



**National Association for the  
Advancement of Colored People  
Temple Branch  
P.O. Box 157 • Temple, Texas 76503**

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The Temple NAACP stands with the family of Michael Dean at this difficult time. We have repeatedly asked that the evidence be released so that the public knows the truth of the events that led to the tragic death of a young unarmed African-American man. Something very wrong happened here. The actions of the Texas Rangers, the Temple Police Department, and now the District Attorney's Office raise more questions than provide answers. We will watch this process carefully to see if justice is indeed served.

Michael Dean could be any of us. It is not unusual to drive a short distance before pulling over in response to a police traffic stop. But, we do not expect a police officer to approach our car with a gun drawn. Nor do we expect the officer to shoot us. We need to know the truth about what led to the death of Michael Dean. We cannot heal, move forward, and take the steps to prevent similar incidents until we know what happened in the Michael Dean case.

Today it is common to use terms like "transparency" and "accountability." The death of a young, unarmed Michael Dean cries out for transparency and accountability. How is it that a father carrying a birthday cake for his daughter's party ends up dead? We have snippets of information but the full story remains hidden. Transparency and accountability are essential elements of trust. Trust is very much on the line in this case. The events leading up to the death of Michael Dean are cloaked in mystery that can only cause mistrust and concerns about a cover-up. Without a full disclosure of the facts in the death of Michael Dean, it is difficult to trust the acts or omissions of the Texas Rangers and/or the Temple Police Department.

The Temple NAACP strongly believes in a system that is fair to all. The Dean family is hurting and deserves to know the truth in the loss of their loved one. The Temple NAACP is committed to working with everyone in this tragedy to learn the truth, and take those steps that will ensure events like this do not happen again.

The death of Michael Dean is tragic and becoming all too frequent. Another young, unarmed person of color is killed or severely injured in an encounter with law enforcement over a minor infraction. Make no mistake, deadly encounters of this nature, whether or not the victim is African American, should be investigated thoroughly and the facts disclosed to the public.

On December 2, 2019, Mr. Dean was allegedly speeding and allegedly failed to obey a police officer's directions. Somehow these developments resulted in Mr. Dean being fatally shot in the head by former Temple Department Policar Carmen DeCruz.

Mr. DeCruz presented his version of what happened. Michael Dean was robbed of his opportunity to tell his side of the story. Mr. DeCruz' attorney claimed that the shooting was an "accidental discharge." Was it? We need more facts to assess Mr. DeCruz' version of events.

For three years the Dean Family, the Temple NAACP, the media, and the community have sought the facts about Michael Dean's death, including gaining access to the body camera and dashboard camera footage. As Bennie Walsh, Past President of the Temple NAACP, said, in pertinent part, at a demonstration at the Bell County Justice Complex in January of 2020, "We're still protesting and bringing awareness to this case, because we still have not gotten any information about this shooting....This is just plain wrong..." See article by Joel Valley, Answers still sought in death; DPS; Shooting Investigation 'nearing its end,' [Temple Daily] Telegram Staff, January 13, 2020, Answers still sought in Dean death; DPS; Shooting Investigation 'nearing its end," [https://www.tdtnews.com/news/central\\_texas\\_news/article\\_6c1f1576-366c-11ea-87d9-4f2fa8042dbd.html](https://www.tdtnews.com/news/central_texas_news/article_6c1f1576-366c-11ea-87d9-4f2fa8042dbd.html).

We have learned some facts which raise serious concerns. For example, Mr. Dean's car is important evidence in the case. It was reported that the Texas Rangers "forensically processed and photographed" Mr. Dean's car. See article by Deborah McKeon, Temple police cleaned Michael Dean's car after deadly shooting, FME New Service, December 17, 2019, [https://kdhnews.com/news/local/temple-police-cleaned-michel-deans-care-after-deadly-shooting/article\\_2b3ba1c8-20dc-11ea-a8da-07b985884a9f.html](https://kdhnews.com/news/local/temple-police-cleaned-michel-deans-care-after-deadly-shooting/article_2b3ba1c8-20dc-11ea-a8da-07b985884a9f.html). The car was then returned to the Temple Police Department. The Temple Police Department advised the Dean family that the car was available for release. The Dean family and its attorney asked that the car be maintained in its original condition. Rather than honor the Dean family request, one seat of Mr. Dean's car was cleaned with bleach. *Ibid*. The decision to clean the car hampered an independent expert for the Dean family forensically processing and photographing this key piece of evidence. It appears no one at the Temple Police Department issued a formal order to clean the car. Interim Police Chief Jim Tobin declined to speak with the press until the [Texas] Rangers' and internal investigations were concluded. *Ibid*.

As we await the upcoming trial scheduled to begin on January 23, 2023, the Texas Rangers' evidence has not been released to the public. Based on a news article, we have learned of Mr. DeCruz' arrest affidavit that refers to the events and certain video evidence, but the actual evidence, including the body cam and dash cam footage have not been released to the public. See article by Jamie Stengle, Details still murky in police shooting of unarmed Texas man, The Seattle Times, February 12, 2020, The Seattle Times, <https://seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/details-still-murky-in-police-shooting-of-unarmed-Texas-man>. Also the same news article reported that on December 30, 2019, the Temple Police Department filed at least one report with the Texas Attorney General's office describing the incident. *Ibid*. Also see [www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov), Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) Incident Report OIS00002541, uploaded December 30, 2019.

The Temple NAACP will watch this trial closely. The Bell County District Attorney opted not to pursue charges of criminal homicide or murder. We will see if the evidence supports the lesser charge of manslaughter. Under any circumstances, we support the prosecution of this case. While the Dean family can never receive justice because Michael is gone forever, we can hope that a criminal conviction of Mr. DeCruz prevents him from ever again endangering or taking the life of another person.

NAACP Temple Branch Executive Committee