

# Report exposes attempted cover-up of Ronald Greene's murder by Louisiana State Police troopers

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According to the Louisiana State Police (LSP), officers present during the arrest and subsequent death of Ronald Greene, a 49-year-old African American barber, attempted to cover up the bloody assault.

John Clary, the ranking officer at the scene, falsely told internal investigators that Greene was still a threat to flee after he was restrained. Additionally, Clary denied the existence of his own body camera footage until it emerged last month.

The circumstances surrounding Greene's death drew fresh attention after the Associated Press (AP) released video last week showing his fatal encounter with LSP troopers just outside Monroe, Louisiana, on May 10, 2019.

The video shows troopers repeatedly jolting Greene with stun guns, putting him in a chokehold, punching him and dragging him by his ankle shackles. Subsequently on Friday, LSP Superintendent Col. Lamar Davis released nine additional videos of the beating, including Clary's body camera and dash camera footage.

New state police documents outline numerous inconsistencies between officers' initial statements and what is seen in the video. They add to growing signs of a coordinated effort to cover up Greene's death, which police initially blamed on a car crash during a high-speed chase and is now the subject of a federal civil rights investigation.

Clary told investigators that Greene "was still, yelling and screaming...and he was still resisting, even though he was handcuffed. He was still trying to get away and was not cooperating" when he arrived on the scene. In an April report, Detective Albert Paxton wrote that Clary's description of Greene's behavior was clearly a

mischaracterization.

"The video evidence in this case does not show Greene screaming, resisting or trying to get away," Paxton wrote. "The only screams revealed by the video were when Greene responded to force applied to him."

The report added that Greene was even seen cooperating in Clary's own video, which shows Greene "lying on the ground, face down, handcuffed behind his back, leg shackles on his ankles, uttering the phrases, 'I'm sorry', or 'I'm scared' or 'Yes sir' or 'Okay.'"

Paxton also noted Clary falsely reported that his troopers sat Greene up after he was handcuffed and "immediately held his head up so he could get a clear airway."

However, troopers were heard saying they did not want to sit Greene up because they were afraid he would spit blood.

"Then don't do that," Clary tells them.

Even after Greene became unresponsive and troopers sat him up, his head remained slumped down on his chest and they did not lift his head to make a clear airway for almost six minutes. Another report shows state police failed to turn over to forensic pathologists even the most routine documents relating to Greene's arrest, including incident reports, collision details or emergency medical records.

State police did not open an administrative investigation into the troopers' use of force until 474 days after Greene's death. Louisiana officials, including Democratic Governor John Bel Edwards, refused to publicly release any body camera video of Greene's arrest for more than two years, until last week after AP began publishing videos it obtained.

**St. Paul, Minnesota, officer sentenced to six years**

## **in prison for assault**

On Friday, a federal court judge sentenced former St. Paul, Minnesota, police officer Brett Palkowitsch to six years in prison for using excessive force during a 2016 arrest involving a police dog. Palkowitsch was found guilty of kicking and injuring Frank Baker, an African American concert promoter, and allowing his K-9 to maul Baker after he was mistaken for a robbery suspect.

Baker had just arrived home on the night of June 24, 2016, and was sitting in his car talking on his cell phone. Around the same time, someone called police to report a possible fight on the city's east side.

The suspect was described as a black man with dreadlocks and white T-shirt and police allegedly thought Baker fit the description. Baker had no connection to the purported fight or any crime at all.

“When the officer said ‘get out of the car and put your hands up,’ I put my hands up,” Baker recalled in an interview with Minnesota Public Radio (MPR). “I didn’t even have time to take two steps. He let the dog out. I’m looking like it’s in slow motion. No, you didn’t!”

Baker complied with the officers’ demands but Palkowitsch began kicking Baker as the police dog mauled his leg. In addition to severe injuries to his leg, which required skin grafts to repair, Baker suffered collapsed lungs and seven broken ribs. Baker would later win a \$2 million settlement from the city of St. Paul.

MPR reported Palkowitsch apologized through tears during his sentencing. He said he would be willing to put himself in front of future officers to make sure “they know right from wrong, and how quick it can happen, and make sure it never happens again.”

Baker said he has forgiven Palkowitsch but did not think his apology was genuine. “His family and friends, his mother, his wife, his kids, got to see that he has a dark side to him. He made my life a living hell,” Baker told MPR. Baker explained that he still has trouble breathing and has to take 18 pills a day for a number of health problems.



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