

What Kind of System Murders the Mentally Ill?

Editor's note: Tyisha Miller was a 19-year-old African-American woman shot dead by Riverside, California police in 1998. Miller had been passed out in her car, resulting from a seizure, when police claimed that she suddenly awoke and had a gun; they fired 23 times at her, hitting her at least 12 times, and murdering her. Bob Avakian addressed this.

If you can't handle this situation differently than this, then get the fuck out of the way. Not only out of the way of this situation, but get off the earth. Get out of the way of the masses of people. Because, you know, we could have handled this situation any number of ways that would have resulted in a much better outcome. And frankly, if we had state power and we were faced with a similar situation, we would sooner have one of our own people's police killed than go wantonly murder one of the masses. That's what you're supposed to do if you're actually trying to be a servant of the people. You go there and you put your own life on the line, rather than just wantonly murder one of the people. Fuck all this "serve and protect" bullshit! If they were there to serve and protect, they would have found any way but the way they did it to handle this scene. They could have and would have found a solution that was much better than this. This is the way the proletariat, when it's been in power has handled—and would again handle—this kind of thing, valuing the lives of the masses of people. As opposed to the bourgeoisie in power, where the role of *their* police is to terrorize the masses, including wantonly murdering them, murdering them without provocation, without necessity, because exactly the more arbitrary the terror is, the more broadly it affects the masses. And that's one of the reasons why they like to engage in, and have as one of their main functions to engage in, wanton and arbitrary terror against the masses of people.

Bob Avakian
Basics 2:16



Eleanor Bumpurs, a 66-year-old mentally ill woman, shot and killed in her own home by NYPD on October 29, 1984.



Mark Garcia, a victim of a robbery in San Francisco, April 1996. SFPD arrived and beat, handcuffed, pepper sprayed, hog-tied him, and then stood on his back. He died from this abuse.



Gidone Busch, a mentally ill 31-year-old, shot to death in Brooklyn by NYPD, August 1999.



Dontre Hamilton, a 31-year-old with a history of mental illness, was shot 14 times by a Milwaukee cop, April 30, 2014.



James Boyd, a mentally ill homeless man, shot to death by police, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 16, 2014.



Deborah Danner, a 66-year-old Bronx woman, who battled schizophrenia for decades, was shot and killed by the NYPD, October 18, 2016.