

YEADON BOROUGH AND YEADON POLICE,

WHAT HAPPENED TO SHAWN MORCHO?

A 22-year old Black man who died by suicide while in Yeadon Police custody.



SHAWN MORCHO'S STORY

JULY
5,
2022



Shawn Morcho was a 22-year old Black man who was in need of mental health services and rehabilitation support on July 5, 2022. Shawn's mother called 911 in an attempt to get Shawn admitted into a rehabilitation center for marijuana use and alcohol consumption; she was greatly concerned about Shawn and wanted him to receive help as soon as possible. Yeadon Police Officers Matthe Barr, Nicholas Tokonitz, and Phillip Stephens arrived at Shawn's residence where Shawn was arrested for an outstanding warrant for failing to appear in court regarding a past family dispute. **The officers completely dismissed the critical need to provide Shawn with any rehabilitative assistance.** Shawn was then transported to Yeadon Borough Hall and placed into the custody and care of Yeadon Borough Police Department and Shift Supervisor Lieutenant Burns. Shawn was left unattended in a holding cell for approximately 45 minutes. After only 20 minutes, Shawn died by suicide.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

BODY CAM FOOTAGE

Saying that Yeadon Police failed to uphold a couple policies and procedures on this day would be an understatement – **numerous** standard policies and procedures were violated and no, this is not an exaggeration. Shawn's Miranda rights were not read. When the officers arrived at the police department with Shawn, the booking and processing took a total of 73 seconds before he was left abandoned in a cell. Yeadon Police does not have any previous lockup records for Shawn, meaning that no paper trail for Shawn exists whatsoever. The question remains if this incident is not only a systemic failure across the department, but also a more targeted act of malicious negligence.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?



HOLDING CELL FOOTAGE & DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S INVESTIGATION

Shawn was visibly distressed and afraid on multiple occasions throughout the video. The video shows Shawn asking for help on multiple occasions by waving directly at the camera at least ten times and trying to get someone's attention by waving his hands outside of the cell bars. Lieutenant Burns was in charge of the monitoring cameras and unfortunately no one visibly responded to Shawn's cry for help. Additionally, Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer and the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) conducted a 3-day investigation based only on the officers' testimonies and footage. The officers were immediately cleared of any wrongdoing.

YEADON COUNCIL

YEADON COUNCIL

There is a very clear division between Yeadon's Council members. Council meetings are rarely ever completed in their entirety due to premature adjournments. Yeadon Council has moved forward with decisions that the majority of council did not vote in favor of, such as the hiring of third-party Valori Group, based in New Jersey, to conduct a private investigation. Nonetheless, both Mayor Hepkins and Yeadon Council have publicly expressed support for an independent U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation into this tragedy. The Mayor has made a formal request and the case is currently under review by the DOJ Civil Rights Division.

YEADON POLICE

YEADON POLICE

Officer Matt Barr intentionally drove through a crowd of protestors who were rallying outside of Yeadon Borough Hall for Shawn. An officer showing no remorse for his actions and putting the safety of the community that he is supposed to be protecting in harm's way is unacceptable. This is an extreme safety hazard for a predominantly Black and Brown community. In addition, Yeadon Police's negligence and ignorance surrounding their department's policies, as well as Lieutenant Burns' malicious actions cost a young man his life. Shawn's death could have been prevented. **This could happen again if we do not take action now and we need your help to do it.**

Black
Lives
Matter

Yeadon residents and all of Delco, we *need* your help!

OUR DEMANDS: LET'S TAKE ACTION!



Shawn Morcho deserves justice and we will make sure that he gets it.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

A Department of Justice investigation is so important. Without their involvement, the residents of Yeadon cannot rest, they are not safe, and there is no guarantee anything will change. September is suicide prevention month. As a community we have to make sure this does not happen again, and begin working towards having immediate, accessible mental health resources and care when needed.

Yeadon Police should not be able to continue operating in this manner and disregarding the safety and well-being of their residents. The District Attorney's office already failed to administer a proper investigation so it's time to kick things up a notch with the involvement of the DOJ.

HOW CAN WE ACCOMPLISH THIS ON A MUNICIPAL LEVEL?

From the community and family of Shawn Morcho, we make the following demands to Yeadon Council:

1. Pass the provided resolutions, stating council's full public support for a DOJ Patterns and Practice Investigation.
2. Immediately waive your attorney-client privilege as council members when it comes to this case and allow the community to complete our collection of evidence through our pending Right-to-know requests. It is important to work with the community through transparency to help rebuild trust.
3. Immediately suspend Officer Barr and Lieutenant Burns to desk duty pending further administrative review and the DOJ investigation that we believe will lead to both of their terminations.

HOW CAN WE ACCOMPLISH THIS ON A COMMUNITY LEVEL?

People power is effective. When we strategically work together as a collective to accomplish a goal, we are in control of the narrative. How can you get involved? Let's talk about your options.

1. Amplify the demands on social media using the #JusticeForShawnMorcho hashtag.
2. Join the calls for the DOJ investigation. This ranges from attending council meetings and participating in public comment, to calling your borough officials and writing letters. An action toolkit can be provided.
3. Attend protests, marches, and rallies for Shawn Morcho.

WHO TO CONTACT TO GET INVOLVED

Delco Resists
delcoreists@gmail.com



U.D.T.J. Organization
udtjorganization@gmail.com
www.udtj.org

