

MANAGING ATTORNEY

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THE OKOLO LAW FIRM LLC®



The Okolo Law Firm, LLC has been retained to represent Tavion Koonce-Williams, a 15-year-old child who was brutally shot by a member of the Akron Police Department while he was unarmed with his hands up in the air, doing everything he possibly could have done to be safe. Tavion is an East High School student with a promising future and is now grappling with the trauma of being profiled and having his life flash before his eyes after being shot. Tavion was shot on the inside of his wrist which clearly indicates his hands were up when he was shot. The video released today by the City of Akron speaks for itself. Tavion now finds himself in the lineage of Black youth being profiled and shot by the Akron Police Department with absolutely no justification or regard for human life.

The Koonce and Williams family are heartbroken and seek justice and accountability for lack of humanity that was shown to Tavion on April 1, 2024. How is it that a 15-year-old child could be gunned down just a block from his grandmother's home while his hands were up doing exactly what the police officer asked him to do? What could possibly justify the inhumane treatment of a child? Black boys deserve to grow up and live without the threat of walking home and being shot by the police. Black boys deserve to be treated with dignity and humanity. Tavion deserved better—the community deserves better.

The City of Akron and the Akron Police Department have tried to and will continue to place the blame on Tavion. They want you to believe it is his fault for being profiled and treated like an animal. The City of Akron is considering charging Tavion with a crime for simply having a toy gun. Tavion is no different than the countless youth in this city who carry a toy gun. Tavion is heard multiple times saying: "It's a fake...I just wanted to be safe." "I'm a good kid, I get A's in school, I just wanted to be safe my cousin just died." At no point was that gun pointed at anyone's home, at any individual, and certainly not any member of the Akron Police Department. Ohio is an open carry state, and it is certainly not a crime to purchase a toy gun from a toy store. There is no justification for a child being shot with his hands in the air, pleading for his safety.

Later this week, the Koonce-Williams family, The Okolo Law Firm, and community leaders and organizations will gather for a press conference to demand justice and accountability for Tavion and seek answers. Mayor Malik and Acting Chief Harding have the power to do the right thing here, to live up to their promises for safety and "systemic change." They could act now and send a message to the department that Black youth in this city deserve to be treated with humanity, but instead, they have chosen to pass the buck and hide behind "process" designed to thwart accountability and ensure little political backlash. We ask that the community see this situation for what it is and demand immediate action. We ask that the community continue to uplift the family and join us in this fight for Tavion and the fight for the dignity and humanity of Black bodies in Akron. Tavion is sadly another victim of police brutality by the Akron Police Department. The struggle for freedom, for humanity, continues...

Respectfully,

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