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# *No Charges for Wisconsin Officer in Killing of Unarmed Black Teenager*

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA MAY 12, 2015





A memorial to Anthony Robinson Jr., the 19-year-old who was killed by a police officer in Madison, Wis., in March.

Tom Lynn/Reuters

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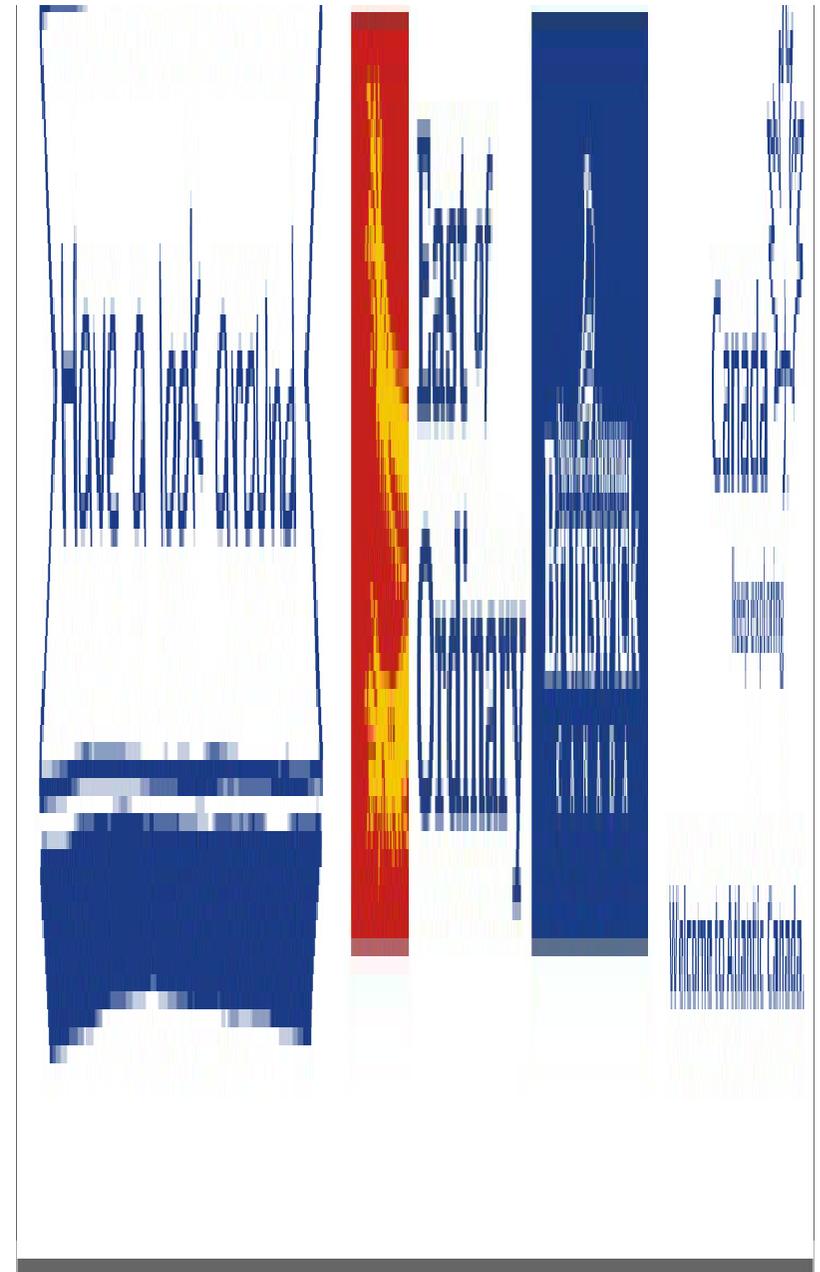
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A Madison, Wis., police officer who killed an unarmed black man in March, in one of a spate of similar incidents that have set off protests around the country, will not face criminal charges, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

The [shooting of the man](#), Anthony Robinson Jr., had led to protests in Madison and raised concerns of potential unrest if the officer, Matt Kenny, who is white, was not



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charged, particularly after rioting in Baltimore recently following the death of an unarmed black man from a severe spinal injury sustained while in police custody.



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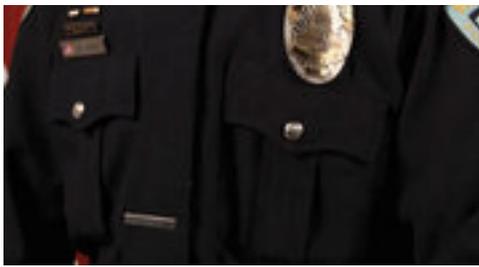
Walking through the case in detail for a room full of reporters at the Public Safety Building, the Dane County district attorney, Ismael Ozanne, repeatedly stressed that on the day he died, March 6, Mr. Robinson was behaving erratically and violently, assaulting several people — apparently including Officer Kenny. He left the room without taking questions.

“My decision will not bring Tony Robinson Jr. back,” he said. “My decision will not end the racial disparities that exist in the justice system, in our justice system. My decision is not based on emotion. Rather, this decision is based on the facts as they have been reported to me.”



Although Mr. Ozanne did not mention either man’s race, he discussed his own identity at some length — the biracial son of a black woman from Anniston, Ala., who, he said, worries that his skin color puts him at risk.

“I am a man who understands the pain of unjustified profiling,” he said, seeming shaken and pausing several times to mop his face with a handkerchief. “I am cognizant of the



Officer Matt Kenny will not face criminal charges.

Madison Police Department

very real racial disparities and equity issues which exist in this county.”

Outside the courthouse, Mr. Robinson’s grandmother, Sharon Irwin, said she cried when she heard the decision. “There’s just no justice,” she said. “I don’t know what else to say.”

Mr. Ozanne met with family members before revealing his decision, expressing condolences but giving them no inkling of what he would do.

A group of black community leaders prayed in a hallway outside the room where Mr. Ozanne made his announcement. One of them, Michael Johnson, head of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, said Madison leaders did not want the kind of outbreak of violence seen in other communities.

“What happened in Baltimore did not happen in Madison, and will not happen in Madison,” he said.





The Dane County district attorney, Ismael Ozanne, said that the shooting of Anthony Robinson Jr. was provoked by erratic behavior, including assault.

John Hart/Wisconsin State Journal, via Associated Press

In front of the building where Mr. Robinson was shot, about a hundred protesters milled in the street, then marched to Grace Episcopal Church, where Mr. Robinson's mother, Andrea Irwin, [spoke](#) through a megaphone.

“Today is the day that we are going to change history and not be the ones to be put down and killed anymore,” she said.

Mr. Ozanne said Mr. Robinson, 19, was at the apartment of a friend the day he died, being belligerent, punching the friend and damaging a wall before leaving. He went into the street, where multiple witnesses reported him jumping in and out of traffic, running into a car and

assaulting people.

In the span of five minutes, three people called 911 to report his behavior, starting with his friend, who said Mr. Robinson was under the influence of drugs; Mr. Ozanne said hallucinogenic mushrooms, marijuana and Xanax were found in his system. Then he tried to go back to his friend's second-floor apartment, but the friend had locked him out, and Mr. Robinson was pounding on the door and yelling.

Officer Kenny arrived in response to the 911 calls, heard sounds of an altercation and entered the stairwell leading to the friend's apartment. The video camera on his squad car's dashboard showed that "Officer Kenny is inside the residence for approximately 20 seconds before he reappears, exiting the residence in a backward motion, appearing to lose his balance," Mr. Ozanne said.

The officer told investigators that in the stairwell, after he called out that he was a police officer, Mr. Robinson rounded a corner and punched him

in the head, and then came at him, swinging his fists. Officer Kenny said he nearly lost his balance and fell backward down the stairs. Fearful of losing consciousness from being hit again or hitting the ground, and of Mr. Robinson's getting his gun, he fired seven shots, all of them hitting Mr. Robinson.

Though there has been speculation that Mr. Robinson was shot in the back, Mr. Ozanne said, "All bullets hit Robinson from front to back."

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David Callender and Ashley Southall contributed reporting.

A version of this article appears in print on May 13, 2015, on page A11 of the New York edition with the headline: No Charges for Wisconsin Officer in Black Man's Death .  
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