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ON JANUARY 21, 2026, THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCURRED WITH THE ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE THAT THE USE OF DEADLY FORCE WAS JUSTIFIED IN THE MARCH 15, 2022 NON-FATAL POLICE SHOOTING BY A NEWARK POLICE OFFICER IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

Pursuant to the New Jersey Attorney General's Law Enforcement Directive No. 2019-4 ("the Directive") the Office of the Attorney General has reviewed the completed investigation of the Essex County Prosecutor's Office ("ECPO") into the March 15, 2022 use of deadly force in a non-fatal police-involved shooting. ECPO concluded that the use of deadly force by an officer of the Newark Police Department (NPD) was legally justified and that it is not necessary to present this matter to the Grand Jury because there were no material facts in dispute regarding the lawfulness of the uses of force. The Attorney General's Office concurred with ECPO's conclusion to forego the presentation of this matter to the Grand Jury.

On March 15, 2022, at approximately 6:15 a.m., a 911 caller reported that an unknown car was parked behind his house in Newark. The caller reported that when he approached the car, it drove away with the wheels "screeching." At approximately 6:28 a.m., the 911 caller reported that the car had returned and again parked behind his house. The caller stated there were 3 to 4 people in the car, and he believed the car was a black Chevrolet Camarro.

Four Newark Police officers responded to the scene in marked police units. All the officers were wearing full police uniforms that included badges, their names, Newark police insignia on the left shoulder, outer-carrier vests with the words Newark Police written in reflective lettering, police radios and body-worn cameras.

The officers walked up a narrow driveway between two residences toward the backyard and observed a black Dodge Challenger with heavily tinted windows. The Challenger's headlights were on, and its engine was running. Officer-1 walked up to the passenger side of the car and knocked on the windshield. Officer-1 then walked to the rear passenger door and attempted to look inside the window and lift the door handle.

The car's engine began to rev. Officer-2, who was at the top of the driveway, immediately unholstered his department-issued handgun and pointed it at the driver's side area of the windshield. The car began to accelerate toward Officer-2 and Officer-3. Officer-2 discharged several rounds at the driver as the car continued toward him and Officer-3. The car

crashed into the adjacent residence, blocking the driveway. The crash caused the passenger side of the car to temporarily lift off the ground. An individual ran from the car and was apprehended near the scene. The driver of the car was struck with gunfire. Officer-2 and Officer-3 rendered medical aid to the driver until EMS arrived. Investigation revealed that the car had been stolen several hours before the incident.

Pursuant to the Directive, a comprehensive conflicts check was conducted, and no actual or potential conflict of interest was found involving any individual assigned to the investigation. The Attorney General's Office designated the Essex County Prosecutor's Office as the Independent Investigator pursuant to the Directive.

The Essex County Prosecutor's Office Professional Standards Bureau investigated this incident and obtained all relevant evidence. The investigation was conducted in accordance with the Directive.

Applying the relevant statutes and the then-applicable New Jersey Attorney General's Use of Force Policy (December 2020) ("the Policy") to the undisputed material facts detailed above, it was the ECPO's conclusion that NPD Officer-2 justifiably used deadly force in defense of self and/or others.

N.J.S.A. 2C:3-4(a), Use of Force in Self-Protection, provides that "the use of force upon or toward another person is justifiable when the actor reasonably believes that such force is immediately necessary for the purpose of protecting himself against the use of unlawful force by such other person on the present occasion."

N.J.S.A. 2C:3-5, Use of Force In Protection of Other Persons, provides that "the use of force upon or toward the person of another is justifiable to protect a third person when: (1) The actor would be justified under section 2C:3-4 in using such force to protect himself against the injury he believes to be threatened to the person whom he seeks to protect; and (2) Under the circumstances as the actor reasonably believes them to be, the person whom he seeks to protect would be justified in using such protective force; and (3) The actor reasonably believes that his intervention is necessary for the protection of such other person."

The officer who used deadly force indicated a belief that his/her life, and/or another person's life was in imminent danger when the suspect drove the car toward them. The officer indicated that he believed he needed to use deadly force immediately to prevent himself and the other individual another from getting struck by the car. The subsequent investigation and an independent analysis of the undisputed material facts led to the determination that these beliefs were reasonable. Therefore, this use of deadly force was justified pursuant to all applicable laws and the Attorney General Guidelines.

At the conclusion of this investigation, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office referred the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency for administrative review in accordance with the Attorney General's Internal Affairs Policy & Procedures.

This statement was prepared and disseminated to the public in accordance with the Directive.

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