



**National  
Urban League**

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**Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.**

May 27, 2021

Colonel Lamar A. Davis  
Louisiana State Superintendent of Police  
7919 Independence Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Dear Colonel Davis,

On behalf of the National Urban League, I respectfully request that your office immediately fire and arrest Lieutenant John Clary, Trooper Kory York, and Trooper Dakota DeMoss, and any other officers involved in the car chase, arrest, and death of Ronald Greene on May 10, 2019. I also request a thorough and transparent investigation into the inconsistent accounts that the Louisiana State Police has provided about the death of Ronald Greene in police custody.

Last week, the Associated Press obtained police body camera footage of the arrest of Ronald Greene that revealed shocking brutality toward Mr. Greene.<sup>1</sup> Compounding the dangerousness of their actions, the footage clearly contradicted and undermined the police department's official account of what happened during the arrest. State troopers initially told Mr. Greene's family that he had died on impact after crashing into a tree during the chase. Later, reports stated that Mr. Greene was taken into custody after "resisting arrest and a struggle with Troopers" and died on his way to the hospital.

The recently released body-worn and dashboard camera footage show a different story entirely. The disturbing video shows one trooper wrestling Mr. Greene to the ground, putting him in a chokehold and punching him in the face while another can be heard calling him a "stupid motherf-----." In an increasingly excessive manner, Mr. Greene is repeatedly tased, punched, and choked by the troopers who put him in handcuffs as Mr. Greene apologizes, saying "I was scared." After Mr. Greene was handcuffed with his hands behind his back, he was left in a prone position for more than nine minutes. At one point, an officer maliciously dragged Mr. Greene by his ankle shackles. "I hope this guy ain't got f----- AIDS," one of the troopers can be heard saying as he cleans blood from himself. The horrific footage eventually shows Mr. Greene covered in blood and appearing unresponsive as he is loaded into an ambulance.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Mustian, *'I'm scared': AP obtains video of deadly arrest of Black man*, Associated Press, (May 19, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/ronald-greene-death-louisiana-cca021d8a54ec73598dd72b269826f7a>.



While this subset of video footage reveals Mr. Greene was not resisting arrest and in fact, was begging for the troopers to stop, the footage is not complete. Some of the troopers at the scene had their cameras off during the arrests and the microphones were also not always active throughout the videos. In fact, one officer turned his camera off.<sup>2</sup>

It has been over two years since Mr. Greene died. Until May 19, 2021, with the AP release of the initial videos, Louisianians were deceived, and the state troopers' actions were obscured. This runs counter to the hopes for police transparency and accountability that the people of Louisiana had when they funded a multimillion-dollar body-worn camera program for its state troopers in 2016, following the killing of Alton Sterling.<sup>3</sup>

What Mr. Greene's case reveals is that, even with new technology to offer transparency and to inspire public confidence, some officers can avoid accountability by deliberately hiding camera footage. This cannot be allowed to continue.

We are encouraged by your release of additional footage and your statement at the May 21, 2021 press conference that you "want the public to move toward healing" and that you don't want this "to keep resurfacing and bringing up old wounds."<sup>4</sup> In the spirit of moving toward healing and restoring community trust, Lieutenant John Clary, Trooper Kory York, Trooper Dakota DeMoss, and any other state troopers involved in the arrest and death of Ronald Greene must be fired and arrested swiftly. The actions of the troopers depicted in the video footage released thus far show clear, intentional, excessive, and malicious use of force. Their conduct must draw consequences.

On April 26, 2021, the National Urban League released its *21 Pillars for Redefining Public Safety and Restoring Community Trust*.<sup>5</sup> Our forward-thinking plan is emphasized by five key themes designed to promote the protection and preservation of life, dignity, and trust, while also building safer communities. Three themes focus on police accountability, divisive policing practices, and transparency. Several of our pillars should immediately be adapted by the state of Louisiana in light of the death of Ronald Greene. In particular, our 21 Pillars urge for:

- Fair and impartial investigations into cases of police misconduct (Pillar 7);
- Revising use of force policies, requiring that officers use force proportional to the threat faced and employ de-escalation techniques in all circumstances (Pillar 9);
- A ban on chokeholds (Pillar 10); and

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<sup>2</sup>WWL Staff, *FULL FOOTAGE: Louisiana State Police release body cam videos from arrest that killed Ronald Greene*, (May 22, 2021), <https://www.wwtv.com/article/news/crime/see-all-the-body-camera-video-from-the-arrest-of-ronald-greene/289-358de72c-741c-4052-98b2-75a8db068b39>.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Crisp and Grace Toohey, *All Louisiana state troopers getting body cameras; program will start in New Orleans*, (Dec. 21, 2016), [https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/news/article\\_3a09ef56-c7a3-11e6-a67d-0b0beb02e7af.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_3a09ef56-c7a3-11e6-a67d-0b0beb02e7af.html).

<sup>4</sup> Scottie Hunter WAFB, *WATCH LIVE: Louisiana State Police holds a press conference*, (May 21, 2021), [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=754602628535746&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=754602628535746&ref=watch_permalink).

<sup>5</sup> National Urban League, *21 Pillars for Redefining Public Safety and Restoring Community Trust*, (April 2021), <https://78ab0743.flowpaper.com/NUL21PillarsSummaryingles/>.



- Uniform standards on the use and activation of body-worn cameras and direct access to body-worn camera footage for relevant prosecutorial and oversight bodies (Pillar 15).

Louisiana law enforcement will fail to maintain public trust and confidence if state troopers are allowed to deliberately deceive the public to escape accountability, especially after they choke, tase, and beat a handcuffed man, even after being rendered helpless in the prone position. It is imperative the state of Louisiana fire and arrest the state troopers involved in the alarming death of Ronald Greene as soon as possible.

All eyes are on Louisiana and we hope that you will strongly consider this call for action. Please contact Donald Cravins, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer ([Dcravins@nul.org](mailto:Dcravins@nul.org)), Jerika Richardson, Senior Vice President for Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives ([jrichardson@nul.org](mailto:jrichardson@nul.org)), or me for more information on this matter.

Respectfully,

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National Urban League

Judy Reese Morse  
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Urban League of Louisiana