



SON OF MAN SHOT DEAD BY POLICE IN PORTLAND PARK IN 2021 SUES CITY OVER FATHER'S DEATH

Robert Delgado was undergoing a mental health crisis when he was shot and killed by PPB officer Zachary DeLong in Lents Park.

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PORTLAND, Ore. – The son of a man killed by Portland Police in Lents Park in 2021 is suing the City to hold those responsible accountable for his father's death. Skyler Delgado is the son of Robert Delgado who was shot and killed by officer Zachary DeLong. DeLong failed to follow Portland Police's own directives and training as well as ignoring the apparent signs and symptoms of Mr. Delgado's mental health crisis. Robert Delgado did not pose a threat to anyone at the time of his death nor did Mr. DeLong have information that suggested he did.

Robert Delgado was 46 years old. He was unhoused and suffering from mental health issues. On April 16, 2021, Mr. Delgado was living in a tent in Lents Park, Portland. He owned a BB gun shaped like a handgun with an orange tip typical of fake guns. A witness called the non-emergency line to report concern but said that Mr. Delgado was not pointing his BB gun at anyone but rather was pointing it at a fence. This was relayed to Officer DeLong and repeated to him when he himself called the witness to get more information.

Officer DeLong and another responding officer, Samantha Wuthrich, were sent to the park. DeLong did not see a gun in Mr. Delgado's hands. Within minutes, DeLong, who was armed with an AR-15, shot at Robert Delgado twice from a distance of around 90 feet. Mr. Delgado died from a single gunshot wound. Officers did not approach Robert Delgado or offer him medical assistance until seven minutes after he was shot. By this time, he had stopped moving, had no pulse, and was not breathing.

While Robert Delgado's body lay in the park, police feasted on pizza nearby in plain view of the public.

Officer DeLong received no training or discipline for violating clearly established PPB directives intended to prevent excessive use of force. On the contrary, Portland Police have since promoted him to detective. This follows a pattern of PPB promoting officers who have killed people in mental health crisis as well as the larger pattern recognized by the US Department of Justice of PPB officers using unnecessary or unreasonable force during interactions with people in mental health crisis. Between 2008 and 2018, 58 percent of PPB's officer-involved shootings and in-

custody deaths involved people in mental health crisis. Between 2018 and 2019, nearly 70 percent of these shootings involved a person in mental health crisis or with a history of mental illness.

“Zachary DeLong’s actions speak to Portland Police Bureau’s lengthy history of officers ignoring their training and directives and killing people, only to face no consequences for it,” said Juan Chavez, Director of the Civil Rights Project at the Oregon Justice Resource Center who is representing Skyler Delgado and the estate of Robert Delgado. “In fact, DeLong had undergone additional training as a member of PPB’s Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team (ECIT). ECIT officers were supposed to be trained and vetted to respond to and de-escalate situations involving people in mental health crisis. Instead, DeLong went straight for his rifle, shouted obscenities and threats to kill Mr. Delgado, and shot and killed him from a great distance.”

Robert Delgado is survived by his children and siblings who love and miss him.

“My brother Robert was my first friend in life. He was my best friend,” said Tina Delgado, speaking of her family’s loss. “He loved me, he protected me, and he made me laugh. Robert was a funny, charismatic, infectious soul. Not a day goes by that I don't think about him and how I wish I could see his smile one last time, how I miss his laugh. How he made me feel so lighthearted. I miss him every day. There is a piece of my heart broken and shattered with the loss of my brother.”

Skyler Delgado is asking the court to award damages for the loss of his father in an amount to be determined later.

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