

Minnesota Governor Said Philando Castile's Homicide Was Race-Related

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Philando Castile.

Photo courtesy of CBS.[/caption]

Summary: Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton expressed his shock and outrage over the traffic stop murder of school district worker, Philando Castile.

Yesterday, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton surprised many by addressing the racial element of the death of a black man by the police. At a press conference, he expressed his shock over the death of Philando Castile, saying the tragedy would have been avoided if he was white.

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"Would this have happened ... if those passengers were white? I don't think so," Dayton said to BuzzFeed. "All of us in Minnesota are forced to confront that this kind of racism exists."

Dayton said that the force used in this instance was excessive. He added that it was unacceptable that Castile was not given first aid after the shooting, but the officer was given medical attention. He stated that the Department of Justice was investigating the incident.

"It is a terrible tragedy," Dayton said. "My sense of outrage is very real."

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The Governor's response came shortly after Castile's girlfriend videotaped his death and broadcast it on Facebook Live, where it immediately went viral. Diamond "Lavish" Reynolds spoke directly to the camera and explained what had happened—that her boyfriend had informed the officer that he had a license to carry a gun but was reaching for his ID when he was shot. One could see him sitting next to her with blood staining his shirt from his wound. Then the officer appeared and pointed his gun at her, not allowing her to move.

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Castile and Reynolds, along with her child, were pulled over on Wednesday during a traffic stop in Falcon Heights, Minnesota. After the shooting, Castile died in a hospital and Reynolds was taken into police custody to be questioned. An autopsy report stated that he died of multiple gunshot wounds and classified his death as a homicide.

On Thursday, the officer who shot and killed Castile was identified as Jeronimo Yanez. He and his partner, Officer Joseph Kauser, were placed on administrative leave. Authorities stated they are still gathering evidence, as St. Anthony, Minnesota officers are not required to wear body cameras.

NPR reported that Castile worked for the school district and that he was "well-liked by students and staff." The school released a statement, documenting his career in the Nutritional Services Department and working his way up.

"Colleagues describe him as a team player who maintained great relationships with staff and students alike. He had a cheerful disposition and his colleagues enjoyed working with him. He was quick to greet former coworkers with a smile and hug," the statement said. "Those who worked with him daily said he will be greatly missed."

Do you think Officer Yanez will be indicted for the death of Philando Castile? Let us know in the comments below.