



Friday, June 14, 2019

J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards

This application is for:

J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award

Project Title

The Many Heroes

County/Counties

York County

Staff Contact

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Job Title

Public Information Officer

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Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.

On January 15-16, 2018, the York County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) suffered one of the greatest tragedies in its 232-year history. Three officers were shot and one killed in a series of ambushes. A year later, YCSO detailed the events of that night in their own three-hour documentary called: "The Many Heroes." This documentary consist of 17 public safety officials describing the events of that night and openly sharing their involvement. By choosing this unique and transparent method, YCSO honors their fallen brother, honors all the public safety entities that were involved and brings healing and unification to York County.

Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:

Andy Merriman, York County Assistant County Manager, andy.merriman@yorkcountygov.com

Trent Faris, Public Information Officer for York County Sheriff's Office, trent.faris@yorkcountygov.com

Will any of the speakers need accommodations (wheelchair accessibility, etc.) during the competition?

No

Please check boxes for attachments you will submit as part of your application

A concise Project Description to explain the purpose and significance of the entry (up to eight pages). Please follow the prescribed naming convention for your Project Description file.

Any additional materials needed to support your application (up to five pages).

To submit these attachments online, please upload Microsoft Word or PDF documents below.

[the_many_heroes.JMG2019.pdf](#)

[the_many_heroes.JMG2019.support_letters.pdf](#)

"The many heroes."

A documentary of the events of
January 15, 16, & 17, 2018



2019 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award Competition
Submitted by York County Government

A production of the
York County Sheriff's Office

On January 15-16, 2018, the York County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) suffered one of the greatest tragedies to the agency in its 232 year history. Three officers were shot and one was killed in a series of ambushes by one man. Telecommunicators, medics, and more than eighty-five officers from surrounding agencies searched for the gunman, who laid in wait for public safety responders with weapon artillery including a rifle and six 30-round magazines of ammunition.

A year later, the YCSO detailed the events of that night in their own three-hour documentary production called: *The Many Heroes*. This production consisted of 17 public safety officials describing the events of that night and openly sharing their involvement. The documentary videos are posted on the YCSO YouTube page, and are titled as follows:

"The many heroes." Part 1: The Call & Officer Down: <https://youtu.be/rJ21b96k7wk>

"The many heroes." Part 2: The Boat & Ambush <https://youtu.be/EkOlbkYrpT4>

"The many heroes." Part 3: Aftermath & Never Forget 809 <https://youtu.be/5DPpCnSSiZQ>

Why was this project undertaken?

Most importantly, this project was undertaken to honor the life of fallen Detective Mike Doty. He was shot during the ambush and succumbed to his injuries on January 17, 2018. The documentary includes the lifesaving coordination he provided that night for his fellow officers, as well as, a characterization of Det. Doty by his fellow officers. The documentary provides transparency for a community in mourning. Viewers hear the events unfold for themselves through the recordings of Det. Doty and those who worked alongside him to assist fellow officers.

Additionally, the YCSO produced this documentary for the following three reasons:

- 1.) To tell their own story in a way that honors all who were involved.

On the one-year anniversary of this tragedy, the YCSO uniquely and proactively told their own story. Trent Faris, YCSO Public Information Officer (PIO), knew that news outlets would want to do a story to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Det. Doty's death. As a former journalist, he knew their coverage would likely include only a short sound bite. He, along with others in YCSO, felt this could not adequately cover the anniversary. Nor did the heroes involved want to encounter a myriad of reporters.

With that said, the YCSO did not want this painful and personal story sensationalized by the media. Local and national media outlets had already covered the tragedy, where some outlets had arranged it in such a way to pull on heartstrings and achieve ratings. Residents had never heard the full story of the night's events from those who lived it. Only a handful of people were aware of the numerous individuals who risked their lives that night for the community.

With these concerns and goals in mind, Mr. Faris took the initiative to report on behalf of the YCSO. Thus, allowing officers to tell their own story of that night to one of their own. Numerous articles had been written about Detective Doty and the officers who were injured during the manhunt. However, the night's other heroes were never mentioned and their stories of bravery were in peril of being lost. While those in public safety do not require accolades for each act of bravery, the YCSO deemed it important to highlight the many heroes across a variety of public safety entities who played integral roles in the night's events.

- 2.) To chronicle the event for the YCSO and the community.

On Sept 25, 1992, YCSO Deputy Brent McCants was shot and killed in the line of duty. Each year on this date, the YCSO honors him. Few articles or videos have been produced by the media regarding his death. Knowing this, Mr. Faris took the initiative to produce a documentary that ensures the YCSO and residents will always have a recorded history of the events that took place surrounding Det. Doty's death. Each year on the anniversary of Det. Doty's death, the YCSO plans to re-release the documentary. The release order is as follows:

January 15th, initial call: *The many heroes. Part 1: The Call & Officer Down*

January 16th, the day officers were shot and ambushed: *The many heroes. Part 2: The Boat & Ambush*

January 17th, Det. Doty succumbed to his injuries and passed away: *The many heroes." Part 3: Aftermath & Never Forget 809*

3.) To bring healing to the community

York County Sherriff Kevin Tolson felt a documentary narrated through his officer's eyes could bring healing to a hurting community. The community had questions about the events that surrounded that night, many prompted by the deep heartache throughout York County at the loss of an officer. The Sheriff knew that sensationalized interviews and articles would not assist in healing the community. However, the documentary could provide knowledge, which often leads to healing. The documentary enables the community to experience the night alongside the YCSO. Viewers are able to cry along with the officers. The documentary perfectly pieces the events of the night together by delicately unfolding what took place. No stone was left unturned and no question went unanswered. With full knowledge of Det. Doty's character and the events surrounding his death, the community could begin to heal.

What is the significance of this project to your community as a whole? How does it relate in importance to the other problems in your community?

This tragic night affected the entire community. The York County community and law enforcement agencies across the United States came out in droves to show honor and respect to Det. Doty at his funeral. After the initial season of mourning passed, unanswered questions began to surface throughout the community. How could the YCSO touch residents and speak directly to them about Det. Doty and that night? The only way was through the documentary.

The documentary is significant for the following reasons:

1.) It unifies York County.

Instead of watching different reports and newscasts, York County residents have the opportunity to watch the same documentary. Therefore, the community experiences unification because they have access to a full account of what really happened the night of the shootings.

Furthermore, the documentary tells the whole story of that fateful night in vivid detail so viewers feel as if they are there on scene with the YCSO. Therefore, the viewer and the YCSO are unified. Some examples of the viewer's experience are as follows:

- a. By the end, the viewer can imagine how cold it was that night because each person mentioned the coldness and described how it affected them.

- b. Since the viewer experiences the entire tragedy from beginning to end, the heartache of the officers lining the hospital hallway as Det. Doty's body is taken for organ harvest is palpable.

The unity of the community has been evident in the outpouring of thankfulness to the YCSO. The YCSO did not create this documentary to receive glory. The officers were vulnerable in telling their story so the residents of York County could have the necessary information to begin their own healing. In return, residents have shown kindness to and thankfulness towards the YCSO. This attitude of appreciation and thankfulness is a response to the YCSO voluntarily sharing their story.

Lastly, the community is unified as residents realize they are living amongst heroes. Before releasing the documentary, residents only knew the faces of Det. Doty and the other men who were injured. As mentioned, media outlets produced in-depth stories about these individuals and what happened to them. The documentary highlights the faces of seventeen public safety officials who experienced this tragic event. Residents realize that these heroes are with them at church, little league games, and all throughout the community. York County continues to experience unification because residents recognize that the YCSO is part of their daily life, both on and off duty. The community and the YCSO are united by common experience and strong sense of community.

- 2.) It humanizes the officers of the YCSO.

Oftentimes, the public perceives police officers as tough, unapproachable, and emotionless. This documentary displays the humanity of York County public safety officials who experienced a tragedy. They too are heartbroken, many are still healing, and they are brought to tears over the events that took place that night.

- 3.) It allows the YCSO and other public safety officials to thank the community

The YCSO thanks the community for their support in video number three. Numerous officers describe the community's support. This documentary shows the significance of community support and allows the YCSO an opportunity to publicly thank the community for the outpouring of love they experienced following this tragedy.

In today's cultural climate, trust in law enforcement agencies has waned. This documentary proves to York County residents that the YCSO can be trusted and upholds respect for all persons they encounter.

First, the community learns that they can trust Sheriff Tolson to show respect. In the second video, residents learn that Sheriff Tolson directed all his men to move away from Christian McCall (shooter) to ensure no one acted out of emotion rather than reason. The Sheriff himself modeled respect towards McCall.

Secondly, officers had a clear shot at McCall at one point during the incident. Many would have believed they were justified to shoot someone who laid in the dark ambushing them, killing a fellow officer. The community learns directly from Sheriff Office employees that they respect the law and every person they encounter. Sgt. Grady Gonzales describes the type of respect the YCSO models even when they are not shown respect,

“He took Mike’s life for no reason. He could have easily given up at any point. We would have treated him like any other...treated with respect...we do believe in that. If we have to take human life, it’s not easy, it’s not fun, it’s not what you get in this job for. We’re not out here to dish what we think justice is. That’s not who we are. We are collector of the facts. We have to do bad things sometimes. We have to be justified in all that we do...We gave him, as we would anybody, the respect they deserve as a human being, but he surely didn’t give that to any of us.” ¹

Lastly, the videos prove that the sole intention of the YCSO is to protect. The documentary verifies that YCSO takes their oath of office seriously, even when it means their life. Sgt. Gonzales describes the protection of life that night,

“We can’t wait...let him be out there...a lot of good people live over there and we have a lot of great people that live in this county. We didn’t want him to hurt any of them, take them hostage, and maybe kill them.” ²

How much of the county’s population is benefited by the project? In what specific ways are different groups of citizens within the county better off than before?

The entire York County population benefits from this project. Residents are able to watch these videos at any time, learn from them and grow from them. Community groups have watched the videos and continue to reach out to the YCSO to schedule the officers to visit their meetings.

The videos have aided in the healing process for many of those involved. Firstly, some of the officers who participated received unexpected healing from the videos. Walking through the events and publicly talking about their experience had a cathartic effect on many of the officers.

Secondly, the videos have helped in the healing process for the Doty family. Det. Doty’s mother shared with Mr. Faris a desire to know who last spoke with her son. After watching the videos, she discovered that Det. Buddy Brown was the last person to speak with Det. Doty. Knowing facts from the videos continues to assist the Doty family with their healing.

Since York County is growing rapidly, new residents benefit from this project. It’s hard to enter York County without this event coming up in conversation or hearing it mentioned on the news linked to another story. New residents feel connected to their new community by watching these videos. Additionally, new residents learn that that they too can trust the YCSO.

The law enforcement community is affected by this documentary. When one officer is lost, it is felt throughout the entire law enforcement community. That was evidenced by the different law enforcement organizations from across the country who attended Det. Doty’s funeral. This video affects the law enforcement community because each member can relate to the quick decisions and life-risking activities that took place that night. These videos not only assist with their healing, but also can be an educational tool for officers training for ambush situations.

¹ York County Sheriff’s Office (2019, January 16) *The Many Heroes. Part 3: Aftermath & Never Forget 809* [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/5DPpCnSSiZQ>

² York County Sheriff’s Office (2019, January 15) *The Many Heroes. Part 2: The Boat and Ambush* [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/EkOlbkYrpT4>

What degree of success did the project attain? What major objectives were achieved? Provide data where possible.

As of May 31, the videos cumulatively received 44,362 views on YouTube.

The success of the documentary can be measured by the community's reaction. After the release of the videos, residents have displayed a more thankful and supportive attitude towards law enforcement agencies in York County. Additional measurable of success may be forthcoming. This documentary is likely to influence lives in ways that are immeasurable. Perhaps someone decides on a career in law enforcement because of these videos. The possibilities are endless with life changing affects these videos could have on individuals in the community.

The primary objective of honoring Det. Doty's life has been achieved. Secondly, the videos chronicle the entire event from the men who were there that night. The videos bring healing to many different groups within the York County population. Lastly, the videos increase community trust in the YCSO. Ironically, these videos were not produced with this goal in mind. The officers display evidence of their trustworthiness through their own voices, selfless acts that night, and obvious passion. Their answers were not rehearsed. They spoke from the heart directly to the residents of York County.

What did your county have to do to accomplish its objectives? If your county worked with another local government or consultant, how was the work divided?

In order to produce the documentary and accomplish the set out objectives, the YCSO had to find officers who were willing to participate. Mr. Faris sent a request to those in the YCSO and other agencies who served in significant roles during the event asking them to tell their story.

Mr. Faris did not want the videos to be embellished. Therefore, he asked the same two questions of each participant:

- 1.) Will you walk me through the night from your initial call until the end; and,
- 2.) Who was the Mike Doty you knew?

Asking everyone the same questions helped depict an accurate portrayal of the events. The community knew only the Mike Doty described by the media; the documentary allowed those who knew him to describe his character in detail.

Mr. Faris included individuals from the SWAT team who work in York County Emergency Management and York Police Department, as well as a York County 9-1-1 operator. He asked them the same two questions as everyone else.

What challenges occurred during the project? Were there any community concerns?

Numerous challenges occurred during the project. They are as follows:

- 1.) Officers were asked to relive a nightmare.

Though it was hard for the Sheriff to ask, he knew the public safety community within York County would persevere and think of the greater good in honoring Det. Doty. They would want to assist in the healing process for the community.

- 2.) Technical Issues

With any video project, there are technical challenges that occur. Mr. Faris filmed all the interviews in the Sheriff's conference room. He faced lighting issues throughout filming in this room. Additionally, he had to tear down the video set-up every time the conference room was utilized, and then put it all back up when he began interviewing again.

3.) Day-to-day responsibilities as PIO

Mr. Faris produced this documentary while performing his regular PIO duties. For five months, he interviewed the officers himself and edited over 17+ hours of video. Mr. Faris played numerous roles as PIO, reporter, editor and historian during these five months. However, his PIO responsibilities always took precedence.

4.) Not hinder the YCSO operations

Mr. Faris had to produce a documentary that provided enough information to the public, but did not hinder the YCSO operations. As PIO for law enforcement, Mr. Faris must ensure that he does not provide information that gives away the tools, tactics and techniques of the YCSO. There was a concern that some type of tactical information could be provided to the public, which in turn, could be used against the YCSO in another criminal situation.

5.) Release of the documentary to different parties

Mr. Faris worked against the deadline of the year anniversary of Det. Doty's death. Numerous people needed to see the documentary before the public. First, he provided the documentary to the Sheriff for his approval. After that, he wanted the Doty family to have the opportunity to see the videos. He knew they would learn a lot from these videos and felt they deserved to see them before the public. Lastly, the officers of the YCSO also deserved to see the documentary before the public did. He wanted to provide enough time for these parties to watch the videos and provide feedback before releasing to the public on the year anniversary of Det. Doty's death.

There were two community concerns from the YCSO. They are as follows:

1.) How would the public receive the videos?

Mr. Faris was concerned that the public would use the documentary as a tool to criticize the YCSO. He did not want the community to question the handling of the situation by the YCSO. Any criticism from the public would affect the involved public safety officials.

2.) How would the media use/respond to the videos?

Mr. Faris allowed the media to use the videos as long as they gave credit to the YCSO. He was nervous about which parts the media would use in order to create a two-minute emotional sound bite to attract viewers. Most of the media showed respect for YCSO and used the videos in an appropriate and honorable manner. However, one or two media outlets did not.

Additionally, the University of South Carolina Professor Kevin Hull, highlighted a concern,

"What if we want a trained reporter to ask tough questions? The Sheriff probably

doesn't want those questions asked, especially by a fellow police officer." ³ (Collins 2019)

What were the nature and extent of the county government's efforts to alleviate the problem(s)? How difficult was it to accomplish the project's goals and/or objectives?

With the first year anniversary of Det. Doty's death approaching, the YCSO wanted to be the voice honoring their fallen brother. The Sheriff's Office bypassed the media, and told their own story in their own words. Additionally, the YCSO wanted to ensure that Det. Doty and his sacrifice would never be forgotten.

This project was emotionally difficult for the officers who volunteered to be interviewed. That is why the Sherriff, chose one of his own to interview the men and not a reporter,

"...some of the officers likely wouldn't have talked to someone outside the Sheriff's Office and even if they did, would have been a lot more guarded. You'll see a little bit of emotion...But you'll also see the healing."³ (Collins 2019)

The most difficult task for Mr. Faris was interviewing the officers and editing the 17+hrs of video while still performing his day-to-day responsibilities as a PIO for the YCSO. This was not a project that could be quickly pieced together.

Was financing the project an obstacle? Were there any unusual factors inherent in financing the project?

Financing was not an obstacle. Mr. Faris used the video equipment and software the Sheriff's Office had purchased seven years ago. Additionally, Mr. Faris used social media to post and promote the video.

Did any agencies, citizen groups, or other organizations assist your county with this project? Did their participation pose any particular challenges or offer any unique contributions or benefits?

The following agencies participated in the videos: York County Sheriff's Office, York County Public Safety Communications, York County Emergency Management, York Police Department, and State Law Enforcement Division (SLED).

By allowing different agencies to participate in the videos, different perspectives of that night were highlighted and documented. By shedding light on the contributions of each agency, the public is able to understand the lifesaving coordination the 9-1-1 center provided, the guidance the SLED helicopter provided, and the quick, lifesaving decisions the SWAT medics made.

Are there any unresolved problems or other goals left to tackle?

Mr. Faris would like to create a similar documentary detailing the tragic death of Dep. McCants. Mr. Faris plans to interview YCSO employees and others to create a documentary in McCants honor. A secondary objective is chronicling the event for the YCSO.

³ (Collins, J. (2019, Jan. 14) "3-Hour Documentary on Ambush Made by Deputies, not Reporters." *The Associated Press*. Retrieved from: <https://apnews.com/22ab423dd4854ef4a4e2af6620d9fba5>

Justify the uniqueness of this project. What makes it different from other projects designed to achieve the same objective?

This project is unique in that a law enforcement organization itself took charge of documenting an emotional event for public viewing. Instead of relying on a traditional taped statement, the agency increased transparency and ensured that a full and accurate account was given. By choosing this different method, the YCSO honors their fallen brother and brings healing and unification to York County. The uniqueness of this project is best described by Professor Hull:

“But typically agencies put out a taped statement from the Sheriff or a three or four minute segment with an interview or two and some surveillance camera footage. A three-hour documentary is a uniquely ambitious project,”³ Hull said.

Hull goes on to describe,

“The project fills a niche that would have likely otherwise not been done because a TV station in Charlotte would not have had the time or the inclination to produce a three-hour program on the shootings.”³

Hull finishes by stating,

“And the Sheriff’s office gets to honor Doty and the other officers in the way it sees fit.”³ (Collins 2019)

Do you know of any other similar programs in South Carolina? If so, how is your program different?

Mr. Faris does not know of any agency in SC or nationwide that has created a stand-alone documentary. However, the Las Vegas Metro Police Department (LVMPD) created a video about the 2017 Mandalay Bay shooting. Mr. Faris credits his idea of a documentary after seeing the (LVMPD) video.

What innovations were required in accomplishing your objectives?

The innovations used for this project were and still are YouTube and social media outlets.

Who provided the creativity and imagination in your project?

YCSO PIO Trent Faris provided the creativity and imagination for this project. His background is as follows: Mr. Faris has served as the Public Information Officer for the YCSO since 2012. Prior to serving with the YCSO, he was a Multi-Media Journalist (Reporter) for 7 years at WBTV News (CBS) in Charlotte, NC. Prior to that, he worked at CN2 News in Rock Hill as a Sports Reporter and Photographer.

Application References:

- Collins, J. (2019, Jan. 14) “3-Hour Documentary on Ambush Made by Deputies, not Reporters.” *The Associated Press*. Retrieved from: <https://apnews.com/22ab423dd4854ef4a4e2af6620d9fba5>
- York County Sheriff’s Office (2019, January 15) *The Many Heroes. Part 2: The Boat and Ambush* [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/EkOlbkYrpT4>
- York County Sheriff’s Office (2019, January 16) *The Many Heroes. Part 3: Aftermath & Never Forget* 809 [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/5DPpCnSSiZQ>.

Det. Mike Doty, EOW 17 January 2018



The Many Heroes



“3-hour documentary on ambush made by deputies, not reporters” AP, By Jeffery Collins, Jan 14, 2019. Retrieved From: <https://www.apnews.com/22ab423dd4854ef4a4e2af6620d9fba5>
COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — After a deadly ambush involving deputies from the York County Sheriff’s Office, the man in charge of the department’s public relations didn’t want the incident to fade from memory.

Instead of seeking media interviews, sheriff’s spokesman Trent Faris reached out to the officers and asked them if they would talk to him. The result is a three-hour documentary that will start streaming Tuesday - one year to the day after the 911 call that set in motion the events of the ambush that resulted in the death of one deputy and the wounding of three others.

“It’s a way to get the story from the officers’ mouths unedited — not editorialized, not a Q & A — just them sitting down and telling it open-ended,” York County Sheriff Kevin Tolson said.

The documentary — touted in previews on social media as “in their own words for the first time” — will be released on the department’s YouTube channel in three parts, continuing a trend of institutions bypassing traditional media to tell their own stories the way they want them told.

“Police departments are increasingly hiring former journalists as public information officers. They know how the game works. They can put the message they want out to the public and they have good practices to make it look professional,” said University of South Carolina professor Kevin Hull, himself a former TV reporter who teaches introductory journalism.

But typically agencies put out a taped statement from the sheriff or a three or four-minute segment with an interview or two and some surveillance camera footage. A three-hour documentary is a uniquely ambitious project, Hull said.

York County detective Mike Doty was killed and three others hurt in a pair of ambushes. Christian McCall ran into the woods with a pistol and a rifle, a knife, a hatchet and six 30-round magazines of ammunition after beating his wife of about 20 years on Jan. 15, 2018, authorities said.

McCall first shot an officer using a dog to track him. He then hid under a deck and shot Doty and two others. One unidentified officer said in the documentary previews that McCall could have shot even more.

The documentary will use 911 calls, police radio traffic, and dramatic night-vision footage from helicopters showing officers drag their wounded colleagues to ambulances along with interviews with at least a dozen officers, Tolson said.

The tagline at the end of a number of previews Faris posted on YouTube is “The untold story of heroism.”

All the footage used has already been released to the public, and Tolson said most of it was shown in court when McCall, who had a spotless criminal record for two decades, pleaded guilty to murder and other charges in May just four months after the ambush and was sentenced to life in prison.

The project fills a niche that would have likely otherwise not been done because a TV station in Charlotte would not have had the time or the inclination to produce a three-hour program on the shootings, Hull said.

And the sheriff’s office gets to honor Doty and the other officers in the way it sees fit, Hull said. But that also creates its own problems. “What if we want a trained reporter to ask tough questions?” Hull said. “The sheriff probably doesn’t want those questions asked, especially by a fellow police officer.”

Tolson said some of the officers likely wouldn’t have talked to someone outside the sheriff’s office and even if they did, would have been a lot more guarded.

“You’ll see a little bit of emotion,” said Tolson. “But you’ll also see the healing.”

“Erie Feeling: York County Officers remember fatal 2018 police shooting in video”

By Hannah Smoot (2019, Jan. 15) *The Herald* : Retrieved From:
<https://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article224558970.html>

(York County, SC)-One year after the death of a York County officer, first responders are sharing their stories about the night of the “ambush” in a sheriff’s office video.

The voice of fatally shot Det. Mike Doty can be heard in the hour-long video released Tuesday morning, calling for ambulances. And deputies talk about the difficulties in trying to find the shooter amid freezing temperatures and darkness the night of Jan. 15 and early morning of Jan. 16, 2018.

Christian McCall is serving life in prison without the possibility of parole. He pleaded guilty in May to murder in the death of Doty and the shootings of three officers in what police called an “ambush” attack after a domestic violence call near York.

Three officers shot that night spoke out on video, too, some for the first time publicly.

Sgt. Randy Clinton, who was the first law enforcement officer shot, said he had a bad feeling about the domestic violence call from the beginning.

“Just something about this call. It isn’t going to turn out to be good,” Clinton said.

Clinton returned to work Monday, almost a year later.

The other injured officers were York County Sheriff’s Office Sgt. Buddy Brown and York Police Department Sgt. Kyle Cummings.

The sheriff’s office released the one hour video on its Facebook and YouTube pages. The video is the first of three videos to be released Jan. 15, 16 and 17. The videos feature interviews of officers and first responders at the scene that night.

York County deputy Cole Greene, who was with Clinton when he was shot, said he also had a bad feeling. He said he noticed he got ready more slowly than usual and drove to the scene slower than usual.

“Ten minutes before I got on scene, Sgt. Clinton calls me and says: ‘Hey, I got a bad feeling about this,’” Greene said. “And he’s never done that before. And it just added on top of everything that I had already felt from that night.”

Greene, Lt. Mike Ligon and Cpl. Chris Laurencio were with Clinton, and K-9 Unit dog Gabby, when Clinton was shot. “He shot me twice and I’m disoriented,” Clinton said. “And I don’t know where anybody else is, where the other officers are at. I’ve got my gun in my hand but I don’t know where to shoot, because I didn’t see the muzzle flash.”

The officers asked for help in finding the shooter from a State Law Enforcement Division helicopter flying above with a heat-seeking camera. “Next thing you know he opens fire again, and I started returning fire to his muzzle blast from the muzzle flash of his weapon,” Ligon said.

Greene grabbed Gabby and Ligon, and Laurencio pulled Clinton out of the woods after the shooter moved away, they said in the sheriff’s office video.

The SLED helicopter pilots stayed at the scene until they were low on fuel. They had to land because they could not get back to the airport. “Those helicopter pilots are special human beings, to say the least,” said Cummings, who was later shot.

Greene was treated for hypothermia after he was stationed near the crime scene for almost two hours. “When a man with 34 years of experience has an eerie feeling, you learn to trust it,” Greene said.

“Smell of gunfire, smell of blood: York Co. video tells part 2 of police shooting”

By Hannah Smoot (2019, Jan. 16) *The Herald* : Retrieved From:

<https://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/crime/article224622490.html>

(York County, SC)-York County SWAT team member Sgt. Kyle Cummings thought he was going to die in the early morning hours of Jan. 16, 2018.

For the first time, one year later, he has talked publicly about the people who saved his life.

Cummings was one of the four York County officers shot in an “ambush” during a manhunt for a domestic violence suspect the night of Jan. 15 and early morning of Jan. 16, 2018.

SWAT team member Det. Mike Doty died from his injuries Jan. 17, 2018.

The York County Sheriff's Office released part two of a three-part video series on the shooting Wednesday. The third and final video will be released Thursday.

In the first video officers talked about how the night began. After a 911 call reporting a domestic violence incident, a York County K-9 Unit lead by Sgt. Randy Clinton searched a York wooded neighborhood for the suspect, Christian McCall. Clinton was shot twice. He returned to work Monday a year after the incident.

In the second video, Cummings and Sgt. Buddy Brown, SWAT members who were shot along with Doty, described searching for McCall. Doty was part of their group. Brown said he pointed out a house's back deck to search. That turned out to be McCall's hiding spot. Brown said he and Doty were shot almost immediately.

Cummings was later shot in the gunfight. The bullet that struck Cummings was later found to be a police bullet likely fired by another SWAT team member. But McCall was held responsible in court and pleaded guilty for the attempted murder of Cummings.

In the second video, the sheriff's office included the audio of Lt. Heath Clevenger calling for medics for two injured law enforcement officers. Emergency Management Assistant Director and SWAT team medic Mike Channell said he was working by his instinct and training amid the chaos.

“I immediately ran to Kyle, who was screaming in pain, bleeding profusely from the gunshot wound,” Channell said. Cummings had been shot in the thigh. “I thought I was gonna bleed to death,” Cummings said in the video. “Just the way I was bleeding. I could feel the blood spurting. I thought I was done. I really did. I didn't think there was any coming back.” He said he didn't think the medics would get to him in time — they would have to wait until the suspect was controlled. “That's just how life works,” he said. “That's how it works. I mean you can't expose them to gunfire, you just can't. I was just laying there — and next thing I know, here comes the medics.”

Emergency Management director and SWAT team medic Chuck Haynes said he couldn't fit a tourniquet high enough on Cummings and had to plug the bullet wound with his finger and gauze. “I was kind of overtaken by the smell of gunfire, by the smell of blood,” Haynes said. “Just the organized chaos that was going on. Everybody knew that things had to be done, but it was cold, it was dark, people were hurt, our friends were hurt and we needed to do a lot of things in a short amount of time.”

Cummings' wife didn't make it to the hospital before he went into surgery, Haynes said. So Cummings gave Haynes his wedding ring to give to her. He had to find a sink first, Haynes said — it was covered in blood. Cummings seemed to choke back emotions remembering the people who came for him that night. “They came,” Cummings said. “Without any regards to personal safety. They didn't know if the suspect was still able to fire, but they didn't care. They had no reservations about what they were doing whatsoever. They came, and they got to me. And they saved my life.”

“Doty remembered in York County sheriff’s video part 3 about police shooting aftermath”

By Hannah Smoot (2019, Jan. 17) *The Herald* : Retrieved From:

<https://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article224675485.html>

(York County, SC)-Det. Mike Doty died Jan. 17, 2018, a day after he was one of four deputies shot searching for a domestic violence suspect in York. One year later, the York County Sheriff’s Office released an hour long video remembering Doty and the aftermath of that shooting.

The video released Thursday morning was the last of three hour-long videos the sheriff’s office released on the week of the shooting’s one- year anniversary. The first two videos talked about how the call began the night of Jan. 15 and early morning of Jan. 16, 2018, and what it was like to be there. The third video focused on the memory of Doty. Three other officers — Sgts. Randy Clinton, Buddy Brown and Kyle Cummings — were also shot, but survived.

Doty’s colleagues and friends describe him as someone who wasn’t always easy to get to know, but who cared a lot. “Doty’s like all of us,” York County Cpl. Stephen Ramsey said. “Doty was not a saint. He had his bad times, just like everybody else had their bad times. But Doty always did what you asked him to do, and would go above and beyond that. I don’t think you can question his dedication to the job and to the community.”

After Doty’s death, friends and family formed the 809 Foundation to carry on Doty’s extensive work with children and the community. The number 809 was Doty’s radio call number. The foundation asked people to remember Doty on Thursday by displaying blue lights and wearing blue.

“Mike wasn’t always the most pleasant,” said Doty’s twin brother and fellow York County deputy, Chris Doty. “But that was the outside. The inside was just the love that he had. And it was — it didn’t matter who you are, or were. If he was your friend or a family member, it was just pure love.”

Injured officer Cummings said Doty was a friend who would do anything for his loved ones.

“Mike Doty is one of the finest warriors America has to offer,” Cummings said. “Without a doubt. Mike’s a true hero. And he’ll never be forgotten. Ever.”





May 20, 2019

J. Mitchell Graham Award Judges
South Carolina Association of Counties
1919 Thurmond Mall
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

Distinguished Judges,

On behalf of the York County Council and York County Government, I honorably support the submission of the York County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) three-hour documentary, *The Many Heroes*, for the J. Mitchell Graham Award.

This innovative project has proven to be instrumental in the healing process and unification of York County residents. One year after the death of their own, the YCSO emotionally and humbly honored their fallen brother; as well as, provided a true perspective of the tragic events of Jan. 15 & 16. A perspective that the media could not, nor did not, provide.

This documentary verifies the self-sacrificing public safety officials we are fortunate to have here in York County. The honesty, vulnerability and respect showcased throughout the documentary is inspirational to the entire community.

This project was emotionally hard for the YCSO; however, much needed for the deep heartache felt throughout York County. This is the type of project that is unique and usually not produced in-house by law enforcement entities. Thus, deserving recognition for its uniqueness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Michael Johnson, Jr.", written over a white background.

R. Michael Johnson, Jr.
York County Council Chairman



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

YORK COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

1675-2A York Highway • York, SC • 29745-7430
Phone: (803) 628-3059 • www.yorkcountysheriff.com • FAX: (803) 628-3075

Kevin R. Tolson, Sheriff



April 18, 2019

J. Mitchell Graham Award Judges
South Carolina Association Of Counties
PO Box 8207
1919 Thurmond Mall
Columbia, SC 29201-2375

Distinguished Judges,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend the York County Sheriff's Office original documentary, "The Many Heroes" for the J. Mitchell Graham Award. The documentary shares the story of a tragic night where four police officers were ambushed and wounded – one fatally.

This was an important project for the Sheriff's Office for many reasons, mainly to ensure that details were shared in a fair and compassionate way. Having the documentary filmed, edited, and produced strictly in house by Public Information Officer Trent Faris, was also important to the documentary process. This allowed the officers involved the comfort of talking to someone they knew and worked with daily. The one on one interview style really brought to life the personal perspective of each officer involved, ultimately allowing the public to experience the events that unfolded from the true perspective of each responder. Relatability and transparency are two very important factors that are valued by the York County Sheriff's Office, York County Government and the citizens of York County.

York County has my full support for the J. Mitchell Graham award. "The Many Heroes" has, without a doubt, positively impacted our community, our agency and York County Government.

Please contact me should you have and questions regarding this letter of support.

Sincerely,

Kevin R. Tolson
Sheriff, York County



May 30, 2019

South Carolina Association of Counties

Distinguished Judges,

On behalf of the family of Detective Micheal R. Doty and the 809 Foundation this letter is being sent in support of the York County Sheriff's Office and the Documentary that was produced for the anniversary of the tragic events from January 2018. The manner in which these events were presented not only allowed the citizens of York County and South Carolina to have an insight to what occurred but also how the events have influenced the Officers and often their families moving forward. This also allowed the family to understand at a much greater level the sacrifice made by so many that night. The level of professionalism shown throughout the video production shed exceptional credit upon the York County Sheriff's Office and the Public Information Office.

The entire Doty Family and the 809 Foundation continues to be grateful for the care, concern and support that has been shown to us as we all continue to move forward and attempt to keep Mike's legacy alive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. J. Doty", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Christopher J. Doty

President



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

YORK COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

1675-2A York Highway • York, SC • 29745-7430

Phone: (803) 628-3059 • www.yorkcountysheriff.com • FAX: (803) 628-3075

Kevin R. Tolson, *Sheriff*



To whom it may concern:

I, Detective James H "Buddy" Brown, are proud to support the entry of the video series The Many Heroes for the J. Mitchell Graham Award.

The events of January 16, 2018 had a profound effect on me, my family and the citizens of York County. The Many Hero's video series did an amazing job of honoring Detective Doty's memory while allowing everyone affected by this tragic incident to have a better understanding of what actually took place.

I was one of the deputies injured in this incident and would have been very uncomfortable telling my story to someone I didn't know and trust. The format that York County Sheriff's PIO Trent Farris came up with made us all comfortable and allowed our story to be told in its entirety.

My Family watched the series and told me they learned things about the incident that they previously were unaware of. I have also been contacted by Law Enforcement professionals from all over the country that have watched the video and commented on the profound impact it had on them and their agencies.

I gladly support and endorse the entry of The Many Heroes for the J. Mitchell Graham Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James H. Brown".

Detective James H "Buddy" Brown
Property Crimes / SWAT Entry Team
York County Sheriff's Office

May 16, 2019

J. Mitchell Graham Award Judges
South Carolina Association of Counties
1919 Thurmond Mall
PO Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the York County Office of Emergency Management, I support the application for the coveted J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for the documentary "The Many Heroes" produced by the York County Sheriff's Office.


When the tragedy of events began to unfold on January 15, 2018, beginning with the shootings of Sergeant Randy Clinton, Detective Mike Doty, Sergeant Kyle Cummings, and Sergeant Buddy Brown on the early morning of January 16, ultimately leading to the death of Detective Mike Doty on January 17, no one understood how many lives would forever be changed.

In the aftermath, a community was left unsettled. Questions and rumors were ever challenging our law enforcement agencies and those members who repeatedly had to relive that cold night every time someone asked about the shooting. Support poured in from across the country. People from all walks of life lined the streets to say goodbye as Detective Doty was driven to his resting place, but questions remained.

The York County Sheriff's Office decided to produce a three part documentary for the anniversary date. "The Many Heroes" was filmed as officers relived that event in their own words. The video was released and light was shed on what happened and how our officers responded. This video saved the mental anguish of all involved having to face an onslaught of cameras wanting an anniversary report.

As an officer who responded that night and an officer interviewed for the documentary that I truly was against, I found the documentary to provide healing for the community, the officers, and myself. The importance of this project cannot be understated. Our community still remains unified and this award will continue to validate the work by the York County Sheriff's Office.

Respectfully Submitted,



Chuck Haynes, Director



YORK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Public Safety Communications

May 20, 2019

J. Mitchell Graham Award Judges
South Carolina Association of Counties
1919 Thurmond Mall
P.O. Box 8207
Columbia, SC 29202-8207

Distinguished Judges,

On behalf of the York County Department of Public Safety Communications I am writing this letter of support for *The Many Heroes*, a York County Sheriff's Office video documentary. This video highlighted the evening of January 15, 2018, where four officers were critically wounded, and one later died. I feel that its unique support to our community offered answers and healing for a dire event, one year later.

This video chronicled the events that unfolded in the late evening beginning on Monday January 15, 2018. During a domestic violence call deputies were dispatched to a residence where the suspect left on foot with a high-powered rifle and carry bag. Because of the severity, the York County Sheriff's Office SWAT team was deployed. Once deployed a K-9 officer was shot, as the suspect laid waiting to ambush him. Over a few hours and two separate shooting incidents four officers were critically wounded. One of the officers was Sergeant Mike Doty and he was shot during the early morning hours of January 16 and succumbed to his injury one day later. Over the next hours, days, weeks months all public safety had to deal with a "new normal" after such a tragic incident. This incident also had a deep impact on York County citizens as well. There was an overwhelming outpouring of support for public safety because citizens didn't know how to really respond to such a tragic incident.

The Many Heroes video is a 3 hour documentary published by the Sheriff's Office that allowed citizens to live through the event and understand what took place that evening. On that night there were many heroes wearing different uniforms; deputies, police, telecommunicators, paramedics and firefighters that responded. There is not enough space to adequately provide how our public safety community pulled together that night, but *The Many Heroes* chronicled the events to give better understanding and healing. The video was placed publically on social media and has received over fifty thousand views on several media platforms.

Clearly after the event, all of York County (citizens, cities and county government) was reeling from this incident. Strong government leaders, our faith community and citizens pulled together over the next year to bring us to a new daily norm. *The Many Heroes* provided perspective and hope by highlighting the strong men and women that protect and serve our communities. This documentary provided a unique perspective to enhance our communication with citizens and promote a greater quality of life so that our community can feel safe.

Respectfully,

R. Allen Brandon
Director, York County 9-1-1



May 30, 2019

To whom it may concern:

The Rock Hill SC Police Department supports the submission by the County of York of the documentary video *"The Many Heroes"* for the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award. This video was produced by the York County Sheriff's Office to honor Detective Mike Doty who lost his life in the line of duty in January of 2018. It told the story of the many individuals involved that night in their own words. The three hour video chronicles the events of that incident, and demonstrated to the community who saw it what law enforcement officers are trained to do and the many acts of heroism on that fateful night. It also highlighted that law enforcement officers are human beings that have emotions and respond to dangers every day. Our agency responded in support of the YCSO that night.

The video demonstrated to the community how emergency services all work together in major incidents. Multiple law enforcement agencies responded as well as EMS, Fire, Emergency Management, and Med Center Air medical helicopters all working hand in hand to end the incident and support the victims.

Finally, I believe it helped begin the healing for all the survivors of the incident, and it also helped the healing of the community at large which resulted in a more unified York County. This project I believe is truly worthy of this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark A. Bollinger".

Mark A. Bollinger
Executive Officer
Rock Hill SC Police Department

ROCK HILL POLICE DEPARTMENT

120 EAST BLACK STREET
ROCK HILL, SC 29730 • 803-329-7200



May 14, 2019

To Whom it May Concern,

CN2 News supports the York County Sheriff's office and its documentary *The Many Heroes*. The video documentary detailed the events surrounding the deadly shooting of Det. Mike Doty. CN2 News felt the video documentary was of such importance that we aired the series on our channel.

The death of a law enforcement officer is hard on any area, but we saw so much sadness within the York County Sheriff's Office family as well as the community – we thought airing the entire documentary at one time would help with the healing process.

We understand the death of Det. Doty is still very fresh for the many heroes who worked that night and for them to share their stories with complete strangers asking the questions – would have been difficult. The Sheriff's Office was able to air interviews with those heroes and capture their emotions.

The York County Sheriff's Office is worthy of the South Carolina Association of Counties J. Mitchell Graham Award and the office should be recognized for its storytelling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lucas McFadden'.

Lucas McFadden
CN2 News Anchor/Producer



May 30, 2019

Dear Awards Committee:

The purpose of my letter is to strongly endorse the application of the York County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) to be awarded the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for its production of the documentary "The Many Heroes."

As I'm certain you know, on January 17, 2018 YCSO deputy Mike Doty was shot and killed and 3 other deputies were wounded searching for a domestic violence suspect in the City of York. The horrific series of events dominated the news for days, followed by an incredible outpouring of love and respect for law enforcement in the funeral for Detective Doty.

One year later the YCSO released the first of 3, one hour videos, produced in-house, which chronicled the series of events leading up to January 17th and those which followed ending with footage from the funeral itself.

Losing a YCSO deputy and knowing 3 others were seriously wounded shook York County to its core. "Things like this happen other places, not here" was a common theme, but it did happen here and our community was visibly in shock.

"The Many Heroes" documentary was just what citizens and law enforcement needed to bring closure to this emotional period. The compelling accounts of what happened that evening were riveting. Raw emotion, tears, the love of fellow officers-all these and more poured out of the officers as they told the story of their role the night of January 17, 2018. Each episode brought us closer to the actual event, effectively putting the viewer right in the middle of the crime scene.

All who watched relived what the officers had gone through, and "The Many Heroes" made us appreciate what law enforcement faces every day. This documentary not only helped members of the YCSO bring closure to their personal experiences, but for citizens a fonder appreciation for the work and challenges our community's 1st responders take-on in their profession. "The Many Heroes" brought us "front and center" into their world, giving us a much greater appreciation for the work the men and women of the YCSO do.

I highly recommend "The Many Heroes" be awarded the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award.

Very truly yours,

MANNING KIMMEL

Managing Partner



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