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## New police beating video clearly shows chokehold, aftermath

By Jeffrey Collins and Jonathan Drew

RALEIGH (AP) - A white North Carolina officer is shown putting a black pedestrian in a chokehold in video released April 2 that offers more footage of a police beating that has sparked outrage over use of force.

City officials in Asheville, North Carolina, released nine body camera videos of the August 2017 encounter - most of it made public for the first time - from multiple officers. Earlier this year, a shorter clip obtained by a newspaper sparked anger in the community and helped lead to assault charges against former officer Christopher Hickman.

The new videos show for the first time the aftermath of the encounter, and Hickman acknowledges multiple times to Johnnie Jermaine Rush and to his supervisor that he struck the pedestrian.

When Hickman's supervisor asks if the Taser was effective, Hickman said: "I hit him in the face with it. I hit him in the face as if it was a club. That was effective."

The footage stretches into a 20-minute clip of conversation after Rush is released from the hospital and is heading to jail, and the two men have an almost oddly calm conversation.

"I didn't probably start choking you until I punched you 10

times," Hickman says to Rush.

Another of the new clips from an officer arriving as back-up appears to show Hickman using both arms to restrain Rush by his neck. Police have previously said Hickman put Rush in a chokehold, but it was difficult to see that on Hickman's own body-worn camera that leaked to the newspaper.

A judge ruled a week ago that the new videos could be made public. North Carolina law generally prevents the release of body camera footage without court approval.

Hickman is shown on the videos subduing Rush, then punching and shocking him with a stun gun. Rush was stopped because officers accused him of crossing outside a crosswalk near a minor league ballpark and cluster of breweries popular with tourists.

In one of the new clips, Rush argues that a supervisor who arrived on the scene, Sgt. Lisa Taube, appears to put more faith in Hickman's account than his.

"You weren't even here to know what happened," Rush is heard saying. "You're just going by what your officer told you. There are two sides to every story."

Taube then responds: "There are. And, thankfully, I've got body-worn video camera to watch afterward."

Police have said Taube was disciplined for her handling of the case.

While the encounter happened late last year, it took six months for it to become public through the leak to The Citizen-Times.

Hickman, 31, was arrested in March on a felony charge of assault by strangulation, plus misdemeanor counts of assault and communicating threats.

His lawyer, Thomas Amburgey, released a statement April 2 that Hickman showed no criminal intent to harm Rush.

"It's unfortunate that so many individuals have rushed to judge my client. I am confident that when a fair and impartial jury hears the whole story that Mr. Hickman will be acquitted," Amburgey said in the statement.

In the clip at the hospital, the two laugh and calmly discuss what happened while standing outside the hospital. Hickman called Rush "super cool" as he prepares to take him to jail.

"Once we get there, is there any way y'all can have them to let me go to the restroom so I can clean myself up?" Rush asks.

"Absolutely," Hickman answered. "Soon as they get those cuffs off, that will be the first thing we do."

The Aug. 25 encounter came months after the city implemented the use-of-force policy that included training on de-escalating tense situations. The policy was drafted in the aftermath of a white officer killing an armed black man after a high speed chase.

An arrest warrant for Hickman said Rush suffered head abrasions and swelling and that he lost consciousness when Hickman pressed his arm on his throat.

Community outrage spilled over with angry comments at a March community meeting with the police chief, and even the City Council expressed anger that they weren't informed of the case for months.

Collins reported from Columbia, South Carolina.



Ms. Bettylenah Njaramba

## NCCU Student Elected First African-American Woman President of UNC System Association of Student Governments

North Carolina Central university (NCCU) junior elementary education major Bettylenah Njaramba was elected president of the University of North Carolina (UNC) Association of Student Governments (ASG). She will be the first African-American woman to hold this position for the organization.

The ASG is a student organization designated to represent the interests of students in the deliberations of the UNC Board of Governors.

In this role for the 2018-2019 academic year, Njaramba will serve as the chief executive officer of the organization and act as the official representative and spokesperson. She will also serve as an ex officio member of the UNC Board of Governors and the Council of Student Body Presidents.

She also serves as president of NCCU's Association of Students for a Better Africa and is a member of the university's student government association.

Njaramba credits her mentor, former senior class president Brienne Gill, for her passion in student government. In 2015, Njaramba served as freshman class president. Also during her freshman year, she served as a delegate for NCCU at ASG's formal meeting. She has served in this role for subsequent years in addition to serving as speaker pro-temp for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Njaramba, a Raleigh, native by way of Kenya, tributes her African culture as a significant influence on her life and success.

"My culture is very important to who I am as a student-leader," said Njaramba. "In order to be great servant leader you must be true to yourself."

Immediately after graduation she plans to join the Peace Corps with aspirations to pursue a doctoral degree to teach.

## DeVos joins debate on racial inequities in school discipline

By Maria Danilova

WASHINGTON (AP) - Education Secretary Betsy DeVos on April 4 entered a heated national debate on racial disparities in school discipline, meeting with educators as a government watchdog said in a report that African-American students continue to be punished more often than their peers.

The study by the Government Accountability Office found that black children account for about 16 percent of students but 39 percent of students suspended from school. A 2016 federal study showed that black students are more than three times more likely to be suspended from school and nearly twice as likely to be expelled than their white peers.

A 2014 document issued by the Obama administration told schools to determine if penalties like suspension and expulsion were disproportionately affecting black students. If they didn't correct any disparities, they could face federal investigations and possible loss of federal funding.

The document also urged educators to move away from harsh penalties in favor of positive behavior interventions such as counseling.

DeVos met behind closed doors April 4 morning with educators who believe that rolling back the Obama rule will further entrench discrimination. Later in the day she heard from opponents who say that softening discipline practices makes schools less safe and prevents effective learning.

While there's widespread agreement that disparities in discipline based on race and disability are a serious problem, there's intense debate over what causes them and how to fix them.

Tynisha Jinter, behavioral health specialist for elementary schools in Chicago, said the Obama-era guidance was instrumental in fighting discrimination. She recalled a visit to a public school to help counsel an unruly first-grader. Jinter observed the student, a black boy, acting out during a PE class. But she also noticed that during the first 10 minutes of class, the teacher redirected that student six times, while his white peers who also were misbehaving did not receive the same attention.

"Black students, especially black boys, are looked at as deviant and defiant while white students are seen as exploring and testing boundaries," Jinter said in an interview.

She said she told DeVos that "hands down, positive interventions work best." Olinka Crusoe, who teaches English as a second language in New York City, cited the example of a first-grader at her school who would act out during writing time. She and other teachers spent several months trying various approaches until they figured out that giving him a sheet of paper with bigger lines and a bigger pencil solved the problem.



Chancellor Johnson O. Akinleye

## NCCU to Celebrate Installation of Chancellor Johnson O. Akinleye

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) will install Johnson O. Akinleye, Ph.D., as its 12<sup>th</sup> chancellor at 10 a.m., Thursday, April 19, in McDougald-McLendon Arena, 700 E. Lawson St. Durham, N.C.

During the Installation ceremony, Akinleye will take the Oath of Office and receive the University Medallion. UNC System President Margaret Spellings will preside over the Installation. Following Akinleye's address, a reception will take place at Brant Street Plaza.

Three additional events, through April 19, lead up to the Installation of NCCU's 12<sup>th</sup> chancellor. The following activities are free and open to the public:

- At 9 a.m., Wednesday, April 18, Akinleye will open the university's International Symposium with a TED Talk, also in B.N. Duke Auditorium. The International Symposium will feature international thought leaders and cover topics that include grassroots peacebuilding, education, entrepreneurship, leadership, global engagement, economic development and international collaboration, among others. The keynote speaker will be His Royal Majesty Drolor Bosso Adamtey I, SUAPOLOR of the Se (Shai) Traditional Area, Ghana, West Africa, Chancellor, University of Professional Studies Accra, Ghana, Chancellor, Caribbean Maritime University, Kingston Jamaica. Online registration can be [completed here](#).

Akinleye served as acting chancellor from August 2016 to January 2017. Previously, he served as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs for the university, where his responsibilities included faculty development, academic planning and assessment, enrollment management, and academic oversight of NCCU's seven schools and colleges.

Since joining NCCU, Akinleye has worked to expand the university's academic partnerships, including new agreements with community colleges, as well as to introduce a robust online, distance-education program, NCCU Online. In addition, he created K-12 initiatives and implemented a security strategy to increase safety for campus constituents.

For more information on the chancellor's Installation, please visit [www.nccu.edu/installation](http://www.nccu.edu/installation). Individuals are encouraged to register for the Installation ceremony.