



INITIATIVE FOR
A JUST SOCIETY



For Immediate Release
Friday, October 8, 2021

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Legal Team Representing Bradley Blackshire’s Family Reaches Settlement in Lawsuit Involving Fatal Police Shooting

Today, plaintiffs represented by the [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.](http://naacpldf.org) (LDF), [co-counsel Loevy & Loevy](http://loevyandloevy.com), and the [Initiative for a Just Society](http://initiativeforajustsociety.org) reached a settlement – subject to the approval by the probate court – with the city of Little Rock, Arkansas for monetary and non-monetary relief. This lawsuit was filed in June 2019 on behalf of the family of Bradley Blackshire, a Black man who was repeatedly shot and killed by former Little Rock Police Department (LRPD) Officer Charles Starks. The suit brought forth several claims, including counts of excessive force, failure to provide medical attention, and wrongful death.

The LRPD’s history is [checkered](#) by unconscionable violence and police misconduct — pervasive problems that were again readily apparent in Blackshire’s case. For too long, the city of Little Rock has [maintained policies and practices](#) that allow LRPD officers to engage in deadly force with little to no accountability.

“Bradley Blackshire should be alive,” said Practitioner-in-Residence at the Initiative for a Just Society Omavi Shukur. “Former Little Rock Police Department Officer Starks’ fatal actions — and the municipal policies and practices that precipitated them — have caused unspeakable grief, which has only been exacerbated by the machinations of a callous legal process. Litigation alone has proven to be inept at preserving Black life and providing justice to communities being ravaged by state-sanctioned terror. The family believes that true justice lies outside of the current legal system and intends to continue to pursue justice for Bradley well into the future.”

“The Blackshire family have lost a son, brother, father, and deeply loved family member. We cannot ever forget that. This settlement is an important step forward; it includes small steps to begin the process of reform within the Little Rock Police Department. Those steps are just the beginning, however, as we work to eradicate a culture of violence in policing,” said attorney David B. Owens.

“Bradley Blackshire’s fatal shooting is the result of the systemic police violence that unjustly kills Black people not only in Little Rock, Arkansas, but across the country,” said LDF Assistant Counsel Lauren Johnson. “Today’s settlement is an important point of departure for a locality that too often offers no relief to victims of police violence and their families. Of course, no compensation will ever be sufficient to account for the tragic and senseless taking of Mr. Blackshire’s life. A significant transformation of the Little Rock Police Department is critical to ensuring that more Black lives are not taken by the Department in the future.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

At Columbia Law School, this case forms part of the Initiative for a Just Society (IJS), a project of the Columbia Center for Contemporary Critical Thoughts that engages in litigation, research, and curricular development and works actively with students and partner organizations to help create a just society.

Loevy & Loevy is a nationally recognized civil rights law firm built on a strong foundation that relies on using extensive experience and resources to achieve justice for clients at trial.