

# Uncovering the truth behind Walter Scott's killing

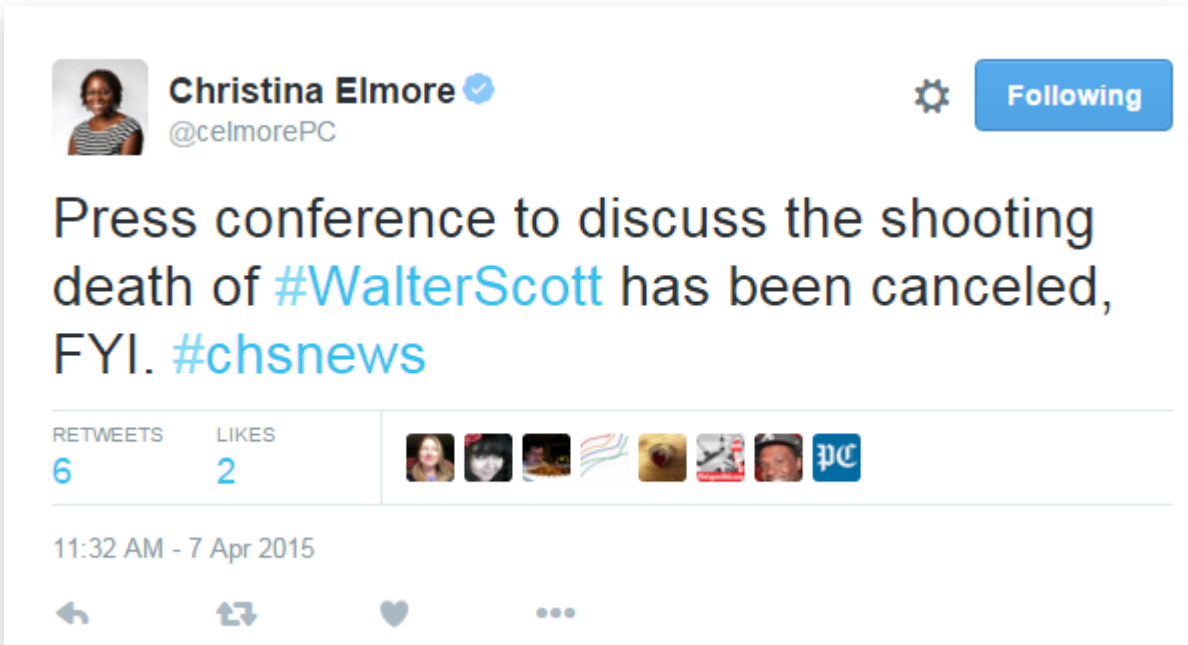


An anonymous bystander filmed the confrontation April 4 between Walter L. Scott and North Charleston Patrolman 1st Class Michael T. Slager that ended in Scott's fatal shooting.

**On the night of April 6,** The Post and Courier received a tip that a video had surfaced that would utterly disprove the official version of how a 50-year-old black man came to die at the hands of a white North Charleston police officer two days earlier. Over the next 24 hours, our reporters chased down the tip, obtained the video and broke the story online well ahead of several national media outlets also chasing the story. We tweeted and published a story on the first reports of the video's existence and the pending arrest of Officer Michael Slager. We then followed with social media posts and continuously updated web stories that captured all avenues of the rapidly developing story, including the first disturbing images from a damning video that quickly went viral. Our coverage was complete, comprehensive and accurate.

The first tweet came April 7 at 11:22 a.m.

Reporters had been working for hours to obtain a copy of the video, filmed by a passing bystander with his cell phone. The bystander, who had run off after the killing, had turned the footage over to private sources close to Scott’s family. As we made inquiries about the video, the city of North Charleston abruptly called off a press conference planned to discuss Slager’s story.




Sources told us the press conference had been scuttled after city officials learned of the video’s existence. As we continued to press for the video’s release, our team was able to verify that the footage discounted Slager’s version of events and raised serious challenges to his claims of self-defense.

That led us to break this news at 4:20 p.m.



**Within 40 minutes,** we followed that news with the first reports that Slager would soon to be out of a job.



**Andrew Knapp** ✓  
@offlede


North Charleston City Council members expect officer in [#WalterScott](#) shooting to be fired: [postandcourier.com/article/201504 ...](http://postandcourier.com/article/201504...)  
[#chs](#) [#chsnews](#)

RETWEETS

13





LIKES

5



4:59 PM - 7 Apr 2015

📍 South Carolina, USA



**Also around 5 p.m.,** we were finally able to tweet screenshots from the footage, giving the public its first look at what happened to Scott.



**The Post and Courier** ✓ @postandcourier · Apr 7

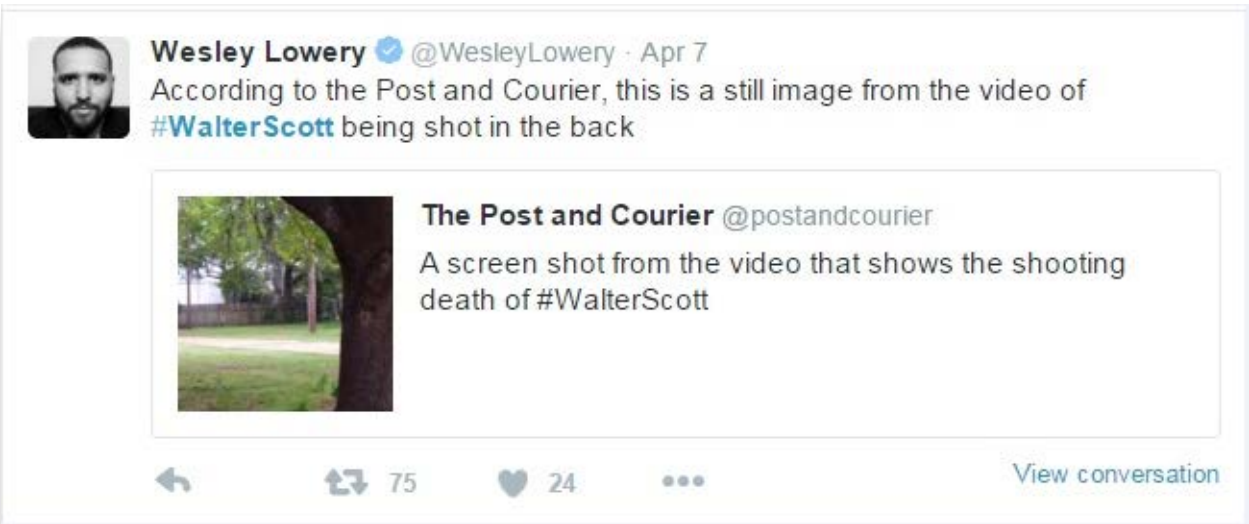
A screen shot from the video that shows the shooting death of [#WalterScott](#)



 1.4K  372 



**Twitter erupted after the tweets,** with thousands of people – including national media figures - sharing the disturbing images.





**Eric Frazier** @ericfraz · Apr 7  
Horrible. Looks like an assassination. RT @postandcourier: Video screen shot shows the shooting death of **#WalterScott**



21 18



**SyllabusMag** @SyllabusMag · Apr 7  
Listen don't even show the footage... Ppl will be PISSED **#WalterScott**



**Bakari Sellers** @Bakari\_Sellers · Apr 7  
Rest in Peace **#walterscott** **#nobodycameras**



**As thousands of people weighed in on social media** about the shooting, we were the first to reach Officer's Slager attorney, only to learn this baffling news:



**Andrew Knapp** ✓  
@offlede

Attorney David Aylor: "I'm no longer involved in form or fashion" with North Charleston Officer Michael Slager. **#chsnews**  
**#WalterScott**

RETWEETS  
**27**


LIKES  
**20**



5:13 PM - 7 Apr 2015

South Carolina, USA

Then, at 5:15 p.m., this bombshell dropped:




**Christina Elmore** ✓  
@celmorePC

⚙️ Following





The person who filmed the video brought it to the family and it was then handed over to SLED. Officer will be charged with murder

RETWEETS  
84

LIKES  
36



5:15 PM - 7 Apr 2015





**The Post and Courier** ✓  
Published by Laura Joyce Gatton [?] - April 7 - 🌐

⌵

Here's the full update from The Post and Courier's quick response team about the Walter Scott shooting video.



**North Charleston officer faces murder charge after video shows him shooting man in back**

A white North Charleston police officer was arrested on a murder charge and the FBI opened a civil rights investigation Tuesday after video surfaced of the...

POSTANDCOURIER.COM

**Post and Courier reporters peppered the city’s mayor and police chief with questions** at a hastily called press conference at City Hall. Officials said they had only seen the video that afternoon. They quickly condemned the officer’s actions and announced their support for the murder charge.



**Melissa Boughton**  @mboughtonPC · Apr 7  
BREAKING: "When you're wrong, you're wrong." Officer to be charged with murder in shooting of [#WalterScott](#) [#chsnews](#)

 12  5 



**The Post and Courier**  @postandcourier · Apr 7  
As a results of bad decision made by officer, he will be charged with murder. - [@MayorSummey](#) [#WalterScott](#)

 94  23 



**brenda rindge** @brindge · Apr 7  
"Bad decision made by officer. Will be charged with murder - mayor summey [#WalterScott](#) [#chs](#) [#chsnews](#)

 5  1 



**brenda rindge** @brindge · Apr 7  
Went exactly by the book. - mayor summey. [#chs](#) [#chsnews](#) [#walterscott](#)


 4  4 



**The Post and Courier**  @postandcourier · Apr 7  
RT [@brindge](#): Elder james Johnson greets police chief Eddie driggers. [#chs](#) [#chsnews](#) [#WalterScott](#)




**At 6:05 p.m.,** the video of Scott’s shooting went live on The Post and Courier website. It showed Scott running for his life through a field as Slager took aim and fired at the retreating man’s back. Eight shots were fired in 2.7 seconds. By the time the gunfire ceased, Scott was dead. The harrowing video quickly went viral.

**The Post and Courier**

Published by Laura Joyce Gatton [?] · April 7 · 🌐

The following contains unedited, graphic footage of the April 4, 2015, shooting of Walter Scott by North Charleston Patrolman 1st Class Michael Thomas Slager taken by an anonymous bystander.

**WARNING:** This video contains graphic content and may be upsetting to some people.



03:13

7,118,848 people reached

Boost Post

7.8k Likes 3.9k Comments 43k Shares

Like

Comment

Share

7,118,848 People Reached

1,185,307 Video Views

160,261 Likes, Comments & Shares

48,302 Likes	7,883 On Post	40,419 On Shares
67,488 Comments	6,379 On Post	61,109 On Shares
44,471 Shares	43,956 On Post	515 On Shares

2,339,505 Post Clicks

973,728 Clicks to Play ⓘ	2,370 Link Clicks	1,363,407 Other Clicks ⓘ
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

787 Hide Post	131 Hide All Posts
3 Report as Spam	1 Unlike Page

**Minutes later,** our reporters were able to confirm that the U.S. Justice Department had opened a civil rights investigating into the shooting.



Melissa Boughton @mboughtonPC · Apr 7

US DOJ confirms investigation into fatal shooting of **#WalterScott**, involving FBI, DOJ Civil Rights Division, US Attorney's Office **#chsnews**

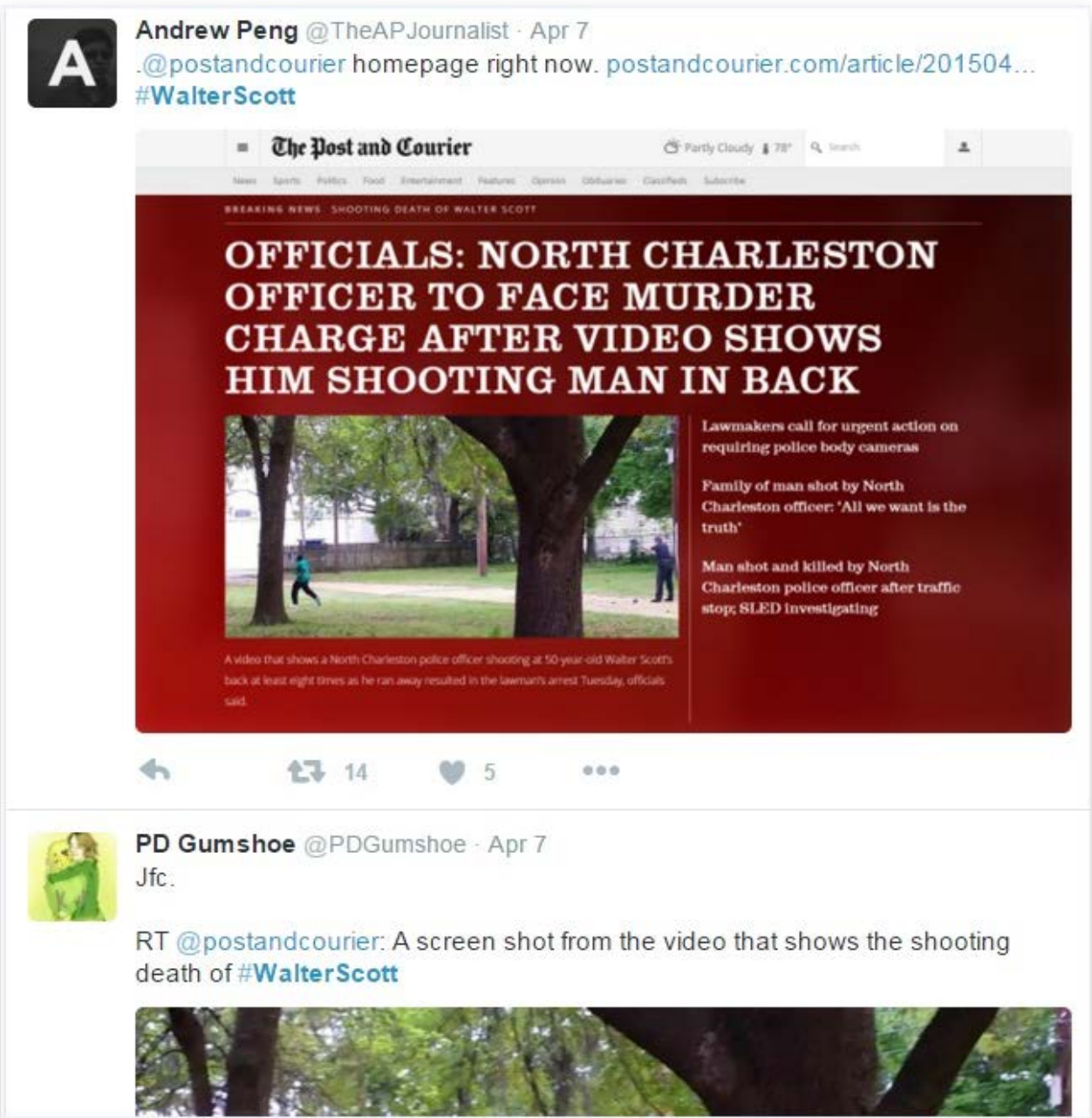
View Tweet activity

102,550


1,181


**Tens of thousands**

of people flocked to The Post and Courier’s website as new details and angles emerged about the shooting, which had now become a national story, leading nightly newscasts across the country. To help readers find the latest available information, The Post and Courier launched a homepage takeover, changing the look and feel of its website to focus attention on the story.




**Post and Courier reporters then scrambled** across town to meet with Scott's family as they prepared to make their first public remarks about the shooting. After the media cleared out following a press conference, reporter Melissa Boughton convinced a family representative to help her get an exclusive sit-down interview with Scott's brothers, who shared their grief and their hopes that his death would lead to meaningful change in policing in America.








**Melissa Boughton**   
@mboughtonPC

They say they don't mind video being public, that America needs to know what's going on [#chsnews](#) [#WalterScott](#)

LIKE  
1



9:51 PM - 7 Apr 2015






**Melissa Boughton**   
@mboughtonPC

[#WalterScott](#)'s brother: 'We don't advocate violence, we advocate change' [bit.ly/1GJIl6y](http://bit.ly/1GJIl6y)  
[#chsnews](#)



RETWEETS  
4

LIKES  
2



11:37 PM - 7 Apr 2015



The following morning, our print edition carried complete coverage of the video's release, Slager's arrest, his history with the department and the looming federal investigation, along with local reaction and national context.



Wesley Lowery

@WesleyLowery



 Follow

The front page of today's @postcourier, which has done outstanding #WalterScott coverage

[postandcourier.com/article/201504...](http://postandcourier.com/article/201504...)

FATAL ENCOUNTER

North Charleston officer Michael Slager fires eight times and kills Walter Scott

VIDEO EVIDENCE

Slager is arrested after a cellphone video surfaces, contradicting his account

PLEA FOR PEACE

Community leaders stress the need for calm in the aftermath of Scott's death



An anonymous bystander filmed the confrontation Saturday between Walter L. Scott and North Charleston Patrolman 1st Class Michael T. Slager that ended in Scott's fatal shooting.



Walter L. Scott

was a father of four and a Coast Guard veteran, who served for two years.

BY ANDREW KNAPP

aknapp@postandcourier.com

A white North Charleston police officer was arrested on a murder charge after a video surfaced Tuesday of the 50-year-old black man being shot eight times at a 70-year-old black man as the man ran away.

Walter L. Scott, a Coast Guard veteran and father of four, died Saturday after Patrolman 1st Class Michael T. Slager, 35, shot him in the back.

One of the eight bullets hit Scott in his family's attorney said. Four of those struck his back. One hit his chest.

The footage filmed by a bystander, which The Post and Courier obtained Tuesday

from a source who asked to remain anonymous, shows the end of the confrontation between the two on Saturday after Scott ran from a traffic stop. It was the first piece of evidence contradicting an account Slager gave earlier this week through his attorney.

The U.S. Department of Justice said in a statement that FBI investigators would work with the State Law Enforcement Division, which typically investigates officer-involved shootings in South Carolina, and the state's attorney general to examine any civil rights violations in Scott's death.

North Charleston Mayor Keith Sanborn said during a news conference that Slager

Please see B1B12B, Page A6



Patrolman 1st Class Michael T. Slager

served for more than five years with the department.

DC

Online

For the video and analysis of the video, go to [postandcourier.com/WalterScott](#).

Inside

Reactions to fatal shooting of Walter Scott, A6

Lawmakers call for urgent action on regulating police body cameras, A7

Experts No justification for shooting, A7

Editorial:



BRIAN HICKS

A family, and an entire city, devastated

W

hen Michael Thomas Slager fired eight shots at Walter Scott's back, Sanborn said, he not only killed a man -- he wounded an entire community.

And it is going to take North Charleston a long time to heal.

For years, the North Charleston Police Department has been accused of racial profiling, of treating black suspects much more harshly than whites.

Some people walked at these

RETWEETS

575

LIKES

289



WALTER SCOTT SHOOTING

**Reporters then went back at it**, covering the protests, rallies and reaction that spilled forth in the wake of the Slager arrest. Many pointed to alleged mistreatment others had at the hands of North Charleston police.



**Christina Elmore**   
[@celmorePC](#)



**Following**

Area residents sharing stories about their experiences with local police [#WalterScott](#)



RETWEETS

16

LIKES

7



9:54 AM - 8 Apr 2015



**brenda rindge**  
@brindge



Following

"We will be the generation to stop this."  
Academic magnet junior Natalie Davidson  
[#chs](#) [#chsnews](#) [#WalterScott](#)



RETWEETS

18


LIKES

7




10:51 AM - 8 Apr 2015

**Before the day was out,** our reporters published a comprehensive account of North Charleston’s longtime struggle with race relations as its police tried to find the delicate balance between preserving public safety and respecting civil liberties. The piece would set the stage for much of the discussion that followed, with its themes replicated in several national publications.




Mitch Pugh

@SCMitchP



Following

Strong, authoritative piece on No. Charleston's historic struggle w/race relations, crime per @offlede, @glennsmith5.  
[postandcourier.com/article/201504...](http://postandcourier.com/article/201504...)

The Post and Courier

Post & Courier Charleston

2.5/5.0 stars – 100 ratings


FREE

North Charleston has struggled since its inception with mistrust and tension between citizens and police as it tries to find a delicate balance between public safety and civil rights in a community...





[View on web](#)


RETWEETS

10

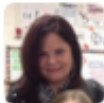


9:34 PM - 8 Apr 2015





Reply to @SCMitchP @offlede







Stephanie Barna

@stefbarna · 8 Apr 2015

@SCMitchP @offlede @glennsmith5

Excellent.

2

WALTER SCOTT SHOOTING