



JUSTICE Ministration

Stop Killing Us (SKU) Solutions Campaign

"Proactive solutions to stop the killings!"

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT IN RESPONSE TO THE GRAHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT'S HIRING OF DOUG STRADER

March 29, 2021

Merrick B. Garland, Esquire
U.S. Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530
Via U.S. D.O.J. website Complaint 3/29/21 @ 9PM

Josh Stein, Esquire
N.C. State Attorney General
N.C. Department of Justice
9001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
N.C. D.O.J. website 3/29/21@ 9:15PM

Dear U.S. Attorney General Garland and N.C. State Attorney General Stein:

On approximately March 1, 2021, *Graham Police Department Chief Kristi Coles* dangerously and irresponsibly hired a police officer in the person of Doug Strader, who, according to news reports, was fired from the Greensboro Police Department for egregious acts of police misconduct.

This complaint calls for the *U.S. Department of Justice (D.O.J) and the NC State Attorney's Office* to immediately intervene to protect the citizens of Graham, NC and surrounding areas. Moreover, this complaint resolutely requests that the D.O.J. and the State Department of Justice assist in making sure Strader and any other officers within the Graham Police Department who have a history of using unwarranted deadly or excessive force be terminated immediately and prohibited from serving within any capacity of law enforcement within North Carolina and within the jurisdiction of the United States of America.

It has been confirmed through investigative news reports that Strader was one of several officers fired from the Greensboro Police Department after shooting at a fleeing vehicle, and hog-tying Marcus Smith back in 2018, which led to Smith's death (see attached article).

When certain Graham residents such as Faith Cook and Ann Jones, per the attached article, rightfully questioned Police Chief Cole's hiring of Strader, the chief issued the following response to media outlets, a response which is offensively insufficient and obviously ignores the legitimate concerns being raised by the community:

"Our department exceeds and complies with all guidelines set forth by the NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission which mandates background investigation (12 NCAC 09B.0102) on all applicants seeking law enforcement certification and issues L.E. certification pursuant to 12 NCAC 09C.0301.

As with all police applicants, Graham Police Department conducted a thorough background into the character and suitability of Officer Strader. Many of the details and results surrounding hiring decisions are protected by North Carolina personnel law and cannot be divulged pursuant to North Carolina G.S. 160A-168."

This complaint is filed by ***Jesus Uniting Souls To Increase Community Engagement (J.U.S.T.I.C.E.) Ministration***, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation and its SKU campaign which are based in Alamance County where the city of Graham, N.C. is located. SKU is the acronym for our "***Stop Killing Us (SKU) Solutions Campaign.***"

As part of the kickoff of the aforementioned SKU campaign, in August of 2017, JUSTICE Ministration unveiled its 18-point *SKU Universal Standards for Law Enforcement*, referred to hereafter as the "SKU Standard." The SKU Standard provides clear guidelines we ultimately hope to have incorporated throughout the country. In this case, I would like to bring your attention to point number 6 of the SKU Standard which states the following:

"We universally demand any police officer or law enforcement officer within the United States found to have used excessive force of any kind be immediately removed from the agency or department and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Any such law enforcement officer who has been disciplined, reprimanded, terminated, or prosecuted for using brutality or excessive force must be banned from working in the area of law enforcement or denied employment which uses weaponry in any other agency, state, city, municipality, division, or district within the United States."

Research shows that many of the high profile wrongful killings of black citizens across the country were committed by officers who had a history of reprimands, disciplinary write ups, terminations, and/or previous wrongful acts of excessive force.

Case and point, as the world watches the trial of Derek Chauvin, it is important to note that according to investigative news reports, this former Minneapolis police officer who was charged with murder in the death of George Floyd "shot one suspect, was involved in the fatal shooting of another, and received at least 17 complaints during his service with the department."

Similarly, Timothy A. Loehmann, Cleveland police officer who shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice as Tamir was playing with a toy gun, resigned from a previous small-town police job when he was deemed emotionally unstable and unfit for duty, especially in his handling of firearms. If you will notice, the SKU Universal Standards for Law Enforcement also requires regular mental health evaluations and drug testing for police officers.

We are therefore calling on your Justice Departments to take our complaint seriously as JUSTICE Ministration, SKU, and other great organizations and concerned citizens here on the ground in Graham, Alamance County, and surrounding areas are proactively working to ensure we are not waiting on the next wrongful shooting, choking, hog-tying, or some other senseless death committed by those who swore to “protect and serve.”

Even if Chief Cole followed every “guideline” to the letter set forth in NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission which mandates background investigation (12 NCAC 09B.0102) on all applicants seeking law enforcement certification and issues L.E. certification pursuant to 12 NCAC 09C.0301,” and still ended up hiring a candidate with Doug Strader’s record of repeated acts of deadly excessive force, it only proves the current “guidelines” are insufficient, a part of the problem, and require the need for an updated “universal standard” that TRULY “serves and protects” the lives of black and brown human beings.

Without question Strader must be immediately removed from the force with any other officers who have been found guilty of committing excessive force and/or a part of one’s wrongful death. There is no room for compromise in such a humane, reasonable, nonpolitical, and life-centered request.

In pursuit of JUSTICE always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis E. Gatewood", enclosed within a thin blue rectangular border.

Rev. Curtis E. Gatewood
Founder