

News Release

For Immediate Release
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Solicitor Wilson's Statement Regarding Guilty Plea of Former Officer Michael Slager

Over the past two years, I have spent many hours with the Scott family and my thoughts and prayers are with them. This crime has had a devastating impact on the Scotts. Likewise, the criminal justice process has been extraordinarily difficult for them. Both have taken their toll but the Scotts have acted and reacted with dignity and grace no matter the situation. We are grateful for their patience, understanding and cooperation.

My role is to hold criminals accountable, regardless of their profession. My mission has been to seek justice in this case in a reasonable, honest and efficient manner. The civil rights aspect of the killing of Walter Scott has always been important to the Scott family, to our community and to our nation. For these reasons, my team has worked steadily with the Scotts, their attorneys and the Department of Justice in exploring the options for justice in this case.

In our view and under the circumstances of this case, the Department of Justice's involvement in this case made sense and we were please they accepted it for prosecution. While certainly the State charges addressed the killing of Mr. Scott, they did not squarely address the violation of Mr. Scott's civil rights by a police officer acting under color of law. It is essential that law enforcement and our community see the federal government address such an important aspect of this case. Today, in working with the Department, we found justice in a resolution that vindicates the State's interests by holding former police officer Michael Slager accountable for shooting Mr. Scott (in the back) when Slager knew it was wrong and illegal; as well as justice in a resolution that recognizes the egregious violation of Mr. Scott's civil rights. Now that Slager has pleaded guilty to a *willful* violation, admitted the facts we set out to prove *and* waived the right to appeal his conviction, a successive prosecution by the State is not necessary.

Soon, a federal judge will decide what name and label to give the killing of Walter Scott. The same judge will determine what punishment former Officer Slager should receive. The maximum sentence is life in prison. We have confidence in the comprehensive federal sentencing process and we will continue to support the federal government's efforts in any way that is necessary and appropriate.