

Video Shows Man Slain by Police Held a Metal Pipe

Summary: A man who was slain Wednesday was holding a silver object that resembled a gun.

Surveillance video of a man slain in New York this week was released on Thursday, and it showed that he was pointing a silver object at residents that was not a gun but resembled one.

The footage was released by the New York Police Department, according to [CNN](#), and it showed the killing of Saheed Vassell, a black man whose family said suffered from mental illness.

Vassell was shot in Brooklyn on Wednesday after the NYPD responded to a 911 call where residents reported a suspicious man wandering the neighborhood. Police said that they thought Vassell was brandishing a weapon at them, and it turns out that he was holding what appears to be a metal pipe.

Only weeks before Vassell's death, another unarmed black man Stephon Clark was killed in Sacramento, California by police. It was later discovered that Clark had been shot in the back multiple times and was holding a cell phone.

A spokesperson for the New York Attorney General, Eric Schneiderman, told CNN that the city was "committed to conducting an independent, comprehensive and fair investigation." New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said that the city would be "transparent" with the probe.

Vassell's father told [Time](#) that his son was mentally ill. Mayor de Blasio showed sympathy for Vassell's situation, but he said that people should imagine what it was like if Vassell had actually been holding a weapon, instead of the pipe.

"Let's play out the scenario had it been different. If this individual with a loaded weapon, who for whatever reason, including a mental health challenge, was ready to use it, that's a split-second matter of trying to save lives right then and there," de Blasio said. "How you get the full facts of what the person has in their hand, and what their mental health condition might be, and are they known to anyone, in something that's playing out in seconds and minutes, that's a very tall order."

Transcripts of the three 911 calls about Vassell described his pipe as a silver firearm. A police spokesperson said that when officers arrived at the scene Vassell took a "two-handed shooting stance" as he approached the men in uniform.

After Vassell was shot by four officers, he was taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

"If that's what officers were responding to in real time, we've got to recognize that if they believe they are dealing with an immediate matter of life and death to the people in the surrounding area, that's an exceedingly difficult, tense, split-second decision that has to be made," Chief of Department Terence A. Monahan said at a press conference.

Vassell's father said that his son was "polite" and "kind" and had no access to guns. He said that his son suffered from bipolar disorder but was not taking medication.