying the start of an NBA game.



The protesters, angered by the shooting death of 22-year-old Stephon Alonzo Clark, locked arms to form a chain around Golden 1 Center, blocking fans from entering the NBA game scheduled between the Sacramento Kings and the Atlanta Hawks at Golden 1 Center.

Protesters also had rallied outside city hall and the Sacramento Police Station earlier in the day, leading to a march that eventually shut down I-5. Marchers held signs with messages like “Sac PD: Stop killing us!”

Clark was shot Sunday as police said they were responding to a call about a suspect who had broken into several car windows and was hiding in a backyard. Sacramento police released videos Wednesday of the shooting.

The Sacramento Police Department said the man, who was black, was seen breaking into at least three vehicles and later into a neighbor's home. The break-ins were first reported by a 911 call also released by the police.

Body camera footage from two officers who fired 20 shots at the man includes audio of them asking the man to show his hands, then shouting “gun, gun, gun” before beginning to fire.

The police department also released video Wednesday from a Sacramento Sheriff's Department helicopter.

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Neither the body camera videos nor the helicopter video clearly depict what the man was doing in the moments before the police fired.

The man turned out to be holding a cellphone, and no gun was found.

"Based on the videos alone, I cannot second-guess the split-second decisions of our officers, and I'm not going to do that," Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg said in a statement. "The investigation must be completed. We need more information in addition to the video before we can render any final conclusions."

The shooting happened in the backyard of the man's grandparents' home, where he was staying, after police said he refused orders to stop and show his hands.

"He was shot so many times, so many times," Sequita Thompson, Clark's grandmother, said Tuesday.

Thompson said she was inside her home Sunday when she heard gunshots coming from her backyard.

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"It went 'pow, pow, pow.' They just kept on shooting," she said.

However, she never thought those bullets were going toward her grandson. It wasn't until several hours later that Thompson said a detective came to her door and asked to see photos of her grandchildren.

"He was real quiet, and said, 'Ma'am you can't go back there, you can't go back there,'" Thompson said. "I said 'OK.' I waited till he walked out that door, I opened up that curtain, and (saw) my grandson on the ground dead."

According to Sacramento Police, they received a call about a suspect who was 6-foot-1.

"My grandson is short," Thompson said.



In this Tuesday, March 20, 2018, photo, Lashunda Britt, a cousin of Stephon Clark, stands near where he was fatally shot by police in Sacramento. (Photo: Renee C. Byer, The Sacramento Bee via AP)

Clark's family claims police killed the wrong guy.

Investigators say before the two officers fired 10 shots each at the scene, they thought Clark was pointing a gun at them.

"I want justice for my grandson. That's all I want is justice — and for all the black kids. As a matter of fact, everybody's kid that got gunned down by policemen," she said.

Clark was the father of two.

"He's not coming home to me no more," said Salena Manni, Clark's girlfriend, through tears. "He's really gone."

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Manni said she had been with Clark for five years. She is heartbroken, especially for their two children, Aiden and Ciaro.

"I have to wake up every morning to my kids asking me, 'Where's Daddy? Let's go get Daddy,' " Manni said. " 'Daddy's always in our hearts forever. Don't forget that.' Even today, my son, he doesn't understand hearts and tummies. He goes 'Daddy's with me. He's in my tummy.' "

Manni said Clark was the love of her life, but she didn't realize how much of an effect he had on other people.

"He has a lot of love out there," Manni said. "And I'm grateful for it."

The department could not say how many times Clark was hit, and the coroner's office was not releasing information until his relatives were notified. The department said the two officers have been with Sacramento police for two and four years, but each has four years' previous experience with other law enforcement agencies. Both are on paid administrative leave.

A 22-year-old black man was fatally shot by Sacramento police for holding a cell phone that they thought was a weapon. Veuer's Natasha Abellard (@NatashaAbellard) has the story. Buzz60

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