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People Still Can't Breathe. Police Still Don't Care

Ryan Calhoun

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Little more than a year after the death of Eric Garner at the hands of the NYPD, another man with a family and a case of asthma has been killed by a reckless police force. Troy Goode was visiting Mississippi for a concert. As many concert goers do, Goode got drunk. Goode's wife, who was sober, began the drive home with Goode in the passenger seat. At some point, Goode exited his vehicle and began "acting erratically." The police were called. Upon their arrival, Goode continued his drunken behavior opening up the door to the police K9 car, exciting their dog. The police subdued Goode and hogtied him, putting him face down onto a stretcher. Much like the Garner case, Goode informed police he couldn't breathe and a bystander exclaimed what a bad idea the face down hogtie was. Two hours later the Goode family was informed Troy was dead.

The state medical examiner in charge of the case said in a preliminary statement that a hogtie was entirely unnecessary. The hogtie method of cuffing has been banned by many other police departments. The Southaven PD's justification for its use thus far? According to Huffington Post, "He must have been

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on LSD or something.” Why is it that police, supposed peace officers, continually ignore the pleas for mercy of those they are charged with protecting? There has been no accountability for these types of incidents, as evidenced by the Garner case. One problem is the lack of incentive police have to truly serve their customers – the taxpayers. The state’s monopoly on law enforcement prevents the formation of any meaningful alternative. Furthermore, the state’s monopoly on the legal system all but ensures the abusive officers are never brought to justice.

As a result of the state’s protection racket, we have at least the fourth asthma-related death while someone was in the “care” of a “peace officer” within the past year. Beyond Garner and Goode, there’s also the tragic cases of Jermaine Darden and Casey Kressen. During a mistaken cocaine raid on Darden’s house, police pushed him to the ground and cuffed him on his stomach. His family begged the officers to stop, but they didn’t. Police ultimately used a stungun to subdue Darden, a 300 lb. man with cardiovascular issues, leading to his death. No charges were brought in the case.

In Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, Casey Kressen’s wife was stopped for speeding by police while transporting her husband to the hospital during an asthma attack. A mere 3 miles from the local hospital, police detained the couple, preventing Kressen from receiving the urgent medical care he needed. An ambulance was called but did not show for 6 minutes, and Kressen died as a result of the delay.

These incidents highlight law enforcement’s utter disregard for the health and safety of its citizens. From these sad stories, we learn that police have a one size fits all approach to law enforcement. They apply brute force against those they arrest, regardless of how petty the alleged crime may be. Selling loose cigarettes, being drunk in public, mere possession of an illicit substance, and rushing your dying husband to the hospital – all small time “offenses” which police choose to crack down on

to the peril of the offenders. As bodies pile up, we are told the killings are “inadvertent.”

It all leads us to wonder how we can possibly reshape the institution of American policing. I am on the side of scrapping the system entirely. I favor radical experimentation in the task of providing community safety. Police are simply not up for the job. The men and women in blue have declared indifference to the well being of everyone not in uniform. It’s time for those of us not in uniform to treat the police with the same skepticism and hostility we receive from them. Abolish the police before there is another Troy Goode, Eric Garner, Casey Kressen or Jermaine Darden in your city.