

Ohio officer charged in deaths of Black woman, child

Jonathan Allen

REUTERS

A grand jury indicted an Ohio police officer on four counts of murder on Tuesday for his fatal shooting of a 21-year-old pregnant Black woman in a grocery store parking lot.

Blendon Township Police Officer Connor Grubb and another officer approached Ta’Kiya Young in her car on Aug. 24, 2023, suspecting her of shoplifting.

Police released body-worn camera video that showed both officers ordering Young to get out of her car, which she refused, telling them she had not stolen anything. One of the officers, identified by county prosecutors as Grubb, stood in front of her car and aimed his gun at her through the windshield.

“You gonna shoot me?” Young can be heard saying. She slowly drove forward, turning her wheels to the right and away from the officer. Grubb placed his left hand on the hood and fired one shot through the windshield as the car struck him in the leg.

Young and her unborn daughter were declared dead at a hospital.

The grand jury at the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas voted to indict Grubb on four counts of murder, four counts of felonious assault and two counts of involuntary manslaughter. The case is being handled by the prosecutors’ office in neighboring Montgomery County.

Grubb, who is due in court on Wednesday for his arraignment, could not immediately be reached for comment and it was not clear whether he had an attorney.

His labor union, Capital City Lodge #9 of the Fraternal Order of Police, said



Family and friends mourn Ta’Kiya Young and her unborn daughter, who died last year in a police-involved shooting, in Columbus, Ohio.

COURTNEY HERGESHEIMER/COLUMBUS DISPATCH FILE

it was disappointed by what it called a “politically motivated” indictment.

“Like all law-enforcement officers, Officer Grubb had to make a split-second decision,” Brian Steel, the union’s president, said in a statement. “These decisions are made under extreme pressure and often in life-threatening situations, with the primary goal of safeguarding the general public’s and their own lives.”

A lawyer for Young’s family, Sean Walton, called the indictment a “solemn victory” in the family’s pursuit of justice for what they called an act of brutality. U.S. police have been criticized for using excessive force and for killing unarmed Black people.

“The actions that led to the death of

Ta’Kiya – the unnecessary aggression, the chilling commands that amounted to ‘comply or die’ – were there for us all to witness in dreadful clarity,” Walton said in a statement.

Blendon Police Chief John Belford said in a statement that Grubb, who has been on administrative leave since the shooting, would now face disciplinary proceedings, noting that Ohio law forbids anyone under indictment from having a gun.

Belford said his officer was presumed innocent until proven otherwise. “I want to be very clear, we’re not passing any judgment on whether officer Grubb acted properly,” the police chief said. “We haven’t seen the evidence.”