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No crime or punishment

The city of Philadelphia paid a record \$4.4 million to an unarmed man that police officers mistakenly shot in the face and leg.

As part of the settlement, the Police Department agreed to implement some common-sense reforms. But more than two years after the incident, questions remain about the shooting and handling of the investigation.

For starters, the department's Use of Force Review Board concluded the officers violated department policy, but they have



Thomas R. Kline AP

EDITORIAL

The city paid a record \$4.4 million to an unarmed man shot by two police officers, but accountability is lacking.

never been punished. District Attorney Seth Williams took a pass on prosecuting the officers, which has left it to plaintiffs' attorney Thomas R. Kline to seek justice and push the Police Department to implement the reforms.

Something is wrong with this picture when a local attorney does more to look out for the safety of citizens and improve the quality of policing than the city's highest law enforcement official. Mayor Kenney's office called the shooting "an unfortunate, regrettable series of events." Talk about an understatement.

Philippe Holland, a community college student who was working nights as a delivery man for a pizza shop, had just delivered a cheeseburger to a house in West Philadelphia in April 2014 when he heard gunshots ring out. Sensing trouble as an unmarked car swerved down the street, Holland quickly slid into the passenger-side door of his Ford Taurus.

Two men approached Holland's car. As one shined a flashlight into his

face, Holland saw the other had a gun.

Holland, then 20, panicked and tried to pull away. The two men — who were plainclothes police officers — began spraying bullets at Holland's car. Fourteen shots were fired in all. Two bullets hit Holland in the leg. Another bullet struck him in the face. The officers put Holland in handcuffs and patted him down for weapons. No weapons were found, but he was still taken to the hospital in handcuffs.

The officers said they yelled "Stop! Police!" several times. But Holland and a witness said they never heard the officers identify themselves.

The subsequent investigation was shoddy. A sergeant transported the two officers involved to the station together — rather than separately — which allowed them time to discuss the shooting before offering their individual versions of the event. Three eyewitnesses offered to give statements, but were told by a police officer to leave the scene.

As part of the settlement, the city rightly agreed to implement a new protocol that includes a training video for plainclothes officers.

Meanwhile, a bullet remains lodged in Holland's jaw, while fragments are in his brain. He suffers from seizures, which prevent him from driving a car. And the taxpayers are out \$4.4 million. An innocent man was shot. But sadly it took a civil lawyer to bring about some accountability.