

U.S. NEWS

Walter Scott shooting: Michael Slager, ex-officer, sentenced to 20 years in prison

Source : <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/walter-scott-shooting/walter-scott-shooting-michael-slager-ex-officer-sentenced-20-years-n825006>



Source image : nytimes.com

CHARLESTON, S.C. — More than two years ago, the fatal shooting of Walter Scott, an unarmed black motorist, by a white South Carolina police officer set off a wave of national protests over racially biased policing and the use of lethal force.

On Thursday, Michael Slager, who was fired as a North Charleston patrolman days after the shooting, was sentenced to 20 years behind bars after pleading guilty in Scott's death. U.S. District Judge David Norton, in issuing the sentence, said Slager shot Scott with "malice and recklessness" and then gave false testimony to investigators. Norton ruled that Slager, 36, was guilty of second-degree murder and obstruction of justice, and he also sentenced Slager to two years of supervision after his release. Scott's mother, Judy, was one of seven family members who spoke before the sentencing. She recalled her 50-year-old son growing up as a "happy, jolly child" and then turned to Slager directly, telling him, "I forgive you." Slager began to cry.

In his final statement before sentencing, the ex-officer said: "I wish I could go back in time and change the events. But I can't. It's a very tragic situation. I'm standing before the Scott family and the court and taking responsibility for the actions of April 4, 2015."

Federal prosecutors had sought life in prison for Slager, who [agreed to plead guilty in May](#) to a federal charge of violating Scott's civil rights. That was in exchange for state prosecutors' dropping their case after [a month-long murder trial ended in a hung jury](#) a year ago. In that trial, Slager had faced 30 years to life in prison if convicted.

Slager's sentencing capped a winding case that followed other notable [police-involved deaths in Ferguson](#), Missouri; [Cleveland](#); and [New York](#), and it highlighted how rare it is for law enforcement officers to be convicted or to plead guilty in such incidents. A bystander captured the shooting of Scott on his cellphone, and the graphic video, which was viewed by the public millions of times, became a key piece of evidence for the prosecution.

