

S.F. cops in Mario Woods shooting are back on the job

By Matier & Ross | January 19, 2016 | Updated: January 19, 2016 5:19pm

✉️ | [f](#) | [t](#) | [p](#) | [s](#) | [g+](#) | [print](#) | [comment](#) 21



Photo: Carlos Avila Gonzalez, The Chronicle

A memorial altar for Mario Woods is made at the site where he was shot and killed in December 2015.

All five San Francisco police officers involved in last month's fatal shooting of **Mario Woods** have been quietly cleared to return to work by a Police Department panel and Chief **Greg Suhr** — and have been placed on desk duty while investigators continue their probe.

The five officers — **Winson Seto**, **Antonio Santos**, **Charles August**, **Nicholas Cuevas** and **Scott Phillips** — were placed on paid administrative leave after the Dec. 2 shooting in the Bayview of Woods, 26, a suspect in a stabbing who was holding a knife.

None of the officers is going back on the street anytime soon — not while police and the district attorney's office decide whether criminal or disciplinary charges are warranted.

A seven-member police management panel recommended that the officers be returned to work. Suhr told us he “concurred and placed them on administrative duties.”

The chief briefed the Police Commission on the decision, but didn't seek its approval, said panel President **Suzy Loftus**. “That was not our call,” she said.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco Police Officers Association — which has mounted a radio ad campaign defending the shooting — has put out the call to its membership to turn out for a show of support for the officers at Wednesday's commission meeting.

One of those expected to show up is Officer **Shante Williams**, who was on the scene when the shooting happened and helped administer CPR to Woods.

Many of the protesters upset over the shooting have focused on the fact that Woods was African American. But Williams, who is black, said race had nothing to do with it.

“People are screaming justice for Mario Woods, but you have to understand that less than 30 minutes before this, he stabbed a man unprovoked,” Williams said.

Of the five officers who shot Woods, one is white. The others are Asian American, Latino, black and Filipino American.

“We don't go out looking for color — we go out looking for criminal activity,” Williams said. “We are not out there racial profiling.”

Many officers are unhappy that some members of the Board of Supervisors are “pretty much passing judgment on us as guilty until proven innocent,” said Williams, who expects 10 to 20 of his fellow Bayview officers to show up on their own time at the Police Commission meeting.

Just hours before the session, Woods is expected to receive his high school diploma posthumously from Five Keys Charter School, which offers classes to people in community-based programs and County Jail. Woods took his courses at HealthRight 360 in San Francisco, which offers mental health services, health care and substance-abuse treatment.

His mother, **Gwen Woods**, is expected to receive the diploma during Five Keys' graduation ceremony at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Bump in the road: If history is any indication, the protesters who shut down the Bay Bridge on Monday won't pay too high a price — if any — for their actions.

THE MARIO WOODS KILLING



Woods' family calls for federal probes into S.F. police killing



Woods' mother calls off meeting with mayor



Police Chief Greg Suhr sees red over rumors run amok



S.F. mayor Ed Lee outlines reforms in wake of Woods killing



Photo: Michael Macor, The Chronicle

A woman who declined to give her name displayed a photo of the victim Mario Woods as the San Francisco Police department hosted a town hall meeting, on Fri. December 4, 2015 to discuss the officer-involved shooting of 26-year-old Mario Woods in the Bayview neighborhood that sparked outrage nationwide after a video taken of the shooting was circulated on social media, in San Francisco, Calif.

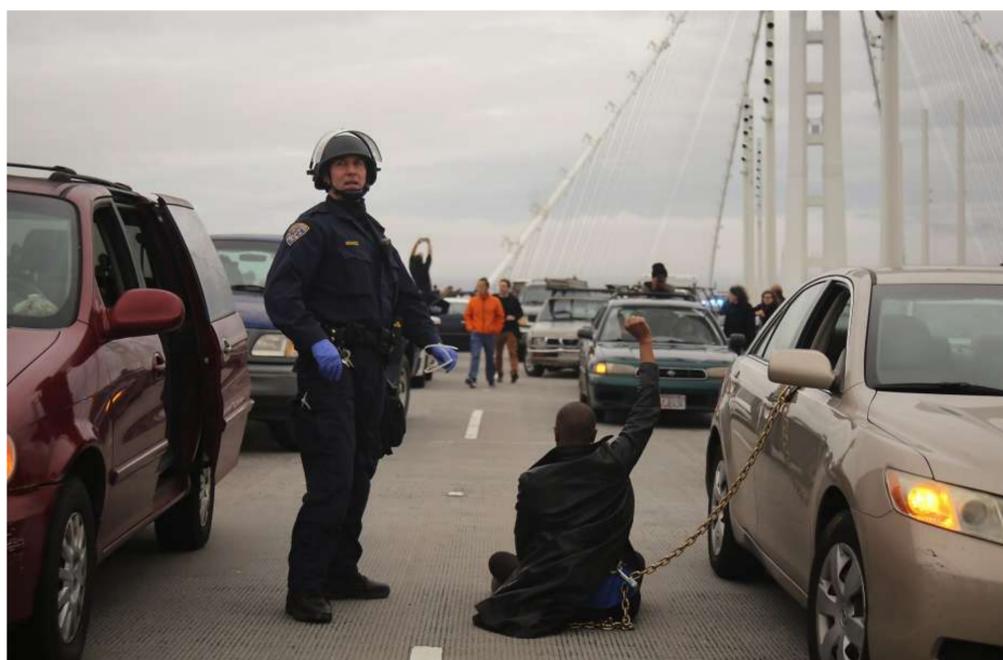


Photo: Joel Angel Juarez

April Martin raises her fist as she and other protesters block traffic during a demonstration against police brutality on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in Oakland, California on January 18, 2016.

Twenty-five people were arrested by the California Highway Patrol after chaining themselves to five cars that they parked across the westbound lanes of the eastern span. They were booked on suspicion of creating a public nuisance, unlawful assembly and obstructing free passage.

However, local prosecutors often ultimately reduce — or even drop — charges in such cases.

The most recent example was Alameda County District Attorney **Nancy O'Malley**, who dismissed all charges against 14 Black Lives Matter protesters who disrupted BART service for hours when they chained themselves to a train at the West Oakland station the day after Thanksgiving in 2014.

O'Malley's decision followed a year of political pressure by protesters' supporters, including sit-ins in her office.

Rather than take the cases to court, O'Malley had the protesters come in for a “restorative justice” sit-down in her office. At the meeting, the protesters acknowledged the effect their demonstration had on BART passengers. They also aired their complaints about the criminal justice system.

Contrast that with how San Mateo County prosecutors dealt with activists who shut down the San Mateo Bridge last January in support of protesters in Ferguson, Mo. A dozen who refused a plea deal that included \$400 apiece in restitution and 30 hours of community service went to trial, and “all but one were convicted,” said Chief Deputy District Attorney **Karen Guidotti**.

Most were sentenced to between 30 and 100 hours of community service. One protester got two days in jail — but wound up picking up garbage instead.

San Francisco Chronicle columnists **Phillip Matier** and **Andrew Ross** appear *Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays*. *Matier* can be seen on the *KPIX TV* morning and evening news. He can also be heard on *KCBS* radio Monday through Friday at 7:50 a.m. and 5:50 p.m. Got a tip? Call (415) 777-8815, or e-mail matierandross@sfgchronicle.com. Twitter: [@matierandross](https://twitter.com/matierandross)

Matier & Ross
Chronicle Columnists

You must be signed in to comment

SIGN IN

<p>Local</p> <p>Gaps in counts of police killings hinder grasp of issue</p>	<p>49ers</p> <p>49ers' Groundhog Day cycle of failure destroys all hope</p>	<p>Election 2016</p> <p>Voter guide: Recommendations for the Nov. 8 election</p>	<p>Top 100 Restaurants</p> <p>Top 100 Restaurants 2016: Savor Bay Area's best</p>
---	---	--	---