

Police try to quell anger after shooting triggers unrest

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Authorities tried to quell public anger and correct what they characterized as false information Wednesday after a night of looting and arson added Charlotte to the list of U.S. cities that have erupted in violence over the death of a black man at the hands of police.

With officials refusing to release any video of the shooting of 43-year-old Keith Lamont Scott, two starkly different versions emerged: Police say Scott disregarded repeated demands to drop his gun, while neighborhood residents say he was holding a book, not a weapon, as he waited for his son to get off the school bus.

The killing inflamed racial tensions in a city that seemed to have steered clear of the troubles that engulfed other places.

As Charlotte's white mayor and black police chief stood at City Hall and appealed for calm, African-American leaders who said they were speaking for Scott's family held their own news conference near where he was killed on Tuesday, reminding the crowd of other shootings and abuses of black men.

John Barnett, who runs a civil rights group called True Healing Under God, or THUG, warned that the video might be the only way for the police to regain the community's trust: "Just telling us this is still under investigation is not good enough for the windows of the Wal-Mart."

On Tuesday night, a protest near the apartment complex where the shooting took place turned violent. Dozens of demonstrators threw rocks at police and reporters, damaged squad cars, closed part of Interstate 85, and looted and set on fire a stopped truck. Authorities used tear gas to break up the protests. Sixteen officers suffered minor injuries. One person was arrested.

The violence broke out shortly after a woman who appeared to be Scott's daughter posted a profanity-laced, hour-long video on Facebook, saying her father had an unspecified disability and was unarmed. In the footage, she is at the cordoned-off shooting scene, yelling at officers.

"My daddy is dead!" the woman screams on the video, which has not been authenticated by The Associated Press.

On Wednesday, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney said: "It's time to change the narrative, because I can tell you from the facts that the story's a little bit different as to how it's been portrayed so far, especially through social media."

The police chief said officers were serving arrest warrants on another person when they saw Scott get out of a vehicle with a handgun. A black plainclothes officer in a vest emblazoned "Police" shot Scott after the officer and other uniformed members of the force



Officers stand in formation in front of protesters in Charlotte, N.C. on Tuesday.

made "loud, clear" demands that he drop the gun, the chief said.

Putney was adamant that Scott posed a threat, even if he didn't point his weapon at officers, and said a gun was found next to the dead man. "I can tell you we did not find a book," the chief said.

Neighbors, though, said that the officer who fired was white and that Scott had his hands in the air.

The three uniformed officers had body cameras; the plainclothes officer did not, police said. But the chief said he cannot release the video because the investigation is still underway. No cellphone video has emerged on social media, as happened in other cases around the country.

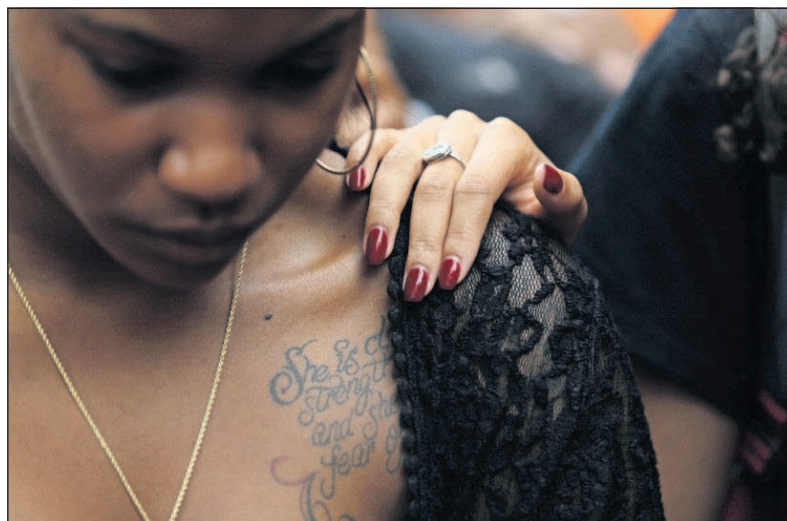
The plainclothes officer, identified as Brently Vinson, a two-year member of the department, has been placed on leave, standard procedure in such cases. Scott's mother described her son as a family man.

"And he was a likable person. And he loved his wife and his children," Vernita Walker told The Charlotte Observer.

Scott has a lengthy criminal record, including convictions in Texas, North Carolina and South Carolina. Texas records showed he was convicted of evading arrest with a vehicle in 2005, and several months later, of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

The unrest took many by surprise in Charlotte, the banking capital of the South with a population of 830,000 people, about 35 percent of them black. The city managed to pull through a racially charged shooting three years ago without the unrest that erupted in recent years in such places as Baltimore, Milwaukee and Ferguson, Missouri.

In 2013, Charlotte police charged one of their own, Randall Kerrick, with voluntary manslaughter days after the white officer shot an unarmed black man who had been in a wreck and was looking for help. The jury deadlocked and the charge was dropped last summer. There



Students at the University of North Carolina Charlotte comfort one another during a vigil following Tuesday's fatal police shooting of Keith Lamont Scott in Charlotte, N.C., Wednesday.



Protesters demonstrate in Charlotte, N.C., Tuesday, Sept. 20. Authorities used tear gas to disperse protesters in an overnight demonstration that broke out Tuesday after Keith Lamont Scott was fatally shot by an officer at an apartment complex.

were a few protests but no violence.

At the apartment complex where Scott was killed, some people who said they witnessed the shooting told their version with an air of certainty even when they were hundreds of yards away.

Taheshia Williams said her balcony overlooks the shady

parking spot where Scott was Tuesday afternoon. She said he often waited there for his son because a bicycle accident several years ago left him stuttering and susceptible to seizures if he stayed out in the hot sun too long.

On Tuesday, she said, Scott had only a book in his hands and was

Clinton, Trump decry latest police shootings of black men

CLEVELAND (AP) — Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton decry a fresh round of police-involved shootings on Wednesday, with the Republican nominee saying he was "very troubled" by the killing of a black man by a white police officer in Oklahoma.

Courting black voters who have long spurned Republicans, Trump's event in Cleveland Heights' New Spirit Revival Center took a bizarre turn when he was introduced by boxing promoter Don King, who used a racial slur as he made the case for black voters to support Trump.

Trump's latest foray into the black community not only sought to connect with voters in Cleveland, home to a large community of African-American voters key to Clinton's prospects in Ohio, but also with moderate suburban voters, who frequently hear Clinton describe Trump as extreme.

King, introducing Trump, raised eyebrows when he said a black man is always framed by his skin color, recalling that he once told pop icon Michael Jackson "if you're poor, you're a 'poor Negro.' If you're rich, you're a 'rich Negro.'" An educated black man is "an intellectual negro."

King, who is black, continued: "If you're a dancing and sliding and gliding n----- I mean Negro — you are 'a dancing and sliding and gliding Negro.'" Gasps and laughs could be heard from the audience.

The King incident underscored the often clumsy way in which Trump has made his appeal to minority voters. Many black community leaders and voters have been offended by his dire depiction of life in minority communities. Trump's outreach has also been viewed cynically as an attempt by his campaign to soothe concerns among more moderate, suburban voters.

following orders.

"He got out of his car, he walked back to comply, and all his compliance did was get him murdered," Williams said.

The American Civil Liberties Union urged the police chief to release the video. And some leaders called for a boycott of Charlotte.

"Since black lives do not matter for this city, our black dollars shouldn't matter," said B.J. Murphy, a radio host and leader of the Nation of Islam.

Mylan CEO defends EpiPen cost to angry lawmakers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of pharmaceutical company Mylan is defending the cost for life-saving EpiPens, signaling the company has no plans to lower prices despite a public outcry and questions from skeptical lawmakers.

"Price and access exist in a balance, and we believe we have struck that balance," Heather Bresch says in prepared testimony released by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee ahead of her Wednesday appearance before the panel.

The price of EpiPens has grown to \$608 for a two-pack, an increase of more than 500 percent since 2007. Republicans and Democrats

have said families struggling to pay for the emergency allergy shots have every right to be outraged by Mylan, a company whose sales are in excess of \$11 billion.

Bresch says in the testimony that she wishes the company had "better anticipated the magnitude and acceleration" of the rising prices for some families.

"We never intended this," she says.

But she says investments are necessary to ensure more access for those who need it and the company has made strides to more widely distribute the drug to schools and others.

"We don't want to go back to a time — not that long ago — when awareness

of anaphylaxis was much lower and epinephrine auto injectors were only available in schools with a prescription for an individual child," she says. "Achieving this level of expansion of awareness requires significant investment."

House Oversight chairman Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, and the panel's top Democrat, Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, have said they also want to examine ways to encourage greater competition in the EpiPen market.

Bresch has some familiarity with Capitol Hill — she is the daughter of Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va. But lawmakers so far haven't given any deference

to her because she is related to a colleague. Several other committees have called for investigations into the matter.

EpiPens are used in emergencies to stop potentially fatal allergic reactions to insect bites and stings, and foods like nuts and eggs. People usually keep multiple EpiPens handy at home, school or work, but the syringes, prefilled with the hormone epinephrine, expire after a year.

Bresch noted that Mylan has said it will begin selling its generic version for \$300 for a pair. That will still bring Mylan tens of millions of dollars while helping it retain market share against current and future brand-name and generic competition.

U.S., Russia abandon diplomatic niceties in testy Syria debate

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States and Russia abandoned diplomatic niceties Wednesday in a fractious public debate over Syria, blaming each other for spoiling the country's cease-fire and offering only temporary patches to stem the bloodshed.

Secretary of State John Kerry called for all warplanes to halt flights over aid routes, while Russia's chief diplomat spoke of a possible three-day pause in fighting.

In a U.N. Security Council session originally envisioned to enshrine Syria's Sept. 9 truce, world powers rued the possibility of a darker phase in the conflict amid increased attacks on humanitarian workers. The council's nations all sought to revive the U.S.-Russian cease-fire deal, but once again illustrated why they've been unable

for more than five years to stop Syria's civil war.

"Supposedly we all want the same goal. I've heard that again and again," a visibly angry Kerry told the council. "Everybody sits there and says we want a united Syria, secular, respecting the rights of all people, in which the people of Syria can choose their leadership. But we are proving woefully inadequate in our ability to be able to get to the table and have that conversation and make it happen."

While the U.S. and Russia have previously butted heads over several proposed resolutions critical of the Syrian government, Wednesday's agenda didn't even include a suggested course of action. Instead, the two-hour discussion served as a warm-up act for a Thursday meeting blocks away in New York that will include Kerry,

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and their counterparts from more than a dozen European and Arab countries.

Kerry blamed Russia, lambasting what he portrayed as a cynical response to an airstrike on a humanitarian aid convoy this week that killed 20 civilians and raised "profound doubt" about Russia and Syria's willingness to abide by the cease-fire. The U.S. believes with very high degree of confidence that a Russian-piloted aircraft carried out the strike, said a senior American official, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter and demanded anonymity.

"This is not a joke," Kerry exclaimed, urging all to stop the "word games that duck responsibility or avoid the choices ... with respect to war and peace, life and death."

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