

Local Reaction To OKC Officer Charged With Manslaughter In Shooting Death Of Homeless Man

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Jennifer Pierce



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By: [Jennifer Pierce](#)

OKLAHOMA CITY -

The Oklahoma County District Attorney charged a local police officer on Thursday with first-degree manslaughter. Oklahoma City police Sergeant Clifford Homan was accused of killing a homeless man by allegedly shooting him in the back last December.

The OKC Fraternal Order of Police announced on Thursday they support and stand behind Holman. The FOP President John George said in a statement that Holman followed his training when Bennie Edwards, 60, charged at another officer while being armed with a knife.

However, not everyone agreed.

“It was murder,” said T. Sheri Dickerson, Black Lives Matter OKC leader.

Dickerson was one of many who gathered in a parking lot at Hefner Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue last December. Witnesses captured video of the fatal officer-involved shooting of Edwards in front of a pawn shop. His family said he suffered from mental illness and lived on the streets.

“We knew he had been hit in the back,” said Dickerson. “That’s never OK.”

Dickerson said she confirmed that after reading the state medical examiner's report. The Oklahoma County DA also factored that in when he charged Holman with first-degree manslaughter.

A court document stated, “Holman dropped his taser, drew his service weapon and fired three shots unnecessarily at Mr. Edwards as he was running away.”

The OKC FOP president said Holman and another officer at the scene were put in peril. A statement to News 9 said, "In this situation, when faced with a disturbed individual armed with a deadly weapon, our officers used multiple methods of de-escalation and less-lethal options to try to avoid the use of deadly force."

Others said lethal force should have never been used and supported the charge against Holman.

“I don’t want to say I’m pleased,” said Dickerson. “Because I’m tired of having to make statements about the situations of deaths that come from the hands of police.”

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The other officer at the scene was not charged. Police officials said Holman is currently on paid administrative leave.

Read the OKC FOP statement in full below:

John George, president of the Oklahoma City Fraternal Order of Police (OKC FOP), released the following statement regarding the charges filed against Sgt. Cliff Holman.

The OKC FOP stands by Sgt. Holman, who followed his training when an armed suspect charged another officer. A loss of life is always a tragedy, but officers must be able to protect one another when de-escalation tactics are ineffective.

In this situation, when faced with a disturbed individual armed with a deadly weapon, our officers used multiple methods of de-escalation and less-lethal options to try to avoid the use of deadly force. When those efforts were ineffective, the officers were put in peril when they were charged by the armed person. We maintain that Sgt. Holman upheld his duty and followed the law.

We know these are trying times for Sgt. Holman and his family, and we're here for them. The FOP thanks every officer who puts on a badge to protect and serve, despite this challenging environment.

The attorney representing the family of Bennie Edwards released the following statement Thursday:

