



## Charlotte Police Department Releases Videos of Shooting

After days of riots and looting and some mostly peaceful protests following the police shooting of Keith Lamont Scott — a black man — in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) has released the dashcam and bodycam videos of the shooting. And while — as Charlotte officials had previously said — the videos do not conclusively show Scott pointing a gun at officers, the videos do seem to confirm the officers' account of what happened Tuesday.



CMPD Chief Kerr Putney — who initially said he would not release the dashcam and bodycam until there was a “compelling reason” to do so — released the video one day after Scott’s wife released her own mobile phone video of the shooting. As *The New American* [reported](#) Friday, Mrs. Scott’s video does not show the actual shooting since Scott is out of the frame of her camera at the time of the shooting. Her video also seems to confirm the account of the shooting offered by the police officers involved. In her video and the police videos released Saturday, some officers can be seen taking cover behind other vehicles in the parking lot as other officers are seen trying to break the window of the SUV occupied by Scott. Officers can be heard ordering Scott to drop his gun and Mrs. Scott pleads with Scott, saying repeatedly, “Keith! Don’t do it. Don’t you do it!” before Officer Brentley Vinson — who is also black — fired four shots at Scott, killing him.

It was originally wrongly reported that Scott had exited the vehicle with a gun and then returned to the vehicle when he saw police officers. As the story has developed it is now known that Scott only exited the vehicle in the seconds before he was shot.

Police were in the area to serve an outstanding warrant on another suspect when they saw Scott in his SUV in possession of marijuana. They were considering ignoring the matter when an officer noticed a gun. Because the drugs made the possession of the gun a felony, officers ordered Scott out of the vehicle. When he refused, they began to try to break the window. On Mrs. Scott’s video, she can be heard saying, “Keith, don’t let them break the windows. Come on out the car.” Just before Scott exits the vehicle, an officer again orders him to “drop the gun” and Mrs. Scott says, “Keith! Don’t you do it.”

In the videos released by CMPD Saturday, Scott can be seen exiting the SUV, his hands by his side as officers repeatedly order him to “drop the gun.” On Mrs. Scott’s video, she can be heard saying in a panicked voice, “Keith! Keith! Keith! Don’t you do it! Don’t you do it!” The next sound is Officer Vinson’s weapon firing four times.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) crowd as well as Scott’s family and many in the mainstream media have pointed to the fact that none of the videos shows Scott holding a gun or pointing anything at the officers, but there is more to this story than any grainy, out of focus, or distant videos shot at odd angles can tell.

**(Advisory! This video contains graphic language and violence.)**



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on September 25, 2016

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As Chief Putney has said, while the video is not conclusive, it is part of a larger body of evidence, including officer statements, forensic evidence, and the fact that a gun — which was later verified to have Scott's fingerprints and DNA on it — was recovered at the scene. As *The New American* [reported](#) Saturday:

- In a recently released [video of the shooting](#) — made and released by Scott's wife — the officers can be heard ordering Scott at least 10 times to “drop the gun” and his wife can be heard pleading with Scott to “get out the car” and (four times) “Keith! Don't you do it!” (In this video, Scott was outside the frame of the camera when shot.)
- No book was recovered at the scene, but a gun — [which can be seen lying on the ground next to Scott in still shots of the video taken by local media after the shooting](#) — was recovered.
- Scott's [fingerprints and DNA](#) were found on the gun when it was examined by police forensic investigators.
- Scott had a long and violent criminal record that included felony assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, misdemeanor assault with a deadly weapon, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in an episode where — while evading arrest — [Scott fired two shots at police officers](#) before being apprehended by those officers.

Although the video evidence is not conclusive, the reality is that it is often the case in real-life situations. After all, this video and other dashcam, bodycam, and mobile phone videos are not planned in advance as in a Hollywood filming session. The lighting and shadows, the angles, the quality of the video, and the rapid action all conspire to make the video very *inconclusive*. That's just the nature of real life. It is also the nature of the life and death decisions officers have to make in fractions of a second.

Because the police dashcam video does not clearly show a gun in Scott's hand, some will assume that he must have been unarmed. Yet it is also true that this video never clearly shows his hands at all — either empty or holding a gun. This is why all of the evidence recorded on the videos — not just what is shown but what is heard — and all of the other evidence — from witness accounts to the gun with Scott's fingerprints and DNA — need to be evaluated in their totality.

Yet despite the evidence, it is likely that the BLM crowd, which terrorized Charlotte until the National Guard began patrolling the city, will be inflamed anew at this video. If that happens, Charlotte may be in for a rough couple of nights.



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