

Law enforcement expert assesses viral video case

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Wednesday, May 3, is a day Tekara Williams will remember for the rest of her life for all the wrong reasons.

Just after 9 that morning, Williams was pulled over by James Carter, a Winston-Salem Police Department officer, on Motor Road, for what appeared to be a routine speeding violation, but in the blink of an eye, all that changed.

"That was the only thing going through my mind, a speeding ticket," said Williams. "I never thought it would escalate into all that."

A law enforcement expert told The Chronicle that some things could have been done differently that probably would have led to a better outcome.

After checking the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles' (N.C. DMV) database, Carter discovered that the vehicle Williams was driving did not have insurance coverage and the registration plate on the vehicle was revoked, with a license plate "pick up order" requiring seizure of the license plate.

After telling Williams about the "pick up order," Officer Carter asked for the keys to the vehicle several times, but Williams refused, and that's when

the encounter turned sour. Just as Officer Carter pulled Williams out of the car, Da'ton Edwards was driving past and started recording on her phone. In the video posted on Facebook, you can hear Williams asking why she was being arrested and insisting that Carter wait for her grandfather, who owns the vehicle. Although it is not shown on the video, seconds later Officer Carter took Williams to the ground to put her in handcuffs.

In less than 24 hours, the video had over 1 million views and had been shared by people across the country. After the dust had settled, Williams was charged with speeding; resist, delay or obstruct an officer; and failure to notify N.C. DMV of change of address.

A press release from the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) shows Williams was also charged with displaying a revoked registration plate, operating a vehicle without proper insurance and driving with a revoked license.

"I've never had an officer ask for the keys not even to seize the tags and I've had that happen before so that's why I continued to ask him why he needed the keys," she said. "The keys weren't even in the ignition. They were on the pas-

senger seat and when I told him that, he proceeded to remove me from the car.

"It really scared me. I've never had an officer come into my personal zone like that," Williams said.

Before showing the body camera footage during a news conference on Friday, May 5, Chief Barry Rountree said the video posted on Facebook caused people to jump to conclusions. He mentioned the viral video doesn't show Williams refusing "lawful orders" from Officer Carter. He said the Facebook video also doesn't show Officer Carter telling Williams that she would be arrested if she didn't comply with his orders.

"The Facebook video and the WSPD video do show that Officer Carter remained calm and collected throughout this encounter. The Facebook video and the Winston-Salem video do show that Ms. Williams is the one who resisted, yelled, and cursed during this entire encounter.

"This press conference is not to bash, attack or belittle Ms. Williams but it is prudent to us to have all the available information out there," Rountree said.

After viewing the viral footage and the body camera footage, Bobby

Kimbrough, author of the book "Surviving the Stop," sat down with The Chronicle to discuss the incident. Kimbrough who served more than 30 years in law enforcement on the local, state, and federal levels before retiring last summer, said, although Carter could have waited for another officer to come to remove the tags, he used his discretionary power when he asked for the keys to the vehicle.

"I understand the safety issue where he didn't want to get behind the car but he could have waited for another officer to get there, but he didn't do that. He chose to say give me your keys and exercise his discretionary powers," continued Kimbrough. "As citizens, we have to remember that the police have discretionary powers that the law has given to them.

"Yes, he could have done some things differently but according to the law he did nothing wrong," Kimbrough said.

When asked how he would have handled the situation, Kimbrough said when he was in the field, using physical force was always his last resort. He said before the situation reached a boiling point he would have tried to change the atmosphere by calming Williams down.

He said, "She wasn't a



This photo, taken from a video of the incident, shows how James Carter with the Winston-Salem Police Department interacted with Tekara Williams after he stopped her during a traffic stop.

threat and it wasn't an emergency. There was no need to go hands-on so quick."

Looking back on the situation, Williams admits that she could have handled the situation better as well, but she still believes Officer Carter abused his authority.

"I'm not saying what he got me for is wrong or needs to be fixed. I just feel like he abused his authority and I deserve an apology. Even in the courtroom Officer Carter couldn't even look me in my face," she said. "Honestly looking back on the situation, if it had been a white woman, I don't think she would have been forced to the ground in front of her children and I think he should be reprimanded for that."

Police administrators are currently conducting an

internal investigation of the incident. Officer Carter will continue his regular duties with the WSPD during the investigation, according to Chief Rountree. As for Williams, her court dates are set for June 29 and Aug. 9. Williams said every time she drives down Motor Road, she has flashbacks, but she said the real victims are her two young children who watched the entire incident unfold from the back seat.

"My daughter still wakes up at night crying, talking about the police. I have to tell her every day that nothing is going to happen," continued Williams. "The police are here to protect and serve. My child should have no reason to fear them; I should not have a reason to fear them."

Black Achievers program marks 20th Anniversary

BY TEVIN STINSON
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During the 20th annual Black Achievers in Business & Industry Awards Gala, the Winston Lake Family YMCA awarded more than \$30,000 in scholarship funds to more than a dozen local high school seniors who completed the Black Achievers teen program.

Since 1997, the Black Achievers program has helped teens set and pursue high educational and career goals. The high school component meets twice per month, where there are sessions on a variety of topics related to college preparation and career development, ranging from test taking skills, SAT Prep and job readiness. The program also offers students opportunities for service learning through volunteering,

social development, networking and college tours.

"Overall this has been a wonderful experience," said Joseph Mackenzie a senior at Reynolds High School. "Not only did Black Achievers prepare me for college but it also helped build lifelong friendships with likeminded people in the community."

East Forsyth senior Devin Higgins, who will be attending UNC Pembroke in the fall on a football scholarship, said, the program helped him become more responsible in the classroom and everyday life. Higgins mentioned he has also learned the importance of being a leader. When asked how it felt to be in the 20th group of students to complete the program, Higgins said, "It gives me a sense of pride to know that so many people before me had the

same goals as me and wanted to do something with their lives."

Other local students honored during the gala held at the Hawthorne Inn were: Amariah Scott, Brelynn Wray, Krishayla Rolle, Willie Leak Jr., Jaylen Jeffreys, Jasmine Dove, Jada Dove, Kenedy Singletary, Malaysia Penn, Ryan Horton, and Tyra Penn.

Several local business owners and community leaders were honored during the gala as well. The Minority Business Award was awarded to David Hinton. Distinguished Service Award winners were Joseph R. Daniels and Reginald McCaskill, and the Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded to Dr. Elwanda Ingram.

The keynote address was delivered by North Carolina native Donovan



Local high school seniors received more than in \$30,000 to further their education during the 20th annual Black Achievers in Business & Industry Awards

Livingston, an author, educator and Ph.D. candidate at Wake Forest University. Although he is a published author, Livingston is most known for his spoken word performance during the convocation at Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2016 that went viral.

Just as he galvanized millions across the globe with his poem "Lift Off," Livingston did the same thing last Thursday evening when he spoke to the class of 2017.

"As awesome as this

moment is, this is only the beginning," he said. "Celebrate this moment but figure out how you can continue to grow and leave your mark on whatever college or university you plan to attend."

While looking back on his own undergraduate days at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Livingston encouraged the students to use the college experience to find their voice and make sure that voice is heard. Livingston said one of the reasons he chose to attend

UNC-CH is because it was a place his voice would be heard, and his passion for spoken word and poetry wouldn't be deemed as a form of rebellion.

He said, "College for me is a moment in self-discovery. It's more than being financially stable or finding the job that's going to make you a lot of money. You have to find a way to connect the change you want to see in the world to the job and career you want to have down the road."

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