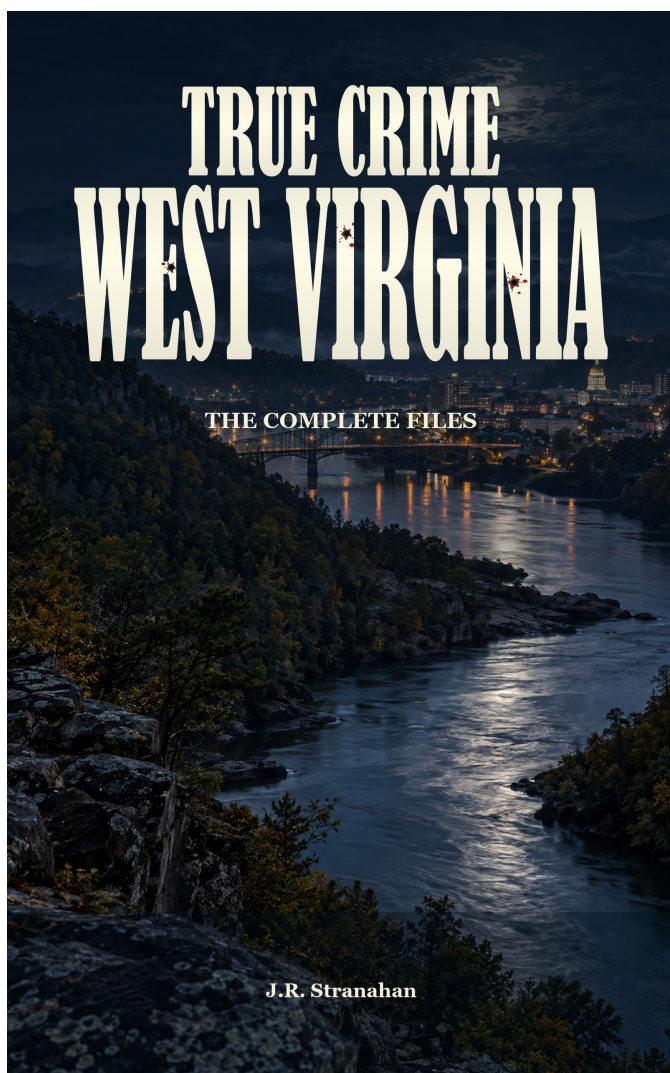


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File 1: The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson

Place and period: Charleston, 2020-2025

Present legal status: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

This file belongs first to Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community. The public record is necessarily organized around investigation and adjudication, but a criminal case is not the measure of a life. The account uses the available record to describe what happened and how institutions responded, while avoiding invented biography where sources are silent.

The human scale

Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of *The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson*. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. In Charleston, later retellings sometimes collapse the investigation and the judgment into one continuous story. The public record does not. It preserves the order in which information appeared and the forum in which it was tested. The present legal posture is stated separately: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

For Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. The detail

belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

The 2020-2025 record from Charleston contains a point that resists shorthand: Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. The present legal posture is equally specific: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The jury convicted Phillips of second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Charleston determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 2020-2025 marks the span over which the public learned it. The 2025 memorandum decision rejected the sufficiency and trial-error claims and left the judgment intact. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. Begin with the person harmed, the routines interrupted, and the community that had to live with the absence. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community.

The first account

By the time The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The jury convicted Phillips of second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

There is no need to enlarge the evidence to make this file serious. The 2025 memorandum decision rejected the sufficiency and trial-error

claims and left the judgment intact. That proposition is consequential on its own. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. The account therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Charleston.

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community at the same time.

At this stage of the file, absence is also information. The available materials establish this much: The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. They do not establish every rumor that accumulated during 2020-2025. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. Refusing to bridge those gaps with speculation keeps the unresolved portions visible instead of disguising them as narrative momentum.

Consider the detail in its proper scale: Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Charleston. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

The language of this chapter changes when the legal posture changes. The jury convicted Phillips of second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. If the proposition came from an accusation, it

remains attributed; if it survived adjudication, the judgment is named; if review altered the result, the alteration is carried forward. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. The controlling endpoint is recorded separately: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

What happened to Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community generated records made for different audiences: investigators, lawyers, judges, jurors, officials, and the public. The 2025 memorandum decision rejected the sufficiency and trial-error claims and left the judgment intact. Those records overlap, but they are not interchangeable. Separate what witnesses reported at the time from what investigators later inferred. Reading across them carefully prevents a later summary from erasing an earlier uncertainty or a later reversal.

Building a chronology

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. In the Charleston record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. Dates and sequence matter because later knowledge can make early decisions seem more certain than they were. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 2020-2025. Dates and sequence matter because later knowledge can make early decisions seem more certain than they were. The legal status is reported in its own terms: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May

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Physical evidence

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: The 2025 memorandum decision rejected the sufficiency and trial-error claims and left the judgment intact. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job.

Describe what an item could establish and what it could not establish without additional proof. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community.

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Witness evidence

Consider the detail in its proper scale: Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Charleston. Credibility is tested through opportunity to observe, consistency, corroboration, motive, and cross-examination. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

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Digital and documentary trails

For Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

The 2020-2025 record from Charleston contains a point that resists shorthand: The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. The present legal posture is equally specific: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. One proposition may be established while a neighboring proposition remains disputed. Treating them separately is not hesitation; it is accurate reporting.

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community privately thought.

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second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. Records can preserve timing and contact, but interpretation still depends on context and authentication. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

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Charging choices

By the time *The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson* reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The jury convicted Phillips of second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. An indictment states allegations; a plea or verdict resolves only the counts and defendants actually adjudicated. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

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The courtroom

What happened to Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community generated records made for different audiences: investigators, lawyers, judges, jurors, officials, and the public. The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. Those records overlap, but they are not interchangeable. A trial is structured proof under rules, not a complete replay of every event or every rumor surrounding it. Reading across them carefully prevents a later summary from erasing an earlier uncertainty or a later reversal.

The most useful context is the context that changes interpretation. Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. In the Charleston record, that detail helps explain why a particular investigative or legal step followed. A trial is structured proof under rules, not a complete replay of every event or every rumor surrounding it. General crime lore would add volume but not understanding, so it is left outside the account.

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. The jury convicted Phillips of second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 2020-2025. A trial is structured proof under rules, not a complete replay of every event or every rumor surrounding it. The legal status is reported in its own terms: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

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Appeal and review

A headline can make this episode appear settled in a sentence. The underlying record is narrower. The 2025 memorandum decision rejected the sufficiency and trial-error claims and left the judgment intact. From there, the inquiry moves through source, timing, corroboration, and legal consequence. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. None of those steps authorizes invented dialogue or a claim about what Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community privately thought.

Location matters in this file. Charleston determined which agencies, courts, and communities carried the case, while 2020-2025 marks the span over which the public learned it. Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. The result is a chronology with identifiable custodians rather than a collection of free-floating claims.

This part of the account begins with a modest question: what did the cited source actually establish? Its answer is plain: The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. The answer does not automatically prove motive, identity, or every charge in the case. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. The remaining status is stated without embellishment: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

The case file gives different kinds of information different weight. Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. A contemporaneous observation, a laboratory result, a charging allegation, and an appellate finding do not perform the same job. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. Describing those jobs plainly is especially important when the story concerns Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community.

By the time *The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson* reached public memory, sequence had become easy to lose. The jury convicted Phillips of second-degree murder rather than first-degree murder. Restoring sequence shows what investigators knew, what prosecutors alleged, what the defense contested, and what a court or jury ultimately resolved. An appellate court tests legal error and the governing record, not whether judges would retell the case the same way. An older headline cannot replace the current status: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

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therefore avoids borrowing certainty from unrelated defendants, other jurisdictions, or later cases that happen to resemble events in Charleston.

Uncertainty

The public record speaks most reliably when attribution travels with the claim. Here is the supported proposition: Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. The source may recount an allegation, summarize trial proof, or state a judgment, and the language must match that function. A responsible account marks the edge of the record rather than filling silence with motive, dialogue, or private thought. That practice protects the accuracy of the case and the dignity of Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community at the same time.

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Consider the detail in its proper scale: The 2025 memorandum decision rejected the sufficiency and trial-error claims and left the judgment intact. It is neither disposable nor self-executing. Its force depends on where it sits among the other records from Charleston. A responsible account marks the edge of the record rather than filling silence with motive, dialogue, or private thought. A measured account can explain that relationship without turning legal caution into a repetitive disclaimer.

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Institutions

The end of a proceeding is not always the end of a case's public life. Charleston Police Officer Cassie Johnson approached Phillips while responding to a report of an illegally parked vehicle in December 2020. Families, institutions, and communities continued to live with the result after 2020-2025. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families each occupy different roles. The legal status is reported in its own terms: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025. It does not imply that every question or consequence disappeared.

The encounter was recorded by a security camera, an eyewitness telephone, Johnson's body camera, and the police cruiser camera. That fact is the fixed point for this portion of *The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson*. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families each occupy different roles. In Charleston, later retellings sometimes collapse the investigation and the judgment into one continuous story. The public record does not. It preserves the order in which information appeared and the forum in which it was tested. The present legal posture is stated separately: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025.

For Cassie Johnson, her family, and the Charleston community, the procedural vocabulary cannot be allowed to eclipse consequence. Johnson was shot during the encounter and died from her injuries two days later. The detail belongs here because it changes the chronology, not because it supplies atmosphere. Police, prosecutors, defense counsel, courts, laboratories, journalists, and families each occupy different roles. Keeping that boundary visible lets the reader understand both the institutional response and the loss that made the response necessary.

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Status at manuscript lock

The controlling status for this account is: Joshua Marcellus Phillips was convicted of second-degree murder and a controlled-substance offense. West Virginia's highest court affirmed the convictions in May 2025. That sentence is deliberately narrower than a television summary. It does not merge co-defendants, convert accusations into findings, or imply that an appeal erased a human death. Later proceedings may change the legal posture, but they should not be projected backward onto the record described here.

Sources from the edition

The Killing of Officer Cassie Johnson

- West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, State v. Phillips: <https://www.courtswv.gov/sites/default/pubfiles/mnt/2025-05/22-683%20md.pdf> -
West Virginia Supreme Court opinions: <https://www.courtswv.gov/appellate-courts/supreme-court-of-appeals/opinions>

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