

Former SC Police Officer to Plead Guilty as Part of Plea Deal



Summary: *Former South Carolina police officer Michael Slager intends to plead guilty in the shooting of a man in the back fleeing from a traffic stop.*

According to sources close to the case, Michael Slager, a former South Carolina police officer, will plead guilty to shooting a man in the back as he ran away from a traffic stop. Slager pulled over Walter Scott on April 4, 2015, for a broken taillight but Scott jumped out of the car, trying to flee. Scott was unarmed.

The one federal charge of excessive use of force is part of a plea deal. The charge is a felony and can carry a life sentence. He was charged with state murder and federal civil rights. The state murder trial resulted in a mistrial when the jury was unable to come to a verdict. Per the source, the plea deal dismisses the state murder charge and two other federal charges so that he is left with just the one federal charge.

The incident was caught on camera, bringing the public into the case, demanding justice for the death of Scott. “Black Lives Matter” was quick to become involved in the case, protesting his death in regards to a number of cases of unarmed black men being killed by police.

When Scott ran from the scene, Slager followed. Cell phone footage of a bystander shows Slager shoot Scott eight times, with several of the shots striking him in the back. Slager argued that he feared for his life because Scott had grabbed his Taser when the two wrestled. The media or protesters did not care about Slager’s account of what happened. The bystander’s footage only captured Scott running and Slager shooting.

Slager was fired from the police force. The North Charleston police chief stating he was “sickened” by what he saw. State prosecutors followed soon after with the murder charge. However, a jury was not able to come to the same conclusion after being presented with all the evidence. They deliberated for 22 hours before the judge called a mistrial.

Scott was a forklift operator that had served two years in the U.S. Coast Guard before being discharged for a drug-related incident. A toxicology report showed that Scott had cocaine and alcohol in his system at the time of death. The level of cocaine was under the half the amount “typical of impaired drivers.”

Slager also served in the U.S. Coast Guard. He had been with the North Charleston Police Department for almost five-and-a-half years when the shooting occurred. Slager was named in a 2013 complaint for Taser-ing a man without reason. He was ultimately cleared although those involved claimed to have never been interviewed. He was also named in a number of other incidents leading up the shooting.

When the cellphone footage was released to the public, Slager’s original lawyer David Aylor immediately withdrew as counsel. Do you think lawyers should be allowed to pick and choose who they want to defend? Tell us in the comments below.

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