

Statement from Family of Eric Harris

We have now had the opportunity to review the heavily edited version of video released by the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office ("TCSO"). This video shows a portion of the events which led to the untimely death of our loved one, Eric Harris. We have also heard TCSO's version of the incident and the findings from its internal investigation. We are saddened, shocked, confused and disturbed.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of all of this is the inhumane and malicious treatment of Eric *after* he was shot. As the video clearly shows, after Eric has been shot, he begins pleading to the TCSO "task force" deputies holding him down. He tells them he's been shot. He tells them he is losing his breath. He is in obvious physical pain and in need of emergency medical treatment. The deputies' response to this situation is appalling. One deputy loudly screams at him, "shut the f**k up!". Another deputy continues to forcefully grind Eric's head into the concrete with his knee while Eric bleeds. When Eric alerts the deputies that he is losing his breath, the response is "f**k your breath!". No human being deserves to be treated with such contempt. These deputies treated Eric as less than human. They treated Eric as if his life had no value. Well, Eric's life meant a lot to us. As a family, we have to try to accept the fact that one of the last things Eric heard before he died was "f**k your breath!". We cannot accept this. And, we, as a society, should not accept this type of behavior from our police and sheriff's deputies who are sworn to "protect and serve".

Will any of the deputies who treated Eric with such disregard be brought to justice? Will any of them even be identified? As of now, it appears not. Why does TCSO allow such inhumanity to exist within the violent crimes task force? Why would Sheriff Glanz seek to protect deputies who seem to have such little regard for human life?

We also take issue with the TCSO's "investigation" of the shooting. TCSO claims that the investigation was "independent". However, the investigation was conducted by Sgt. Jim Clark of the Tulsa Police Department. TCSO paid Sgt. Clark to conduct this investigation. Sgt. Clark is known in the legal community as a paid expert witness. It is also known that Sgt. Clark almost always -- if not always -- testifies on behalf of law enforcement. Indeed, Sgt. Clark has testified on behalf of TCSO in the past. We believe that Sgt. Clark was hired by TCSO as an advocate to put the best possible spin on a bad situation. We also have reason to believe that evidence has been, or is being, concealed or destroyed. We demand a truly independent investigation by a third party with no connections to TCSO. Until this happens, serious questions will remain.

As for the shooting itself, we still have many concerns and unanswered questions. Bob Bates, the man who shot Eric in the back a close range with his own personal firearm, is a 73-year-old reserve deputy. He is a wealthy man who has contributed vehicles, equipment and money to TCSO. Mr. Bates has a close personal relationship

with Sheriff Glanz and Undersheriff Tim Albin. Mr. Bates contributed thousands to Sheriff Glanz's campaign. TCSO has every reason to want to protect Bob Bates. They claim that the shooting was a justifiable mistake. They claim that Bob Bates did not violate any policy or law because he believed that he was discharging his taser when he shot Eric in the back with his own personal .357 snub nose pistol. Is this a reasonable explanation? We do not believe that it is reasonable for a man who claims to have all the necessary training to mistake a pistol for a taser. We do not believe it is reasonable for a 73-year-old insurance executive to be involved in a dangerous undercover sting operation. We do not believe it is reasonable for Bob Bates to be carrying a gun that was not issued by TCSO. We do not believe it is reasonable – or responsible – for TCSO to accept gifts from a wealthy citizen who wants to be “pay to play” cop.

We *do* believe something is deeply wrong with the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office.

We will never get Eric back. He will never have a chance to fully turn his life around. He will never have a chance to develop his relationship with Aidan, his 16-year-old son. He will never be able to hug his brother Andre ever again. Still, we remain hopeful that some good will come out of this tragedy. We hope that a qualified and truly independent entity will investigate the shooting. We hope that the TCSO will take action to change its leadership, policies, practices and attitudes. We hope that there will be justice.

Lastly, we ask for the local and national community to pray for justice, but please keep any protest non-violent. There has been enough destruction violence already.