Commonwealth of Virginia

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
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FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030-4047

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COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

October 11, 2022

REPORT ON JUNE 30, 2022, OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING

On June 26, 2022 Christian Parker went to his brother's apartment in Reston. While inside this residence, Mr. Parker stole his brother's Glock 30 pistol and after an altercation with his brother, Mr. Parker discharged one round while inside the apartment and left shortly thereafter. Mr. Parker's brother notified the police and four warrants were issued against Mr. Parker: Felon in Possession of a Handgun, Felony Grand Theft, Misdemeanor Brandishing of a Firearm and Misdemeanor Reckless Discharge of a firearm. Mr. Parker was not arrested on June 26 because he could not be located.

On June 30, 2022 Fugitive Detectives were assigned to find and apprehend Mr. Parker. Detectives obtained a search warrant for Mr. Parker's cell phone and began receiving ping locations for Mr. Parker's cell phone. Fugitive Detectives began coordinating with the Summer Initiative Team.

At approximately 1604 Mr. Parker's cell phone pinged showing a location in the area of Springfield Mall. Ofcs. Sheehan, Monahan and Houtz - Officers involved in the Summer Initiative Team - began driving over to Springfield Mall. These officers were aware of the car Mr. Parker drove, a green Volvo and had photographs of Mr. Parker. They also were aware that Mr. Parker was being sought, in part, for stealing a pistol and firing it.

At approximately 1633 Ofc. Sheehan located the vehicle in the Target Parking Lot of Springfield Mall. Ofc. Sheehan saw Mr. Parker walking towards the vehicle and alerted the other officers on scene. At approximately 1635 Ofcs. Monahan and Houtz arrived and the three officers boxed in Mr. Parker's vehicle while Mr. Parker was seated in the driver's seat of his vehicle. Ofcs. Sheehan, Monahan, and Houtz drew their weapons and gave multiple commands to Mr. Parker. Ofc. Monahan took cover behind his cruiser which he parked in front of Mr. Parker's car. Ofc. Monahan's position was to the front and left of Mr. Parker. Ofc. Sheehan and Ofc. Houtz took cover behind a car parked on the driver's side of Mr. Parker's car. Ofc. Sheehan's position was behind and to the left of Mr. Parker. Ofc. Houtz was approximately ten feet directly to the left of Mr. Parker, giving him the best view of Mr. Parker and his entire upper body. In his statement, Ofc. Monahan confirmed that Ofc. Houtz had the best view of Mr. Parker.

As seen in the officers' body-worn camera footage, multiple commands were given to Mr. Parker. Mr. Parker displayed a handgun, pointing the handgun up toward the roof of the vehicle. This is seen in the video from Ofc. Sheehan's cruiser. All three officers saw Mr. Parker raise the handgun. Upon seeing the handgun, officers continued giving multiple commands for Mr. Parker to drop the weapon. From the time officers took their positions to the time Ofcs. Houtz and Sheehan fired their weapons, approximately 30 to 40 commands were given to Mr. Parker, all of which he ignored.

When Mr. Parker first points the handgun at the car roof, both Ofcs. Monahan and Houtz

see that Mr. Parker's finger is not on the trigger. All three officers see Mr. Parker lower the weapon and then come back up with the handgun still in his hand. According to Ofc. Monahan's statement, Mr. Parker begins shaking the pistol and yelling at the officers. All three officers see Mr. Parker lower the handgun out of view and lean towards the passenger side of the vehicle and come back up with the handgun. According to Officer Houtz's statement, Mr. Parker looks at Ofc. Houtz and Ofc. Monahan and shakes his head in a motion signifying "no." According to Ofc. Houtz, Mr. Parker holds the handgun at stomach level and swings it from side to side, now with his finger on the trigger. At this time, Ofc. Sheehan sees Mr. Parker make a motion towards Ofc. Houtz. The motion described by Ofc. Sheehan is consistent with a handgun being swung side to side as witnessed by Ofc. Houtz. Due to the handgun being swung side to side, Mr. Parker's finger being on the trigger, and Mr. Paker's continued refusal to comply with commands, Ofc. Houtz felt he and Ofc. Monahan were imminent danger of death and Ofc. Houtz discharged his weapon.

Ofc. Sheehan, hearing Ofc. Houtz's gunshot and seeing the driver's side window break almost immediately following the motion Mr. Parker made towards Ofc. Houtz, believed that Mr. Parker had fired upon Ofc. Houtz. In response, Ofc. Sheehan discharged his weapon at Mr. Parker. Both Ofcs. Houtz and Sheehan fired four rounds. Mr. Parker was hit with six rounds.

Once Officers could safely approach and enter the vehicle, first aid was given to Mr. Parker. Tragically, Mr. Parker died from his gunshot wounds. The handgun Mr. Parker displayed was recovered from inside the vehicle. This was the same handgun stolen from his brother a few days prior.

Mr. Parker's fiancé was interviewed after the shooting. She indicated she spoke with Mr. Parker after he stole his brother's firearm. Mr. Parker told her he would rather die than go back to jail. Although this was not known to the officers on the scene at the time, it lends credence to the officers' statements that Mr. Parker was not complying with commands and escalated the situation to the point where he was swinging the gun in the direction of Ofcs. Houtz and Monahan with his finger on the trigger.

My investigation of this incident included a review of reports, interviews, body-worn camera and in-car camera footage and physical evidence. This investigation leads me to conclude that both Ofc. Houtz and Ofc. Sheehan were reasonable in fearing that Mr. Parker intended to either kill an officer on scene or cause serious bodily injury to one of the officers on scene, and it was therefore legally permissible for both Ofc. Houtz and Ofc. Sheehan to use the level of force they employed. The fact that Ofc. Sheehan incorrectly thought Mr. Parker fired his weapon does not negate this conclusion because Ofc. Sheehan's perception was reasonable based on the facts and circumstances presented to him. Accordingly, I find no violations of criminal law on the part of Ofc. Houtz and Ofc. Sheehan and decline to bring any criminal charge against either officer.

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Fairfax County, Virginia