



For Immediate Release
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NAACP LDF Statement Concerning Former Officer Michael Slager's Guilty Plea

Today, former North Charleston police officer Michael Slager [pled guilty](#) to violating the civil rights of Walter Scott, an unarmed Black man, who Mr. Slager fatally shot during a routine traffic stop. [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., issued the following statement:

More than two years after he shot and killed Walter Scott, former North Charleston Police Officer Michael Slager has finally admitted to willfully violating Mr. Scott's civil rights by shooting him in the back as he ran away. In the plea agreement entered today, Mr. Slager admitted that he, "used deadly force even though it was objectively unreasonable." Following today's hearing, the Scott family expressed gratitude that justice was served. We share their appreciation for the fact that a guilty plea was secured here given that such justice remains all too elusive elsewhere. We await the sentencing hearing and have faith that the punishment imposed by the court will reflect the gravity of his misconduct.

While we welcome his guilty plea, we are disappointed that Mr. Slager will not be held accountable for obstructing justice. Without the bystander video evidence to the contrary, the circumstances leading up to Mr. Scott's death would have remained obscured, the fabricated account offered by Mr. Slager would have been accepted as the truth, and there would have been no plea agreement today. That said, individual accountability is not enough. Mr. Slager's misconduct is consistent with the abusive practices that have characterized the North Charleston Police Department for decades, in such ways as racially discriminatory traffic stops and excessive use of force. Indeed, during the state's trial, [officers testified](#) that they were encouraged to make traffic stops, a practice residents called a quota system. In practice, residents noted that this quota system disproportionately targeted Black residents. Additionally, NCPD Chief Driggers and others testified about the use of force within the NCPD, including former Officer Slager's use of a Taser 14 times over his career. The NCPD must undertake swift and far-reaching reforms to root out biased policing and unconstitutional uses of force.

The process of building a strong relationship between the police and the community it serves cannot begin until there is transparency and accountability around all of NCPD's unlawful policies and practices. To that end, the DOJ's Community Oriented Policing Services Office and city officials must quickly conclude their [assessment](#) of NCPD policing practices, which began almost [one year ago](#).

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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 and 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.