

Notes on police violence

Cop who punched woman on New Jersey beach will not face charges

By Trévon Austin
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Cape May County Prosecutor Jeffrey Sutherland said Tuesday that no criminal charges will be filed against the police officers who were videotaped assaulting and arresting a 20-year-old Philadelphia woman on the beach in Wildwood, New Jersey on May 26. In the video, an officer can be seen punching the woman twice. The video has been viewed over 7,000,000 times.

Police were carrying portable breathalyzers on the beach and randomly testing beachgoers. In the body-cam footage released this week, the Wildwood police officer can be seen carrying a breathalyzer wand and approaching a woman sitting on her beach towel with an open container of fruit.

Emily Weinman, 20, agreed to submit to the test, which came up negative. But the encounter quickly escalated to a violent arrest in which the officer pulled her hair, slammed her to the ground and punched her.

The Cape May County Prosecutor's Office said it recognized that the footage "raised questions" regarding the officer's actions, but claimed the arrest wasn't against the law.

According to the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, Prosecutor Sutherland reviewed police body-camera footage, videos taken by beachgoers, police vehicle video, arrest and internal affairs reports and other police documents in deciding whether or not to charge the police officers.

In justifying the officers' actions, Sutherland said emotional appeals have no place in matters of police work. "A decision such as this is not based on emotion; it is based upon applying the proper laws, policies and directives that govern law enforcement," he said. "Members of the public should understand that no matter what your opinion is regarding the subject event,

it is not based on a full review of the evidence."

Wildwood Mayor Ernie Troiano has vigorously defended the three officers, identified as Thomas Cannon, John Hillman and Robert Jordan. Emily Weinman faces multiple charges after the arrest, including aggravated assault on a police officer and spitting at a police officer.

Weinman's attorney, Stephen Dicht, told the *Inquirer* he wasn't surprised that the prosecutor did not charge the police officers.

"It's ironic. The officer who said, 'You're about to get dropped' isn't charged. The one who beat her on the head wasn't charged. The only person charged is the one who was dropped and beaten on the head," he said.

Officer fired for hitting man with car hired by neighboring sheriff's department

A Georgia police officer who was fired for deliberately striking a man with his vehicle was back at work as a cop just two days later. Taylor Saulters, who was fired by the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, was hired by the neighboring Oglethorpe County Sheriff's Office on Monday.

On Friday, Saulters and his police partner stopped Timmy Patmon, who had an open warrant for a probation violation. Patmon fled on foot, according to police records. Saulters' partner, Hunter Blackmon, chased Patmon on foot while Saulters got into his police cruiser and chased after them.

Footage released by the Athens-Clarke County Police Department showed Saulters swerving in front of Patmon while trying to cut him off. Saulters then accelerated and hit Patmon with the front of the police

cruiser.

In the footage, Patmon can be seen rolling on the hood of the car and falling onto the pavement. Bystanders chastised the two officers for hitting Patmon as he was being taken into custody.

Oglethorpe County Sheriff David Gabriel announced the decision to hire Saulters on Facebook, saying, "I have known him since he was a baby and I know he will be a great asset to our county." Gabriel defended the hiring in the same post, saying of the incident, "a fleeing felon struck his patrol car."

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