

**Ta’Kiya Young's life was blatantly disregarded. Officer's indictment should send warning.**

**Terry Gilbert**

Guest columnist

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The murder indictment of Blendon Township police officer Connor Grubb, who shot and killed the pregnant [Ta’Kiya Young](#) as she was leaving a store parking lot, is a testament to [her family’s yearlong effort](#) to demand justice.

It also sends a warning to law enforcement that police officers are not above the law and could face serious consequences for criminal conduct.

Obtaining an indictment has not been the trend for most families who have lost loved ones by [excessive deadly force in Ohio](#) and around the country.

**Retired police officer:** [The officer who shot Ta’Kiya Young was indicted. Use this moment to demand accountability.](#)

Typically, criminal investigations of police misconduct go nowhere. But will the decision by the Franklin County Grand Jury be a sign that investigators and prosecutors are more open to seek indictments against police? Are grand juries - composed of regular citizens – setting aside preconceived notions that police can do no wrong and vote to hold them accountable for serious crimes?

There have been more indictments in recent years, but it is still difficult to charge police and obtain a conviction.

**'Accountability' is not a dirty word**

After the murder of George Floyd, who was suffocated to death by a Minneapolis officer and now serving a life sentence, the historic wave of protests against racially biased policing gained traction around the world.

Widespread demands for comprehensive reforms, including enacting the stalled [George Floyd Justice in Policing Act](#), which requires nationwide training polices, and eliminating qualified immunity which can shield police from liability.

For many, police accountability is no longer a bad term, and it seems the public is open to accept reasonable and equitable measures to make policing more responsible.

The shooting death of Ta’kiya was shocking and preventable.

Police standards admonish shooting into a vehicle, especially if the officer choses to [position himself in front of the vehicle](#). The Blendon police department blamed Ta’Kiya for refusing an order to get out of her car over an alleged shoplifting offense and suggested that Grubb’s use of deadly force was justified.

**Disregard for Ta'Kiya Young's life blatant**



Shooting into the windshield because of a slight movement forward, is objectively unreasonable, when other safer alternatives were available. If any case deserves a criminal indictment, this is the case. Apparently, the grand jury agreed.

The shooting happened in broad daylight, in a public area, where the officer was wearing a body camera which captured the tragic incident. It shows a blatant disregard for safety and protecting life – the supposed backbone of what policing is all about. It raises the question of what kind of screening, training, and supervision these officers were provided. The township itself should be held accountable, hopefully to be addressed in a potential civil case.

**Robinson:** [Shoplifting shouldn't have escalated to death in Ta'Kiya Young police shooting](#)

All too frequently, policing boils down to an *us vs. them* mentality, with the assumption that every encounter is potentially dangerous, and those who are stopped must be up to something illegal.

Rather than taking measured and professional approaches using de-escalation tactics, some officers see uncooperative persons as a serious threat; but sometimes the threat comes from the reckless actions of impatient and verbally abusive officers. One thing leads to another, and miscommunication and hyped-up anger kicks in and all hell breaks loose. This often happens at vehicle stops, especially involving people of color, as is the case in the tragic killing of Ta'Kiya.

**Family's fight far from over**

As laudable as it is for the Franklin County grand jury to find probable cause that Grubb committed the various charges in the indictment, the family and community will still have to endure months if not years to see a final disposition of the criminal trial.

During this process, the defense lawyers and the police union will mount a vigorous defense, while using the media to advance their arguments that the charges are baseless.



To be sure, Grubb is entitled to a fair trial, but under Ohio law, criminal defendants can waive a jury trial if they think an elected judge (likely supported by law enforcement) will be more favorable than risking a jury of citizens.

None the less, this indictment is a monumental step in seeking justice for Ta'Kiya's family and for police accountability.

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