

OpenVoiceNews U.S.

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

Judge Rejects DOJ Leniency Plea, Sentences Ex-Officer in Breonna Taylor Raid to 33 Months

July 22, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



Download IPFS

A former Louisville police detective has been sentenced to 33 months in prison for violating civil rights during the controversial 2020 raid that resulted in Breonna Taylor’s death. The ruling came after a federal judge rejected a rare Justice Department (DOJ) request for

leniency, stirring renewed debate about law enforcement accountability and federal overreach in local policing matters.

Brett Hankison, previously with the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD), was found guilty in November 2024 of a single count of civil rights violation for firing blindly into Taylor's apartment during a botched narcotics raid. Although Hankison did not shoot Breonna Taylor, nor injure anyone during the incident, his reckless discharge of ten bullets, including some into a neighboring unit, formed the basis for the conviction.

The incident occurred on March 13, 2020, when officers executed a no-knock warrant at Taylor's apartment in the belief that her ex-boyfriend was involved in drug activity. Taylor's current partner, Kenneth Walker, believing intruders were breaking in, fired a shot that struck a police officer. Officers returned fire with over 30 rounds, killing Taylor. The chaotic nature of the raid and the heavy-handed tactics used ignited national protests and placed scrutiny on no-knock warrants and urban policing practices.

The Department of Justice, under the leadership of Civil Rights Division head Harmeet Dhillon, had filed a memorandum urging Judge Rebecca Grady Jennings to sentence Hankison to time served, citing his lack of direct responsibility for Taylor's death and his compliance during the trial process. Jennings, however, pushed back on the DOJ's recommendation, calling the arguments for leniency "troubling" and handing down a sentence of nearly three years in prison along with three years of supervised release.

"Hankison did not shoot Ms. Taylor and is not otherwise responsible for her death," Jennings noted during sentencing. "But his conduct in blindly firing ten rounds into an occupied residence without clear visual confirmation put lives at unnecessary risk."

This case marks the only conviction stemming from the Taylor raid, despite the involvement of multiple officers. While many in the public sphere remain critical of what they see as insufficient justice for Taylor's killing, others argue that Hankison's sentencing, which exceeded the DOJ's request, sends a necessary signal about police accountability, without laying blame for outcomes beyond his actions.

The Taylor family's legal team stated the decision, saying the sentence does not "fully reflect the severity of the harm caused," but acknowledged it was "more than what the Department of Justice sought." They also criticized the DOJ for what they described as a failure to "stand firmly behind Breonna's rights."

Adding further controversy, the DOJ recently moved to drop federal lawsuits against both the LMPD and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD), legal actions that had alleged systemic racism and excessive force. These withdrawals signal a potential shift in federal oversight strategy, prompting speculation about the long-term impact on local police reform efforts.

While emotions remain high, the sentencing of Brett Hankison underscores the legal system's attempt to balance law enforcement duties with constitutional rights. Whether this case sets a precedent for future federal involvement in police conduct remains to be seen, but the message is clear: reckless disregard for public safety during policing operations will not be excused, even if no direct injury is caused.