

# IN SOLIDARITY



Name: Laquan Mc Donald

Dates: September 25, 1997 – October 20, 2014

Place of death: Chicago, IL

Laquan Mc Donald was affiliated with the Youth Advocate Program. A description follows: *YAP is focused on advocates for youth between the ages of 12 and 18, who are active or at risk of gang affiliation, on juvenile probation and likely to recidivate, are disruptive in school, or a victim/witness to violence with hope of reducing their risk in the future. We believe in YAP's model and we are currently investing in a study to help prove out their model to help let them grow and reach more youth.* What happened that fall night that resulted in the death of the young man, a teacher called "respectful and reserved"?

Reportedly, Mr. Mc Donald was walking down a major thoroughfare in an erratic manor. Later toxicology reports indicated that there was PCP in Laquan's system at the time of his death. There had been reports of a knife wielding person in a trucking yard near-by and the police were called. A few cars were on the scene when Officer Jason Van Dyke responded in an excessive way to Mc Donald who had slashed a tire of a police vehicle, ignoring the command to stop. Later, Officer Van Dyke noted that he was concerned about the knife because he recalled an educational module that had explained the severity of knife attacks and the variety of knives available as weapons. Officer Van Dyke shot Laquan Mc Donald in the back as he was walking away. Van Dyke fired 16 shots from his semi-automatic weapon in 15-17 seconds. The knife, found later at the scene, was folded closed.

It was not until a full year later that the scenario above was revealed. Under the Freedom of Information Act, a local TV station and Pro-Publica made public the dash camera feed from that night. It showed the excessive violence that was revealed in this encounter. The City of Chicago had already paid the family of Laquan Mc Donald \$5 million even before a wrongful death suite was filed. The coverup caused scandal in the city. Four other officers were dismissed from the force. Jason Van Dyke was indicted for the murder of Laquan Mc Donald and was found guilty of second-degree murder. His sentence was 6 years and 9 months with mandatory supervision upon release for 2 additional years. Van Dyke has not fared well in prison and because of fears for his safety, has been moved to at least four different facilities since 2019.

June 18, 2020