

Statement

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Ninth Circuit Solicitor

Charleston, South Carolina



In my closing argument of the State's case against Michael Slager, I called upon the jury to "name it" - to decide what to call Michael Slager's crime. They could or would not. A fair and impartial judge has given the final word. After hearing important evidence, the Honorable David Norton gave it a name: Second Degree Murder. Judge Norton sentenced former North Charleston Police Officer Michael Slager to 20 years in prison for the shooting death of Walter Scott on April 4, 2015. We support Judge Norton's thoughtful decision as to both the crime and the sentence imposed. We commend his great care in making the final determination.

This is an important day for our community. While it was sad and shocking to see a police officer wrongly kill another person, it is meaningful that Michael Slager has admitted that what he did was wrong and admitting that he knew it was wrong. Michael Slager has admitted that killing Walter Scott was not justified. There should be no further debate of Slager's guilt.

Law enforcement officers in the United States have one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. The vast majority of police officers are excellent public servants who look out for us and keep us safe so we can live our lives so freely and safely. When an officer takes accountability for his/her actions, they have the potential to save the lives of other officers and civilians. We give police officers an incredible amount of power. With that great power comes great accountability. If we do not hold officers accountable for their crimes, our criminal justice system will fall apart and we will live in chaos.

The Scott Family

I applaud the Scott family for their courage and respect throughout this heartbreaking time. As a community, we have looked to them for guidance and inspiration, and they have demonstrated dignity and grace at every turn. And, frankly, I believe they have not received the credit they deserve for keeping the peace in Charleston and for having faith and respect in our criminal justice system.

I pray we can move forward together as a nation and as a community having love, respect and compassion for each other the way the Scott family has demonstrated over the past two years.