

# NATIONAL REVIEW

## The Anti-Police, Anti-Black Bandwagon in Charlotte

By The Editors — September 29, 2016

On Tuesday, a “suspicious package” forced the evacuation of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. The abundance of caution was not unwarranted. Charlotte is recovering from multiple days of anti-police rioting, following the officer-involved shooting of Keith Lamont Scott, a 43-year-old black man. Once again, though, the outrage outpaced the facts.

On September 20, Charlotte police attempting to serve a warrant at a local apartment complex shortly before 4 P.M. saw Scott exit his vehicle “armed with a firearm.” According to police, Scott refused to heed their calls to drop his weapon. When he emerged again from the vehicle, he “posed an imminent, deadly threat to officers,” and he was shot and killed. The officer who fired was black.

In the immediate aftermath of the shooting, Scott’s family claimed that he was unarmed and was simply holding a “book.” Police did not recover a book, but they did recover a gun with Scott’s fingerprints on it, and dashcam and body-cam footage appears to show Scott wearing an ankle holster. No conclusive video footage has been released, but cellphone footage recorded by Scott’s wife seems to support the police’s account; she can be heard repeatedly saying to him, “Don’t you do it.” Even the family’s lawyer has admitted that Scott did not obey the officers’ instructions.

And Scott had a violent history. In the 1990s, he was charged with aggravated assault and illegally carrying a concealed weapon. In 2002, he shot and wounded a man in San Antonio, earning a seven-year prison sentence. And last year, his wife requested a restraining order against him, claiming that he had assaulted her eight-year-old child and “threaten[ed] to kill us with a gun.”

None of this proves that the shooting was justified, but it raises serious questions about the Scott family's story. Of course, Charlotte "activists" did not wait for any of this information. Instead, under the banner of Black Lives Matter, they launched into riots reminiscent of last year's exhibitionism in Baltimore, and the violence that rocked Ferguson in 2014. The multiple nights of vandalism and looting resulted in widespread property damage, dozens of injuries and arrests, and one death: Justin Carr, a black protester shot and killed by 21-year-old Rayquan Borum, also black, who faces first-degree murder charges.

Precisely how smashing the windows of Charlotte's United Way headquarters advances the cause of police transparency would be a question for Black Lives Matter, if that nebulous group were interested in promoting real reform. But its disregard for the actual facts of the shootings it reflexively condemns, and its willingness to countenance violence of the sort on display in Charlotte, increasingly makes it look like little more than a banner for virulent anti-police sentiment. Indeed, responding to the situation in Charlotte, Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza told *Complex* that "ultimately, policing in and of itself is problematic."

Given the marked increase in homicides in areas where Black Lives Matter has been especially active — Baltimore, St. Louis, Milwaukee, etc. — it's clear that aggressive policing is far less problematic than the lack of it. And Garza and her comrades seem unconcerned that their success in pushing police out of high-crime areas has endangered the lives mainly of black Americans.

A genuine, good-faith effort to make police more accountable would focus on the facts, recognizing that the vast majority of police shootings are, although tragic, justified, and working with departments to make sure that unjustified shootings are fewer and further between. Everyone accepts that there are bad cops and that they need to be rooted out.

But Black Lives Matter has been uninterested in the facts since its inception. "Hands up, don't shoot" was a fabrication, and it may well turn out that Keith Lamont Scott's "book" was, too. Yet "activists" are comfortable running riot, putting innocent citizens in danger, on the basis of these and other lies. Charlotte is the latest

demonstration that whatever Black Lives Matter is interested in, it really isn't the flourishing of black lives — or any others.