

2 Ohio officers indicted in Black man's death

Rich McKay

REUTERS

Two Ohio police officers were indicted by a grand jury in the death of a Black man whom officers restrained with a knee near his neck while he cried "I can't breathe," the county prosecutor announced on Saturday, in a case that evoked memories of the killing of George Floyd in 2020.

The grand jury indicted officers Beau Schoenegge, 24, and Camden Burch, 24, of the Canton Police Department, on Friday on charges of reckless homicide in the death of Frank Tyson, 53, who was restrained after being suspected of leaving the scene of a single-car accident on April 18, said Kyle Stone, the prosecuting attorney for Stark County, Ohio.

"No one is above the law," Stone said at a news conference. "And no one is so far below it that they don't deserve its protections."

It was unclear if either officer was represented by an attorney. The Canton Police Department did not immediately

respond to inquiries from Reuters on Saturday.

In body camera footage released by the Canton Police Department earlier this year, the officers are seen apprehending Tyson, of Canton Township, and holding him down in a nearby tavern where he was suspected as having fled after his car hit a utility pole.

After officers wrestled Tyson to the ground and handcuffed him, one is seen in the footage placing a knee on Tyson's back near his neck for about 30 seconds.

Tyson can be heard repeatedly saying, "I can't breathe. I can't ... Get off my neck," as an officer yells, "Calm down" and "You're fine," before standing up.

The video then showed Tyson lying motionless, face down for about eight minutes before officers checked his pulse, removed the handcuffs and began CPR. Tyson was pronounced dead at a local hospital.

The incident is reminiscent of Floyd's deadly encounter with Minneapolis police four years ago. A cellphone video of Floyd's killing, which went vi-

ral, unleashed a wave of protests worldwide against police brutality and racism.

It shows a white officer, Derek Chauvin, kneeling on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes as Floyd, who was Black, begs for his life, repeating "I can't breathe" before falling silent.

Chauvin and three fellow officers were convicted of manslaughter and other crimes.

During Saturday's news conference, the Tyson family's attorney, Bobby DiCello, called the indictments a step toward justice. "We acknowledge that this is just one step to achieving justice for Frank and his family in what has been a long and very difficult journey," DiCello said. "It is incredibly rare to achieve an outcome like this."

The charges, a third-degree felony, carry a potential sentence of 36 months in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Both Schoenegge and Burch were placed on administrative duties after the incident. They remained in custody on Saturday, and a bond hearing was scheduled for Monday morning.