

Ezell Ford's family files civil rights lawsuit against LAPD

Southern California Public Radio

Lawyers for the family of Ezell Ford filed a federal civil rights lawsuit and a \$75 million claim against the city on Wednesday, saying the 25-year-old African American was wrongfully shot and killed by Los Angeles police officers.

Attorney Steven Lerman said Ford was unarmed and doing nothing wrong when officers shot him August 11th. "The 75 million dollar claim against the city of Los Angeles should send a resonating message that we cannot tolerate or stand for the continued conduct of abuse, discrimination or racial profiling that allowed this poor man to be shot dead," Lerman said.

LA police have said Ford was reaching for an officer's weapon when they shot him. Attorney Lerman responded, saying "that's complete nonsense." Lerman said officers shot Ford "unlawfully" and knew he was unarmed. "They knew that he was basically helpless and harmless. And yet, they proceeded to attack him, bring him to the ground and shoot and kill him without justification," Lerman said.

On KPCC's Airtalk Wednesday, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck responded to questions about the case, saying it is still under investigation. "These cases have to be done on their own time line. We are not only working inside the department on this, we are also keeping the inspector general and district attorney apprised of the investigation," Beck said.

In response to the family's lawsuit, Chief Beck told KPCC, "I'm certainly not surprised. This is the course of action that is generally followed in these cases." The chief added, "when anybody dies, it's a tragedy, and this is a tragedy also, because of the loss of human life." Beck also said, "the propriety of the officers' actions, that is a separate issue."

Newton Division gang officers Charlton Wampler and Antonio Villegas approached Ford as he was walking on West 65th Street, a couple of blocks away his home around 8:15 p.m., for what the department has described as "an investigative stop."

The federal civil rights lawsuit states Ford complied with officers when they asked him to lie on the ground. It also says "within moments" the officers "intentionally or negligently" shot Ford multiple times.

The lawsuit says the officers' actions amount to a violation of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because, according to Lerman, Ford was not committing any crime, was complying with officers' orders, was unarmed and mentally challenged.

[Ezell Ford lawsuit](#)