

Officer Charged With Murder in S.C. Shooting

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(CN) - A white police officer in North Charleston, S.C., was charged with murder Tuesday night after a video surfaced showing him shooting an unarmed black man to death as the man ran away after a traffic stop.

The shooting took place Saturday afternoon, and comes in the wake of several incidents of police officers using lethal force against unarmed individuals in Ferguson, Mo., New York City and elsewhere.

The officer, Michael Slager, had said he used deadly force against 50-year-old Walter Scott, because he feared for his life after Scott grabbed the policeman's Taser during an altercation during the traffic stop. Slager had pulled Scott over because he was driving his Mercedes-Benz with a broken tail light.

But while a video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQgjAY-Mm8s>) taken by a bystander does show the altercation and Scott knocking Slager's Taser to the ground, it also appears to show Scott running away as the officer opened fire. Slager fires a total of eight shoots during the video, and a coroner has reportedly determined that Scott was struck five times -- three times in the back, once in the buttocks, and once in the head.

The video ends with Scott, motionless on the ground, with his hands cuffed behind his back. At least two officers appear to be standing over him, but neither appears to try to revive him.

On Tuesday night, a visibly upset North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey held a press conference (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZhVwl07Z60>) in which he confirmed Slager has been charged with murder.

"When you're wrong, you're wrong," Summey said. "If you make a bad decision, I don't care if you are behind the shield, or just a citizen on the street, you have to live by that decision." North Charleston Police Chief Eddie Driggers said the incident is "not reflective of this entire police department."

He later added, "One does not throw a blanket across the many."

The FBI has opened a civil rights inquiry into the shooting, and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division has also begun an investigation of the incident.

Members of Scott's family told the Post and Courier, Charleston's daily newspaper, that the dead man likely ran from the officer because he was afraid of being arrested for owing child support.

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