

Dept. of Justice: Update on Kenosha officer-involved shooting

Posted on Monday, Sep 21, 2020

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KENOSHA, Wis. Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul and Kenosha County District Attorney Michael Graveley today provided an update regarding the investigation of the officer-involved shooting (OIS) of Jacob Blake.

At DA Graveley's request, AG Kaul has identified a consultant to review the investigative file and provide the district attorney with an analysis of the incident. DA Graveley and AG Kaul agree that having such an analysis prepared for the district attorney's consideration will serve the interests of justice in this case. The consultant identified by AG Kaul, who is being retained by DA Graveley, is Wisconsin native and retired Madison, Wis. Police Chief Noble Wray.

The shooting of Mr. Blake has been vigorously and thoroughly investigated. At this time, the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) is in the final stages of its investigation, and it will soon provide the investigative file to Chief Wray. While investigative files from DCI's investigations of OIS cases contain reports regarding the relevant facts, they do not contain charging recommendations.

The next phase in this case will be Chief Wray's review of the file and preparation of his analysis. Chief Wray's analysis will assist the district attorney in his review of the facts and their relationship with standard law enforcement practices as he makes a charging decision.

"At the request of DA Graveley, I have identified an independent expert who can help ensure a just outcome in this case," said Attorney General Kaul. "Noble Wray is a longtime Wisconsin resident and a widely respected retired Madison Police Chief who has extensive experience in law enforcement, including experience at the

national level as a police reform specialist for the U.S. Department of Justice.”

When DCI is the lead investigating agency of a shooting involving a law enforcement officer, DCI aims to provide its reports of the incident to the prosecutor within 30 days. In this case, the prosecutor has directed that those reports be forwarded to a consultant for review and analysis. Following review and analysis by the consultant, the prosecutor will confer with the consultant, review the reports of the investigation, and then make an independent determination about what charges, if any, are appropriate. If the prosecutor determines there is no basis for prosecution of the law enforcement officer, and no other circumstances prevent the release, DCI will thereafter make the reports available to the public.

DOJ has previously provided the following information:

On the evening of Sunday, August 23, 2020, Kenosha Police Department officers were dispatched to a residence in the 2800 block of 40th Street after a female caller reported that her boyfriend was present and was not supposed to be on the premises.

During the incident, officers attempted to arrest **Jacob S. Blake**, age 29. After the initial attempt to arrest Mr. Blake, **Kenosha Police Officer Rusten Sheskey** deployed a taser to attempt to stop Mr. Blake. When that attempt failed, **Kenosha Police Officer Vincent Arenas** also deployed his taser, however that taser was also not successful in stopping Mr. Blake.

Mr. Blake walked around his vehicle, opened the driver's side door, and leaned forward. While holding onto Mr. Blake's shirt, **Officer Rusten Sheskey** fired his service weapon 7 times. Officer Sheskey fired the weapon towards Mr. Blake's back. No other officer fired their weapon. Kenosha Police Department does not have body cameras, therefore the officers were not wearing body cameras.

The shooting officer, Kenosha Police Officer Rusten Sheskey, has been a law enforcement officer with Kenosha Police Department for seven years. Kenosha Police Officer Vincent Arenas has served with Kenosha Police Department since February 2019, with prior service with the United States Capitol Police Department. Also present was **Kenosha Police Officer Brittany Meronek** who joined Kenosha Police Department in January of this year.

During the investigation following the initial incident, Mr. Blake admitted that he

had a knife in his possession. DCI agents recovered a knife from the driver's side floorboard of Mr. Blake's vehicle. A search of the vehicle located no additional weapons.

Law enforcement immediately provided medical aid to Mr. Blake. Flight for Life transported Mr. Blake to Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee.

DCI is leading this investigation and is assisted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Wisconsin State Patrol and Kenosha County Sheriff's Office. All involved law enforcement are fully cooperating with DCI during this investigation. The involved officers have been placed on administrative leave.

DCI, along with the FBI, have completed the following as part of the investigation:

- Conducted 88 witness interviews,
- Collected 102 evidence items,
- Downloaded 28 videos for review,
- Issued 4 search warrants, and,
- Dedicated over 600 hours working on this case as of Saturday, August 29, 2020.

DCI is continuing to review evidence and determine the facts of this incident and will turn over investigative reports to a prosecutor following a complete and thorough investigation.

No additional details are currently available.