

San Francisco

Mario Woods, black man killed by police, 'had 20 gunshot wounds'

Coroner's report also showed that six of the wounds were in his back and that the 26-year-old had several drugs in his system when he died in San Francisco



San Francisco coroner's report showed that Mario Woods had 20 gunshot wounds, some of which could have been from the same bullet. Photograph: Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

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A young black man killed by San Francisco police had 20 gunshot wounds, including six in the back, according to an autopsy report released on Thursday.

The San Francisco coroner's report showed that Mario Woods, 26, also had drugs in his system when he died in the shooting that sparked protests and calls for the police chief's removal.

Woods had two gunshot wounds in his buttocks and others to his head, legs, abdomen and hands. Some of the wounds could have been from the same bullet, the autopsy said.

It also showed that Woods had used methamphetamine, marijuana, antidepressants and cough medicine before he was shot.

Investigators have said five officers opened fire on the knife-wielding Woods on 2 December and that 27 shell casings were recovered at the scene where he died.

Police had encountered him while searching for an assailant who stabbed a stranger earlier in the day.

Police say Woods ignored commands to drop the knife and resisted even after he was shot several times by a "bean-bag" gun and pepper-sprayed.

The shooting was captured on video and circulated widely online, igniting ongoing protests over police tactics. A group of Beyoncé's backup dancers created a political firestorm when they were photographed at the Super Bowl last weekend, dressed in Black Panther-inspired costumes, holding a sign that read "Justice 4 Mario Woods".

The department, district attorney and police commission have each launched an investigation.

"It is difficult for anyone to watch videos of the shooting. Similarly, it is equally as difficult to read the medical examiner's report," the San Francisco police department said in a prepared statement.

It said the agency was "committed to a thorough review of the shooting, and this report will be an important component of all three ongoing independent investigations".

Chief Greg Suhr says he will not resign as a result of the shooting, and Mayor Ed Lee says he will not fire him.

Suhr and the mayor called on the US Department of Justice to review department policy and procedures and advise the city on reforms. The DOJ said last week it would conduct the review.

Woods's family has filed a legal claim against the police and the city, arguing that officers did not have to open fire.

The family's attorney, John Burris, told the Guardian that the autopsy report confirmed his view that the shooting was unlawful, comparing it to the Chicago police killing of Laquan McDonald.

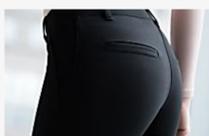
"It's unconscionable that a person can be shot that many times in the back," Burris said. "When you shoot someone in the back, that means he's not threatening you."

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