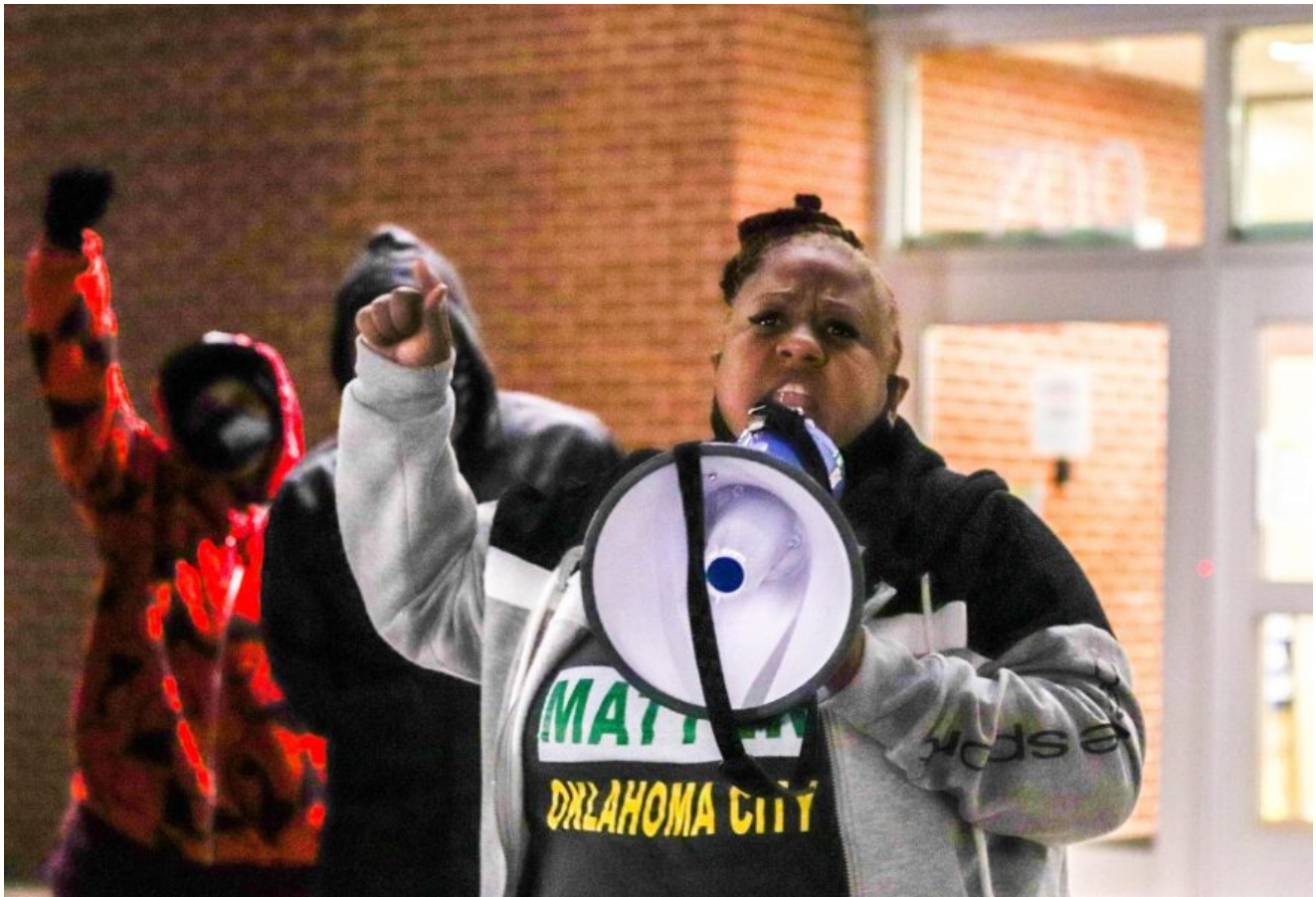


Oklahoma City Police Officer Charged With Manslaughter For Shooting Bennie Edwards

kgou.org/criminal-justice/2021-02-28/oklahoma-city-police-officer-charged-with-manslaughter-for-shooting-bennie-edwards

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Criminal Justice



Quinton Chandler

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StateImpact Oklahoma

Black Lives Matter–Oklahoma City Executive Director Rev. Sheri T Dickerson denounced the killing of Bennie Edwards during a protest the night of the shooting.";

The Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office charged an Oklahoma City police officer with manslaughter on Thursday for killing a Black man who had a history of mental illness.

On December 11, 2020, Oklahoma City police responded to complaints that 60-year-old Bennie Edwards was bothering customers outside a strip mall.

Detective Bryn Carter – an Oklahoma City homicide detective assigned to review the case – said in an affidavit that the first officer to arrive, Sgt. Keith Duroy, called for backup and specifically for a unit that carried a taser.

Police say Edwards had a knife and told Duroy to leave.

Sgt. Clifford Holman – one of the officers who came to back up Duroy – brought a taser. According to the affidavit Edwards pointed the knife at the police and again told them to leave.

The officers ordered him to drop the knife multiple times and when he didn't Holman used the taser on Edwards twice – it didn't subdue him.

The responding officers also reportedly used pepper spray on Edwards, which had little effect.

Carter's affidavit said Edwards ran towards Duroy with the knife after the second attempt to tase him and then he turned and ran away from the police.

Duroy and Holman fired lethal rounds. Holman fired three shots "unnecessarily," according to the affidavit. One of the bullets hit Edwards in his upper back.

An Oklahoma City Police Department spokesperson has said a third officer didn't fire.

The State Medical Examiner's Office found during an autopsy that Edwards died of multiple gunshot wounds and the bullet to his upper back damaged vital organs. Detective Carter said Holman's bullet caused Edwards' death.

A bystander video of the shooting was posted to social media and sparked a loud public outcry denouncing the officers' actions. Police have not yet released their own video of the encounter and subsequent shooting.

Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater has filed a first-degree manslaughter charge against Holman and an alternative second-degree manslaughter charge.

According to state law, first-degree manslaughter carries a punishment of at least four years in prison.

Second-degree manslaughter is punishable by at least two years in prison and no more than four years, or no more than one year in a county jail.

Definition of first-degree manslaughter under state statute:

Homicide is manslaughter in the first degree in the following cases:

1. When perpetrated without a design to effect death by a person while engaged in the commission of a misdemeanor.
2. When perpetrated without a design to effect death, and in a heat of passion, but in a cruel and unusual manner, or by means of a dangerous weapon; unless it is committed under such circumstances as constitute excusable or justifiable homicide.
3. When perpetrated unnecessarily either while resisting an attempt by the person killed to commit a crime, or after such attempt shall have failed.

Definition of second-degree manslaughter:

1. Every killing of one human being by the act, procurement or culpable negligence of another, which, under the provisions of this chapter, is not murder, nor manslaughter in the first degree, nor excusable nor justifiable homicide, is manslaughter in the second degree.

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