

Police Violence
against black in Texas

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US: White ex-officer gets 12 years in shooting of naked black man

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Robert Olsen shot dead Anthony Hill, who had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and PTSD, in 2015.

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- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/white-officer-12-years-shooting-naked-black-man-191101220346880.html>



Former DeKalb Police Officer Robert Olsen stands during his arraignment in Decatur, Georgia [File: Branden Camp/AP Photo]

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A former police officer in the US state of Georgia who was convicted of aggravated assault and other crimes in the fatal shooting of an unarmed, naked man was sentenced Friday to 12 years in prison.

Robert "Chip" Olsen was responding to a call of a naked man behaving erratically outside an Atlanta-area apartment complex in March 2015 when he fatally shot 26-year-old Anthony Hill, an Air Force veteran who had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and PTSD. Olsen is white and Hill was black.

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Olsen was convicted of one count of aggravated assault, two counts of violating his oath of office and one count of making a false statement. Jurors acquitted him on two counts of felony murder.

DeKalb County Superior Court Judge LaTisha Dear Jackson sentenced Olsen to a total of 20 years, with 12 years to serve in prison, followed by eight years of probation.

Prosecutors had asked for 25 years in prison followed by five years on probation, while defense lawyers had asked for five years in prison.

DeKalb County District Attorney Sherry Boston said that while they did not get the sentence they had asked for; she is grateful that Olsen will spend time behind bars and will be held accountable for his actions.

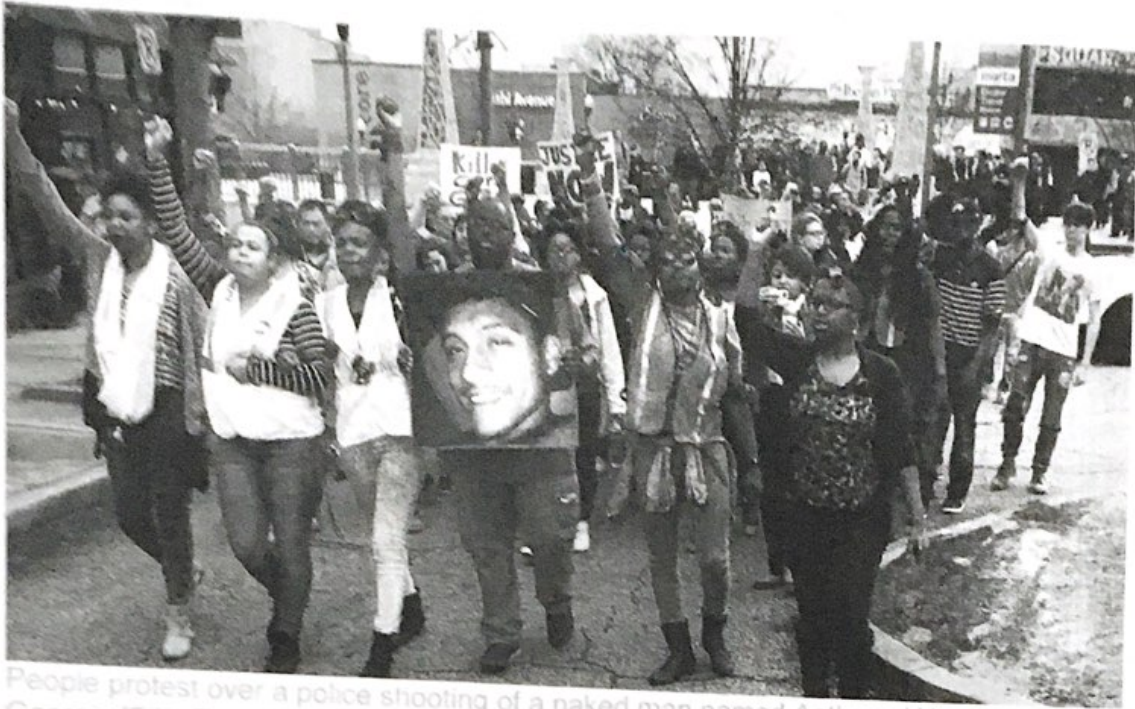
"A badge, a uniform, a gun is not a license to shoot and kill with impunity," she said.

Defense lawyer Amanda Clark Palmer said in an email after the hearing that while the sentence was higher than they wanted, "we cannot say it is an unfair sentence, and we appreciate [the judge's] thoughtfulness".

Clark Palmer added that Olsen is remorseful about Hill's death.

"As Ms. Olsen said today, she and Chip think about the Hills every day and Chip will think about Anthony Hill every day for the rest of his life," she wrote, referring to a statement Olsen's wife, Kathy, read in court.

Olsen did not address the court and was led from the courtroom by sheriff's deputies after the sentence.



People protest over a police shooting of a naked man named Anthony Hill in Decatur, Georgia [File: Tami Chappell/Reuters]

Hill's mother, Carolyn Giummo, addressed the court, saying, "This has been an exhausting journey to get to this day, the day to seek justice for Anthony Hill."

She and Hill's father and sister asked the judge to impose the maximum sentence.

After the sentencing, Giummo said she would have liked him to take the stand: "I was hoping he was going to get on the stand to defend what he did, and he didn't."

During the trial, the apartment complex property manager testified at trial that she saw Hill, a resident of the complex, wearing shorts but no shoes or shirt and behaving strangely on March 9, 2015. After maintenance workers got him to go to his apartment, he reemerged a short time later without any clothes.

The property manager, who testified that she was worried for Hill's safety because he was behaving so bizarrely, called 911 three times.

Olsen was told by dispatch there was a naked man who was "possibly demented". Hill was squatting in a roadway when Olsen arrived but jumped

up and ran towards the patrol car, according to testimony from several witnesses.

Olsen exited his car and yelled, "Stop! Stop!" Hill did not stop and Olsen shot him twice, witnesses said.

Prosecutors told jurors Olsen unreasonably and unnecessarily used deadly force to deal with the unarmed, naked man who was suffering a mental health crisis. Defense attorneys argued Olsen had limited information about the situation, was scared to death, had only seconds to make a tough decision and acted in self-defense.

Other trials

Against a backdrop of white officers around the country frequently not being charged or convicted after shooting black men, Olsen's trial overlapped with the trials of two other white police officers who shot unarmed black men.

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[Ex-Dallas officer gets 10 years for killing unarmed neighbor](#)

A jury in Dallas found former officer Amber Guyger guilty of murder in the shooting of Botham Jean. Guyger testified that she mistook Jean's apartment for her own, which was one floor below, and that she thought he was a burglar in her home. She was convicted October 1 and was sentenced to serve 10 years in prison.

A few days later, on October 5, a southeast Georgia jury found a white former police officer who fatally shot a fleeing, unarmed black man not guilty on charges of voluntary or involuntary manslaughter. Jurors did find Zechariah Presley guilty of violating his oath of office in the 2018 shooting of Tony Green in coastal Camden County, near the Georgia-Florida state line. Presley was sentenced to serve a year in prison.

SOURCE: AP NEWS AGENCY