



PUBLIC STATEMENT

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GRAND JURY FINDS WANAQUE OFFICER'S NON-FATAL USE OF DEADLY FORCE TO BE JUSTIFIED

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

January 1, 2017

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes issues a public statement regarding the outcome of an investigation into a police use-of-force incident that occurred in Wanaque. This statement is issued in accordance with the July 28, 2015, Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive Amending Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2006-5.

On July 12, 2016, Wanaque Police Officer John Galinus discharged his service weapon while on duty. An investigation by the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Shooting Response Team commenced. A comprehensive conflicts inquiry required pursuant to section 3 of the Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive was conducted and no conflicts were detected. The matter was reviewed by the County Prosecutor and all relevant provisions of the Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive have been complied with.

The Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Shooting Response Team conducted an investigation that included neighborhood canvassing, civilian and police witness statements, review of video footage, review of 911 and radio transmissions, submission of ballistic evidence, examination of physical evidence, and medical records.

The results of the investigation were presented to a Grand Jury in Passaic County and the Grand Jury declined to issue an indictment regarding the use of deadly force by Officer Galinus. His use of force was found to be justified.

A separate Grand Jury in Passaic County deliberated on charges against Richard Liccardo stemming from the same incident. That Grand Jury returned a ten-count indictment against Mr. Liccardo for the following charges: one count of second degree Aggravated Assault by attempting to cause serious bodily injury to M.M., in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1b(1); one count of third degree Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, namely a knife, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4d; one count of third degree Aggravated Assault by attempting to cause bodily injury to A.R. with a deadly weapon, namely a lamp, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1b(2); one count of third degree Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, namely a lamp, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4d; and three counts of third degree Terroristic Threats against M.M., A.R. and P.P., in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-3; one count of second degree Aggravated Assault by attempting to cause serious bodily injury to Officer Galinus, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1b(1); one count of third degree Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, namely a knife, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4d; and one count of third degree Terroristic Threats against Officer Galinus, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-3.

The criminal charges against Mr. Liccardo remain open. A criminal indictment is merely an accusation. Despite this accusation, Mr. Liccardo is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The incident occurred in the Borough of Wanaque around 2 a.m. on Tuesday, July 12, 2016. The charges allege that Mr. Liccardo assaulted M.M., with whom he had a dating relationship, at a residence where Mr. Liccardo had been staying. During the course of the assault, Mr. Liccardo attempted to cause serious bodily injury to M.M. with a knife. Mr. Liccardo also threatened M.M., and threatened two other household members who came to M.M.'s aid, A.R. and P.P. Mr. Liccardo additionally attempted to cause bodily injury to A.R. with a lamp. Police responded to the location and soon thereafter encountered Mr. Liccardo in the area. Mr. Liccardo then attempted to cause serious bodily injury to Officer Galinus with a knife and threatened him. During this encounter, Officer Galinus discharged his department-issued handgun striking Mr. Liccardo. The Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Shooting Response Team was activated at that time due to the discharge of a firearm by a police officer. Mr. Liccardo was treated for injuries sustained from the shooting.

Further information on the July 28, 2015, Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive Amending Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2006-5 may be found at: http://www.state.nj.us/lps/dcj/agguide/directives/2006-5_SRT_OIS.pdf.