



Abuse of Force: Body camera video shows man tased 11 times by Glendale officers

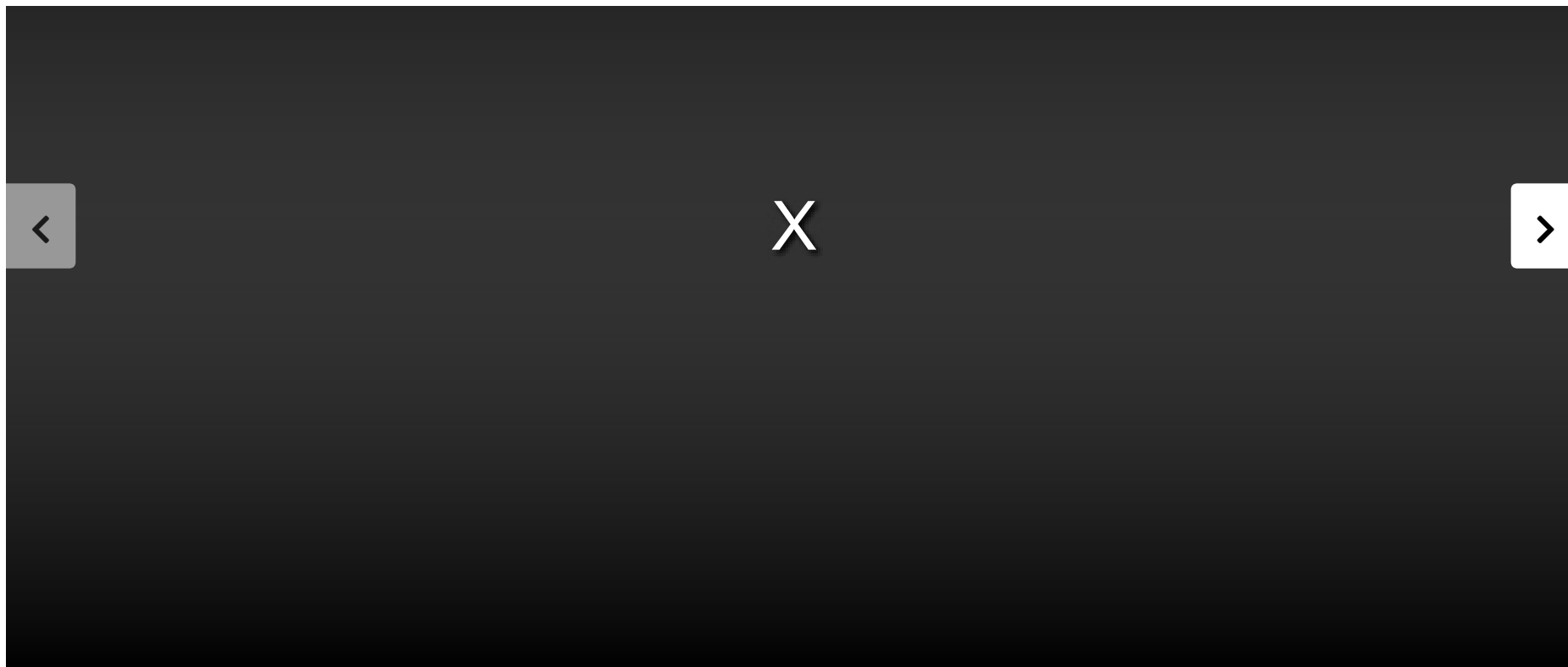
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By: [Dave Biscobing](#)



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On July 27, 2017, Johnny Wheatcroft was a passenger in a silver Ford Taurus when a pair of Glendale police officers pulled in front them in a Motel 6 parking lot.

The stop was for an alleged turn signal violation.

Minutes later, Wheatcroft was handcuffed lying face down on the hot asphalt on a 108-degree day. He'd already been tased 10 times, with one officer kneeling on his back as another, Officer Matt Schneider, kicked

him in the groin and pulled down his athletic shorts to tase him a final time in his testicles, according to a federal lawsuit and body camera footage obtained by ABC15.

The scene was witnessed by his 11- and 6-year-old sons.

“I have never seen anything like this before... This is just beyond the pale. It’s outrageous conduct.”

Multiple independent law enforcement experts, who agreed to review the incident, said the officers’ conduct was unlawful, potentially criminal, and one of the most cruel and troubling cases of police misconduct they’ve ever seen.

“I have never seen anything like this before,” said Jeff Noble, an attorney and former deputy chief of police in Irvine, Calif., who’s testified in hundreds of cases including Tamir Rice and Philando Castile. “It reminds me of a case in New York where an individual was sadistically taking a broom handle and shoving it up (the suspect’s) anus. This is just beyond the pale. It’s outrageous conduct.”

Former LAPD detective supervisor T.T. Williams echoed his shock.

“That’s not even borderline,” said Williams, an expert witness who testified in the [Philip Brailsford](#) case on behalf of the prosecution. “That’s inhumane.”

Watch the raw body camera video in the player below. WARNING: The video contains uncensored language and violence.

No compatible source was found for this media.



Schneider was suspended for 30 hours and remains an active officer on the force, records show.

RELATED: [Internal review leads to suspension of Glendale officer who tased suspect 11 times](#)

The experts said it was appalling that Officer Schneider, who has won multiple awards from the police chief and has represented Glendale twice on the TV show Cops, was not terminated. They also believe Glendale should have referred the case for outside criminal investigation and prosecution.



Officer Matt Schneider

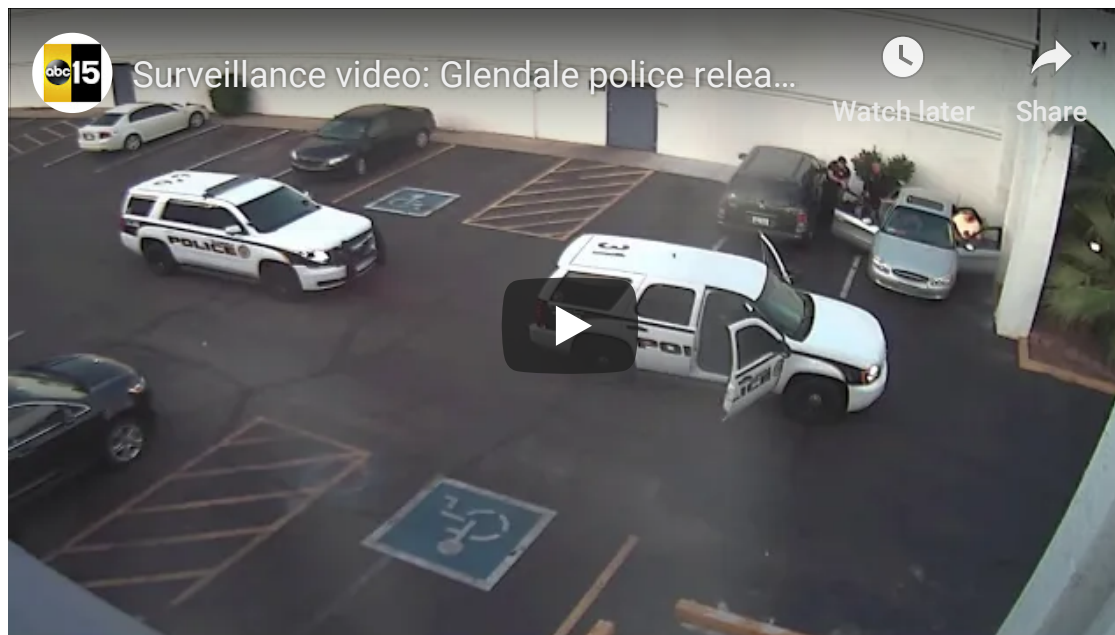
“If he intentionally struck a passenger in the testicles, and then intentionally tased him in or near the genitals, I’m surprised he hasn’t been prosecuted,” said Seth Stoughton, a former police officer who’s now an attorney

and professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law. “It raises half a dozen red flags that suggest the need for a thorough review, including a review to determine if the officer committed any crimes.”

On February 8, the Glendale Police Department released the following statement:



In addition to the statement, Glendale PD released 30 seconds of surveillance video showing the incident:



The release is full of omissions and information that does not match up with the departments own records.

[Read more on our analysis of their statement here.](#)

But [the lawsuit](#), filed in the U.S. District Court of Arizona by attorneys Marc Victor and Jody Broaddus, alleges that the officers violated the constitutional rights of Wheatcroft and his wife, Anya Chapman, and engaged in the “excessive use of force and torture.”

"No one is necessarily above the law, whether it be a priest, a police officer or any civilian on the street. No one is above the law either civilly or criminally," said Broaddus.

When I saw this video, and this has never happened to me in my legal career, I couldn't work anymore that day. I was so disturbed," Victor said.

Wheatcroft and Chapman, who were arrested and charged with aggravated assault on a police officer, spent months in jail after the incident because they couldn't afford bail.

Chapman agreed to plead guilty to a lesser charge in order to get home to her children, her attorneys said.

The charges against Wheatcroft were dismissed by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office after prosecutors saw the body camera video.

Wheatcroft, who's currently in prison on an unrelated burglary charge stemming from a copper wire theft, was not available for comment.

For independent analysis, ABC15 spoke with three former law enforcement officers, who testify as expert witnesses in police use-of-force cases across the country: Williams, Noble, and Stoughton.

ABC15 traveled to southern California to interview Williams and Noble in person. Stoughton was interviewed over the phone.

Second-by-second breakdown:





TIME: 0:00 - 0:55

Officers Matt Schneider and Mark Lindsey approach the car for an alleged turn signal violation. Schneider, who claimed to see the violation, walks over to the passenger side where Johnny Wheatcroft is sitting. Officer Lindsey walks to the driver's side. A friend of Wheatcroft's, Shawn Blackburn, is the driver. In the backseat, Wheatcroft's wife, Anya Chapman, and two children are sitting.

WILLIAMS: I have concerns about the initial justification for the stop.

NOBLE: The controlling officer is not going to the driver's side and investigating the turn signal. He's focused on the passenger, which tells me that maybe this is not why we're here. They're not really interested in his turn signal violation.



TIME: 0:55 - 2:05

Schneider asks Wheatcroft multiple times for identification. He responds by asking why that's necessary since he wasn't driving the car. The officer tells him, "If you're a passenger in a vehicle, you need to have ID." And if Wheatcroft doesn't provide it, Schneider says, "I can take you down to the station and we can fingerprint you."

NOBLE: So the passenger, he's asking very reasonable questions: 'Why are you asking for ID?' And the officer tells him, 'If you're a passenger in the vehicle, you have to give ID.' That's misstatement of the law. He doesn't have to give ID...It's not true. It's not accurate. (Then the officer says) 'I can take you down to the station and fingerprint you.' Well no, you can't. You can't. That's using his authority in an improper way by claiming he can arrest or detain him to fingerprint him when he's done nothing wrong.





TIME: 2:05 - 2:55

Schneider then opens the car door and grabs Wheatcroft's right arm. By grabbing his arm, it prevents the seatbelt from sliding off completely. The officer then pulls his Taser and applies it to Wheatcroft's arm. Wheatcroft says, "Stop please. I didn't do anything wrong." Shnieder replies, "Here's the deal, you tense up and I'm going to, listen to me. Listen to me. Relax your arm." Wheatcroft asks, "What did I do wrong? What did I do wrong?"

WILLIAMS: I didn't see any resisting. I saw questions being asked. See (the officer's) starting out wrong. You're starting out wrong. See what he's doing is escalating the situation for no reason at all.

NOBLE: Look at the passenger, there's nothing threatening there. He hasn't made any threats. All he's done is ask some questions...We're at a point, where this gentlemen, to a reasonable officer, has not done anything wrong. What has he done to allow an officer to physically touch him at this point? So to use force, you have to have a lawful detention or lawful arrest, why are we here. We are here for a turn signal violation and he's not the driver.





TIME: 2:55 - 3:20

Schneider then puts his Taser away and uses his other hand to grab Wheatcroft's elbow and put him into a plain compliance hold. The seatbelt wraps around Wheatcroft's head and legs as officers try to pull him from the vehicle.

WILLIAMS: There's no need to twist his arm. No need for that...He's still strapped in the vehicle. What is he going to do? How is he going to get out...You ask him not to do this, ask him not to do that. He can't do anything because he's strapped into the seatbelt.

NOBLE: He's put him in a rear wrist lock with the seatbelt over his shoulder. If I did that to you right now, you would similarly bend forward. And if you were not flexible, it would be painful. It should be no surprise to this officer, that he is pulling some resistance back. Because he is putting him in a position of pain. This is a pain compliance move. He's twisting his wrist, he's putting his left hand on his elbow forcing forward where the seatbelt is restraining him.



TIME: 3:20 - 4:10

With Wheatcroft tangled in the seatbelt, another officer tases him multiple times in the left side by using what's called a "drive stun." Officer Schneider then steps back and fires his taser at Wheatcroft who's on the ground between the car door and the vehicle, with the seatbelt wrapped around his legs. The officers then drive stun Wheatcroft several more times. He's placed in handcuffs.

WILLIAMS: He's being drive stunned there and he's still strapped into the seatbelt. All of that physical initiation by the officers should not have been. He can't comply because you're not allowing him to comply... What you see here is textbook wrong -- at every angle.

NOBLE: He was just sitting there, and they're tasing him again. (Reporter: So there's no reason for that? It's about pain, just to make him hurt?) Absolutely. That's exactly what that is for. It's about pain. This is about causing this man pain. There is no legitimate law enforcement purpose for that Taser.





TIME: 4:10 - 4:50

During the previous portion, officers claim Anya Chapman hit Officer Lindsey in the head with a plastic bag of items. You hear Schneider say, “Mark is hurt.” The officers then try to drag Wheatcroft away from the vehicle, but his legs are still stuck in the seatbelt. The 11-year-old boy in the car moves into the front seat to finally free Wheatcroft from the belt. Schneider commands the boy to go to the front of vehicle, causing him to burst out in tears and scream.

NOBLE: He’s trying to let officers know, 'I’m trying to comply. I’m stuck I can’t do what you want me to do.' A child, a small child, who just released his legs, who in effect helped the officers, (Schneider) starts giving orders as if he’s a suspect. And you see the boy, who just did something good, just tried to help the officer, being confronted.

WILLIAMS: The young kid there had more common sense than the officers...The officers should have done that themselves.



TIME: 4:50 - 6:00

Wheatcroft is laying face down on the asphalt, handcuffed, with an officer kneeling on his back. Officer Schneider then turns, accuses Wheatcroft of kicking, and then kicks Wheatcroft in the groin twice. Schneider then takes his left hand, pulls down Wheatcroft's athletic shorts below his buttocks, and tases him in the

testicles, according to Wheatcroft's lawsuit. Shortly later, Schneider recharges his Taser and this time places it on Wheatcroft's penis while he's laying on his side, saying "You want it again? Shut your mouth. I'm done (expletive) around with you."

WILLIAMS: That's not even borderline. That's inhumane...There's no reason to tase him period when he's handcuffed at all. They've got four, five officers around there. All of that tasing should have been done; well there shouldn't have been tasing to begin with.

NOBLE: This is not an accident...This has the appearance of an intentional act. There's absolutely no legitimate law enforcement purpose. This is beyond the pale. This is unconscionable.





TIME: 6:00 - END

A handful of officers pull Wheatcroft to his feet and pull Taser probes from his skin. He yells in pain, Schneider tells him, “Shut up...You shouldn’t have been stupid then... Quit acting like a big baby.” Wheatcroft was tased 11 times, according to his attorneys. He was placed in a police vehicle and booked into jail for two counts of aggravated assault. He did not receive medical treatment. Experts said he should have.

NOBLE: This was bad from the beginning, and it only got worse.

WILLIAMS: They started wrong and they ended wrong. There is no justification for what they did.

ABC15 is committed to Taking Action and continuing our coverage of this topic. If you have any comments or questions, contact ABC15 Investigator Dave Biscobing at dave@abc15.com.

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