



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 9, 2015

Hispanic Cop Kills White Man; Media, Authorities Silent 18 Months

John Geer had white privilege.

The privilege of being shot by police and having his death largely ignored by the media, authorities, and activists.

“Hands up, don’t shoot!” It has become a meme and rallying cry for all the wrong reasons and all the wrong people. But it was never a more accurate sound-bite description of events than in the Geer case. The hapless 46-year-old was standing in the doorway of his Fairfax, Virginia, home with his hands at head level when shot by an officer with known “anger issues” who has been subject to four internal-affairs investigations. Geer had committed no crime that day — even the policeman who killed him admits that. Nor was he drunk, armed, or posing a threat at the time.



Oh, and the above is corroborated by six witnesses — four of whom are *police officers*.

In short, indications are that Geer was murdered that fateful day, August 29, 2013. Yet his case had been largely ignored for 18 months. In fact, the officer who shot him is still on the Fairfax County police force.

The case has a racial/ethnic angle, too. Geer was white, and the officer who killed him, Adam Torres, is a Hispanic. Yet unlike the Michael Brown case in Ferguson, Missouri, there are no protests, with Fairfax erupting in flames. There is no media feeding frenzy. Unlike with the Trayvon Martin incident in Florida, Barack Obama hasn’t made inflammatory comments (it seems the president can’t say here, “If I had a brother, he’d look like Geer”). And Attorney General Eric Holder hasn’t brought civil-rights charges or threatened to “dismantle” the Fairfax County police force. Geer had simply disappeared down the black memory hole of white victims.

But his case has now started to get a little more media exposure, and 11,000 pages of official documents record what happened the day he was killed. The problems began when, the *Daily Caller* [writes](#)

Geer’s common law wife called the cops to his house, complaining that she was breaking up with him, and he was angrily throwing her possessions out on the front lawn as a result. She informed the police that Geer did in fact own a legally licensed weapon, but that it was secured, and that he had not been drinking.

Four police subsequently showed up to Geer’s house, and upon seeing them, Geer retreated back into his home. Just a few minutes later, police negotiator Rodney Barnes showed up to begin trying



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to persuade Geer out onto his porch, with the four officers standing, weapons drawn, behind him. Barnes later said that Geer was polite, but reluctant to emerge as he feared for his life. The *Daily Caller* continues:

Geer told Barnes he was afraid of being killed by the police, and that, "I don't want to get shot."

Once Geer was standing in the doorway to his porch, behind his screen door, Barnes asked Geer if he had a weapon, and Geer informed him he did, retrieved it, and held it aloft and holstered for Barnes to see, before setting it aside. With his hands raised, Geer asked if he could slowly scratch his nose, which Barnes allowed.

Another writer who has recently given this case some much needed ink is CBC News' Neil Macdonald. He fills us in on the rest of the story, [writing](#) that Geer then

asked to reach into his pocket for his phone; Barnes asked him not to, and he obeyed.

"He said 'I know if I reach down or drop my hands I can get shot,'" Barnes told detectives later. "I said, hey, nobody's going to shoot you..."

But Geer pointed to one nearby officer in particular: Adam Torres, who kept raising his Sig Sauer pistol from the "ready" position (pointed at Geer's legs) to aim at Geer's chest.

Please ask him not to point his gun at me, Geer begged Barnes. Geer even offered to come out and be handcuffed voluntarily if Torres and the other patrolmen would agree to move "way back."

Then he asked to scratch his nose again. Barnes consented. And Torres fired.

Geer, grabbing his wound, screamed in pain and stepped back, slamming his door.

"And I'm like, who the f[***] shot?" Barnes told detectives later. "I kinda got a little p[*****]."

Torres acknowledged it had been him, and began muttering how he was sorry, and that his wrist was hurting. Then, unbidden, he told Barnes how he'd had a fight over the phone with his wife just before arriving on the scene.

When Barnes demanded to know why he'd fired, Torres claimed Geer had suddenly lowered his hands and seemed to be reaching for a weapon. Barnes later contradicted this, however, stating, "I said I didn't see that. You know, and I never took my eye off him [Geer]." And, once again, this account was corroborated by three fellow officers and two other witnesses.

One of these witnesses was Geer's longtime girlfriend, Maura Harrington, the person who'd called the police to the scene. She said Geer had been talking with officers calmly for 50 minutes and then she stated, [wrote](#) the *Washington Post* late last year, "'All of a sudden,' at 3:30 p.m. 'he starts lowering his hands. His hands move down the door, level with his face, and the cop shot him once in the chest.'" The other witness, Geer's father, Don Geer, "said he was 'in a state of shock.' He said his son's hands 'were always above his shoulders. Almost simultaneous, you heard the shot, and he spun around and closed the door,'" the *Post* continued. Forensic evidence would later show that Geer didn't move more than a step or two before collapsing and bleeding to death where he fell.

Yet for a long time something else fell: pleas for justice on deaf ears. The *Washington Post* [reported](#) March 5 that Deputy County Attorney Cynthia Tianti had "counseled the Fairfax police to withhold internal affairs files" from prosecutor Raymond Morrogh, who'd been investigating the shooting. Consequently, continued the paper, "Morrogh, frustrated by what he saw as obstruction by the police,



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referred the Geer case to federal prosecutors, where it has remained since January 2014.”

Despite federal involvement, however, the case hung in limbo. As the *Post* [reported](#) this past December, the Justice Department attempted to explain the lack of progress by stating that Fairfax “withheld materials” from its Geer probe and that there were “a number of challenges in investigating this case.”

It’s notable here that the DOJ’s attitude was starkly different with respect to Ferguson, Missouri. Ferguson authorities didn’t stonewall a federal investigation — and they were found blameless in the Mike Brown shooting. But this hasn’t stopped Eric Holder from accusing the locality of bigoted practices, demanding sweeping changes, and even threatening to dismantle the department. Fairfax County Police, however, have received no such scrutiny.

It’s hard to escape the conclusion that the different treatment is attributable to the different races of the victims and the police shooters. Then there’s the “squeaky wheel gets the grease” factor. In contrast to Mike Brown’s stepfather, who encouraged violence in Ferguson, [screaming](#) “Burn this s*** down,” Geer’s father remained objective. As the *Post* [reported](#) in September, “I just felt things were going to work out,” Don Geer said. “I don’t think you should be out demonstrating. People have their job to do. But a year is enough. Definitely. Way too much.”

It was at this time that Maura Harrington had filed a \$12 million dollar suit against the Fairfax County Police Department for “gross negligence.” And it was only *after* the suit’s filing that the Internal Affairs [investigation](#) of the shooting began.

And, slowly, the wheels of justice may finally be starting to turn. The *Post* also [reported](#) March 5 that Fairfax County officials are trying to oust Tianti, a 25-year veteran of the county attorney’s office who draws a yearly salary of approximately \$180,000, from her position, and that she is “on leave.”

And what of Officer Torres? He hasn’t yet been charged or even suffered job loss. In fact, his conscience isn’t even exacting a price if his words are to be believed, as he [said](#) about Geer, “I don’t feel sorry for shooting the guy at all.”

Much like the [Roderick Scott case](#), which was the racial flip side of the Trayvon Martin shooting, the Geer incident gets at a politically incorrect truth. While CBC News writer Neil Macdonald [called](#) it “a different” type of “police shooting,” the only unusual factor is the innocence of the victim. Macdonald writes that “police often target minorities disproportionately,” but the evidence indicates the opposite. As *The New American* [reported](#) January 7, research shows that police are *more* willing to shoot whites than blacks. In fact, ex-policeman David Klingler, now a professor of criminology and criminal science at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, reported that during the course of his studies he had numerous police officers tell him, “I didn’t shoot a guy because he was black.” No such reluctance was exhibited with respect to white suspects. And, in fact, the number of blacks killed in police shootings has declined precipitously in recent years and now stands at approximately one-third the number of corresponding whites’ deaths.

That’s the reality — but then there’s the myth. Eric Holder is infamous for his 2009 statement that “in things racial” the United States is “a nation of cowards.” Perhaps, however, our problem isn’t racial cowards as much as it is racial con-artists.



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