

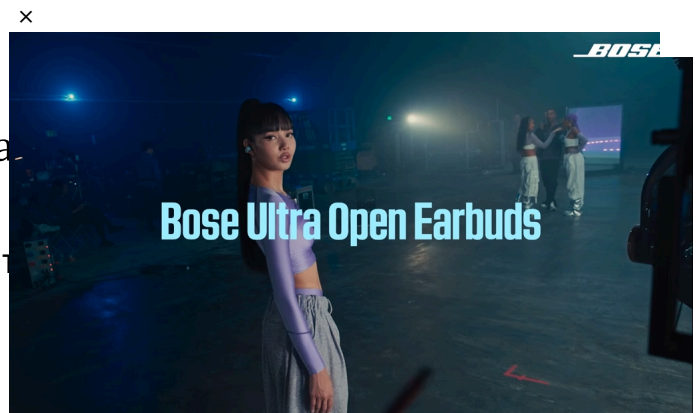


Alonzo Smith, Gary Hopkins Jr., Marquese Alston, D'Quan Young. Bottom: Terrence Sterling, Archie "Artie" Elliott III, Raphael Briscoe. All were killed by police in Washington.

Police Killed These Seven Washingtonians. Here Are Their Stories, and the Family Left Behind

One was shot six times. Another was crushed under an officer's knee.

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Over the past five years, police have killed more than two dozen Black Washingtonians. None of their deaths garnered the attention of Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown, or George Floyd. And yet—police killings of African Americans in Washington go back decades, brutalizing those left behind, who have searched for answers they suspect would have come easily to white residents. Today, though, amid a national reckoning around police violence, some of these loved ones have renewed hope that even as they've had to relive their personal traumas, this time it may not be in vain. Here, seven families spotlight the lives they lost and their quests for justice.

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| Kenithia Alston, mother of Marquese Alston.

Marquese Alston

September 8, 1995–June 12, 2018

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Age: 22

Manner of death: Shot at least six times

DC police officers were patrolling the Washington Highlands neighborhood when they came across Marquese Alston, recently home from prison after a robbery conviction. The cops thought he had a firearm, according to statements by Metropolitan Police

chief Peter Newsham. As they chased him down an alley, Newsham has said, Alston produced a gun and shot at them. Officers returned fire, killing him on the spot.

By early 2019, both the MPD and the US Attorney's Office for DC had decided not to take action against the officers.

Since her son's death, Kenithia Alston, Marqueese's mother, has pressed to see the body-camera video. Amid an outcry over the city's refusal to release it and a new DC law that forces officials to make such footage public, Mayor Muriel Bowser released it in August. The footage shows police running down an alley and shooting. After Marqueese is down, one cop says, "You good?" to another officer, then says, "I watched him turn and shoot at you." But the footage is so shaky and moves so quickly that a viewer can't clearly see Marqueese or what took place leading up to his killing. Before the city published the video, it provided a zoomed-in still image of Marqueese running with an object that police say is a firearm, pointed at the ground.

Alston and her lawyers at Georgetown Law's Civil Rights Clinic contend that the footage only raises more troubling questions.

In June, she filed a \$100-million wrongful-death lawsuit laying out her theory that Marqueese wasn't actually armed and that after police shot him, they "[hailed] him across the pavement by his hands and feet, placing him next to a gun they claim had been in his possession." Marqueese's autopsy report—showing he was shot six times—indicates he was hit in the head, back of the arm, upper back, buttocks, and thigh.

Why did police approach her son in the first place? Why did they shoot him so many times?

"Justice," Alston says, "would be for us to know the truth."

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