

Four Louisiana State Police officers arrested after multiple incidents of excessive force

Aaron Murch**10 February 2021**

Four Louisiana State Police (LSP) troopers were arrested this week for multiple instances of excessive force following a lengthy internal investigation.

On Monday the officers arrested were Jacob Brown, 30; Randall Dickerson, 34; Dakota DeMoss, 28; and George Harper, 26, who served with Troop F in the area of Monroe, Louisiana in the northern region of the state.

All four have been charged with simple battery and malfeasance in office with Brown carrying an additional obstruction of justice charge. The charges stem from a beating during a July 2019 traffic stop and a violent vehicle pursuit in May 2020.

The earlier incident involved a traffic stop in Ouachita Parish in which narcotics were found on the driver, who was then arrested and handcuffed. After the arrest, troopers Brown and Dickerson then allegedly used “excessive and unjustifiable force” on the subdued suspect. They as well each shut off their body cams during the incident. According to state police investigators, the troopers recorded untruthful reports of the event, alleging that the suspect was resisting arrest.

The later incident in May of last year occurred following a vehicle pursuit in Franklin Parish where a tire deflation device, commonly referred to as a spike strip, was used to stop a fleeing vehicle. Once the vehicle was forced to stop, the suspect reportedly got out and laid on the ground in a “compliant position.”

Troopers DeMoss, Harper and Brown are alleged to have again used “excessive and unjustifiable force” in the handcuffing process on the suspect. The state police also say during this instance the troopers deactivated their body cams and turned in false reports of the incident to their superiors.

Officer Brown, who had previously been arrested in

December for another excessive force incident involving a man named Aaron Bowman. Bowman claimed that Brown and other officers followed him into his house and dragged him out face first in the concrete beating and kicked him violently, causing several injuries. Officer Brown now faces an additional charge of obstruction of justice for falsifying use of force reports and withholding video evidence.

The new LSP Superintendent Colonel Lamar Davis released a statement to reporters about the arrests, declaring, “The unjustifiable use of force by our personnel is inexcusable and tarnishes the exemplary work of our dedicated men and women of the Department of Public Safety.

“I commend our investigative team for their diligence and professionalism during this investigation,” Davis continued. “Our agency remains committed to upholding the public trust and providing professional, fair and compassionate public safety services.”

According to reporters with WAFB in Baton Rouge, Davis also sent an internal email to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, stating, “Today I have made the heart wrenching decision to arrest four Troop F troopers following a criminal investigation into use of force encounters.”

The Monroe-based unit, Troop F, has faced several allegations of misconduct in the past with an ongoing legal battle being waged by the family of Ronald Greene, who died after a vehicle chase in May 2019.

Greene’s family alleged that Troop F officers, including the recently arrested Officer DeMoss, beat Greene to death after he drove into a wooded area fleeing police, who made a traffic stop for an unidentified traffic violation.

The LSP claims that Greene was killed upon crashing his vehicle during the police chase. According to the

lawsuit, officers at the scene tased Greene multiple times and used severely excessive force, leaving him “beaten, bloodied, and in cardiac arrest.”

Greene reportedly pleaded with the officers to stop beating him, repeating several times, “I’m sorry,” as the police continued their assault. The LSP has refused to release body cam footage of the incident, as part of what a Department of Justice civil rights lawsuit alleges is a coverup by the LSP.

The attorneys for the Greene and Bowman families claim these attacks are part of a greater cultural problem with the Troop F unit. Each of the arrested troopers is white, and the victims in each case have been black men.

One of the officers fired following the incident with Greene, Master Trooper Chris Hollingsworth, was later caught on audio tape admitting to beating and choking Greene during the arrest, saying that he “beat the ever-living f---” out of Greene, who then suddenly “went limp.” Hollingsworth later died in a single car accident last fall.

Soon after, Troop F Officer Kaleb Reeves was responding to a call when he crashed his vehicle into the back of another car, killing two young passengers in the back seat. Reeves, the son of veteran state trooper and former State Police Superintendent Kevin Reeves, is still employed by the agency and has not yet been officially reprimanded for the fatal crash.

Rafael Goyeneche, president of the Metropolitan Crime Commission, a nonprofit anti-police corruption organization, told WAFB reporters that there are deep-going issues confronting the Troop F unit. “Trooper Brown was arrested a couple of months ago for another excessive force incident. So that’s now three excessive force incidents that he’s been arrested for. What hasn’t been disclosed is that Trooper Brown’s father was the chief of staff under the prior administration,” said Goyeneche. “If it wasn’t initiated during the Reeves’ administration, why not, and I think the public is owed an explanation.”

Goyeneche expressed concern over the fact that for many of these incidents, disciplinary action is not taken until after a lengthy audit to release bodycam footage. “Do they (LSP) have plans to audit some of the bodycam tapes in other troops to determine if this type of conduct is occurring in other troops in Louisiana?”

As the relatively new head of LSP, Davis, the fourth

black man in the agency’s history to hold the position, has stated his intentions to reform the troubled agency and bring in a new era of accountability and transparency.

However, repeated experiences across the United States with the hiring of black or other minority police chiefs and promises of fundamental reform have shown that this will do nothing to slow the reign of terror meted out by the police against the working class. The police operate with nearly complete impunity, enforcing and protecting the interests of the capitalist ruling elite with deadly force. The arrests like those of the officers in LSP Troop F are the rare exception which proves the rule.



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