



INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

Report Concerning the Police-Involved
Death in Howard County on November 30, 2024

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Declination Report Concerning the Police-Involved Death of Tyree Winslow on November 30, 2024

The Independent Investigations Division of the Maryland Office of the Attorney General (the “IID”) is charged with investigating “police-involved incidents that result in the death of individuals or injuries likely to result in death.”¹ If the Attorney General determines that the investigation provides sufficient grounds for prosecution, then the IID “shall have exclusive authority to prosecute the offense.”²

I. Introduction

On November 30, 2024, at approximately 3:20 p.m., Howard County Police Department (“HCPD”) officers responded to a house in the 10000 block of American Pharoah Lane in Laurel, Maryland, for a report of a domestic disturbance. The 911 caller (“Witness”³) advised that a man was banging on the front door of her house. The man fired several shotgun rounds at the front door and then entered the house through a window. Shortly after officers arrived on scene, the man appeared in a window facing the front of the house. The man failed to comply with the officers’ verbal commands to show his hands. The man and two officers exchanged gunfire, and the man disappeared inside the house. At approximately 5:40 p.m., after being unable to establish contact with the man, officers entered the house. The man was found unresponsive inside the house, suffering from apparent gunshot wounds. He was pronounced dead on scene. Several loaded firearms and a knife were recovered near the man. No others were injured during the incident.

After completing its investigation and evaluating all available evidence, the Office of the Attorney General has determined that the subject officers did not commit a crime under Maryland law. Accordingly, the Attorney General has declined to prosecute the subject officer in this case.

The IID’s investigation focused exclusively on potential criminal culpability relating to the subject officer’s conduct. By statute, the IID only has jurisdiction to investigate the actions of police officers, not that of any other individual involved in the incident. Moreover, the IID’s analysis does not consider issues of civil liability or the department’s administrative review of the subject officer’s conduct. Compelled statements by a subject officer may be considered in civil or administrative proceedings, but may not be considered in criminal investigations or prosecutions due to the subject officers’ Fifth Amendment rights. If any compelled statements exist in this case, the IID has not considered them in this investigation.

This report is composed of a factual narrative, followed by a legal analysis. Every fact in the narrative is supported by the evidence obtained in this investigation, including an autopsy report, firearms analysis, 911 calls, police radio transmissions, dispatch records, police reports, body-worn camera footage, video surveillance footage, department policy, and interviews with civilian and law enforcement witnesses. The subject officers in this case chose not to make statements to the IID, which had no impact on the prosecutorial decision.

¹ Md. Code, State Gov’t § 6-602 (c)(1).

² Md. Code, State Gov’t § 6-604 (a)(1).

³ For privacy purposes, the 911 caller will be referred to as “Witness” throughout this report.

The legal analysis explains why the IID will not bring charges under the relevant Maryland statutes.

This investigation involved one decedent and two subject officers:

- A. The decedent, Tyree Winslow, was 29 years old at the time of the incident. He was a Black male who lived in College Park, Maryland.
- B. Officer Christopher Weir has been employed by HCPD since December 2010. He is a White male, and at the time of the incident was 37 years old.
- C. Officer Joseph DeBronzo has been employed by HCPD since May 2017. He previously worked for the Baltimore Police Department. He is a White male, and at the time of the incident was 36 years old.

The IID reviewed all available departmental disciplinary records and criminal histories of these involved parties and where they existed, determined that none were relevant to this investigation.

II. Factual Summary

On November 30, 2024, at approximately 3:09 p.m., Witness called Howard County 911 and reported that her son's father, Tyree Winslow, was at her house in the 10000 block of American Pharoah Lane in Laurel, Maryland, banging on the door, and throwing something at her back window. Witness advised that she, her son, and her brother ("Brother")⁴ were inside of the house.

During the 911 call, Witness repeatedly asked for help and advised that Mr. Winslow was banging on the door and attempting to enter the house. At approximately 3:21 p.m., Mr. Winslow pointed a shotgun at the front door and fired seven times. When the door did not open, Mr. Winslow broke a front window and entered the house. Witness advised 911 that Mr. Winslow was inside the house.

⁴ For privacy purposes, throughout this report, the 911 caller's brother will be referred to as "Brother" and the son's name will be withheld.



Image 1: Still image from private surveillance camera footage showing Mr. Winslow pointing a gun at Witness's front door, which is blocked in this image by the wall shown on the left side of this image. [Click Here](#) for video clip.

Dispatch advised responding officers that Mr. Winslow had a gun. Officer Joseph DeBronzo arrived approximately two minutes after Mr. Winslow entered the house. He stopped behind a red pickup truck that was parked across the street from the house and advised dispatch that he saw a broken window and a long gun case outside the house's front door.

At approximately 3:25 p.m., Officer DeBronzo informed dispatch that he heard a cry for help coming from the house, that he was going enter alone and observed multiple spent shellcasings outside the front door. Officer DeBronzo then advised dispatch that the front door was barricaded.



Image 2: Still image from Officer DeBronzo's body-worn camera footage, showing the broken window through which Mr. Winslow entered the house.

At approximately 3:26 p.m., Officer Christopher Weir, armed with a handgun, arrived at the scene as Officer DeBronzo tried to enter the house.

As Officer DeBronzo observed Witness and her son exiting a second-story window while screaming for help, he returned to the red pickup truck. While screaming, Witness and her son climbed onto an awning just below the second-story window. Both subject officers instructed them to remain on the awning and lay down. Simultaneously, as Officer Weir also stood behind the red pickup truck, he notified Officer DeBronzo that someone was at a second-story window of the house adjacent to the window from which Witness and her son had climbed. As Witness and her son lay on the awning, both subject officers shouted at Mr. Winslow to show his hands. He failed to comply.



Image 3: Still image from Officer DeBronzo's body-worn camera footage, showing Witness and her son (circled in red) lying down on the awning above the front door.

Several seconds after Mr. Winslow initially appeared in the window, the subject officers and Mr. Winslow exchanged gunfire. During the exchange, the subject officers struck Mr. Winslow, and Mr. Winslow struck the red pickup truck. Almost immediately after the exchange of gunfire, Officer Weir radioed into dispatch that a shooting had occurred.⁵

Officer Weir helped Witness and Witness's son off the awning. Witness, her son, and Brother were all unharmed and removed from the scene.

⁵ At 3:27:41 p.m., a sound consistent with a single gunshot is heard coming from the direction of the house.



Images 4 and 5: Photographs taken by Maryland State Police (MSP) Crime Scene showing bullet holes in the red pickup truck, located on the truck's driver side, which faces the front of the house. The bullet holes are circled in blue.

At approximately 3:29 p.m., Officer DeBronzo radioed into dispatch that the suspect was inside and may have been shot. Dispatch requested emergency medical services to respond to the scene. Within fifteen minutes, twelve additional HCPD officers arrived and established a perimeter around the house. As Mr. Winslow remained inside the house, officers were unable to confirm his location. Officers then requested that the Tactical Section ("TAC") Team respond to the scene. At approximately 4:29 p.m., the TAC team arrived, took over the scene, and evacuated the occupants of nearby houses. After several attempts to make contact with Mr. Winslow were unsuccessful, the TAC team made entry into the house.

At approximately 5:48 p.m., an unresponsive Mr. Winslow was located in a second-floor bedroom, underneath a window that faced the red pickup truck. Mr. Winslow was surrounded by several loaded weapons, including two pistols, one shotgun, and one rifle. At approximately 5:54 p.m., medics entered the house and pronounced Mr. Winslow dead.

III. Supplemental Information

A. Autopsy

On December 1, 2024, the Maryland Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (the "OCME") performed an autopsy of Mr. Winslow. The Medical Examiner concluded that a "Contact Gunshot Wound to the Neck" caused Mr. Winslow's death. The Medical Examiner noted that there was evidence of contact-range discharge of a firearm at the neck wound, including deposited soot and a muzzle imprint. The Medical Examiner determined that the manner of his death was "Suicide."⁶

⁶ Manner of death is a classification used to define whether a death is from intentional causes, unintentional causes, natural causes, or undetermined causes. The OCME uses five categories of manner of death: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined. "Suicide" applies when death results from an injury or poisoning as a result of an

Mr. Winslow sustained three additional non-fatal injuries: a graze wound to the right arm, a wound to the left forearm, and a tangential wound to the right hand. No soot or gunpowder stippling was present on the three non-fatal wounds. There was no evidence of close-range fire on the three non-fatal wounds.

Toxicology testing by the OCME detected a blood alcohol content of 0.21 percent.

B. Firearms Recovery and Ballistics Information

Maryland State Police (“MSP”) Crime Scene technicians responded to the scene and recovered six firearms:

- 1) Officer Weir’s service weapon, a Glock 9mm Luger caliber semiautomatic pistol, 17 Gen5 model;
- 2) Officer DeBronzo’s service weapon, a LWRC International 5.56 NATO caliber semiautomatic rifle, M61C-G model;
- 3) A Canik 9mm Luger caliber semiautomatic pistol, TP9SA model;
- 4) A Taurus 9mm Luger caliber semiautomatic pistol, G3 model;
- 5) A Bear Creek Arsenal 5.56 NATO caliber semiautomatic rifle, BCA15 model; and
- 6) A Hatfield 12-gauge pump action shotgun, PAS model.

MSP Crime Scene technicians also recovered nineteen cartridge casings, seven 12-gauge shotshells, and two projectiles.

An MSP Forensic Sciences Division Firearms/Toolmark Examiner conducted a firearm analysis, including a test-fire examination of all the recovered firearms, and concluded all were capable of being fired. The Examiner concluded that the fired cartridge casings were fired from the subject officers’ service weapons and that the fired shotshells were fired from Mr. Winslow’s shotgun. Forensic examination of nine fired cartridge cases recovered from the scene was inconclusive due to damage. Also, two fired bullets recovered lacked sufficient markings for identification, precluding a conclusive finding.

The MSP Forensic Sciences Division determined that the two bullets that struck the truck—one entering through the driver’s side high up near the corner of the cab and one entering the front windshield had a downward angle, both consistent with a shooting position from the second-floor window of the house.

C. Department Policy

intentional, self-inflicted act. This term is not considered a legal determination; rather, they are largely used to assist in the collection of public health statistics. *A Guide for Manner of Death Classification*, First Edition, National Association of Medical Examiners, February 2002.

The HCPD General Orders contain written policies that provide regulations and guidance for their officers. General Order Ops-11 is the department's written use of force policy. This policy only allows officers to "the degree of force that, under the totality of the circumstances, is necessary and proportional to prevent the imminent threat of physical injury to a person or to effectuate a legitimate law enforcement objective." The use of force policy goes on to require officers to "tak[e] into account the totality of the circumstances, and continuously evaluat[e] whether de-escalation would allow the officer to safely and effectively carry out a legitimate law enforcement objective." Officers may only use deadly force "in self-defense or in the defense of others when an officer is confronted by what they have reason to believe is the imminent threat of death or serious physical injury."

The HCPD use of force policy includes a section on the use of specific weapons. When an officer is using a primary handgun, officers need to take into consideration:

- a. Possibility of the handgun inciting or aggravating a situation as opposed to being a protective measure;
- b. Reduced use of hands when using a handgun; and
- c. Potential background targets and the likelihood that rounds may pass through walls, etc.

An officer "shall use a rifle only in extraordinary circumstances, such as tactical or high-risk arrest situations, when it is anticipated that officers may confront an armed suspect(s)." The use of force policy goes on to specify that "where a person is injured... as a result of an officer's use of force, aid shall be rendered as soon as practical."

HCPD General Order ADM-17 contemplates the use of TAC teams for special operations. A TAC team is "specially trained and equipped to handle a wide variety of high-risk situations including hostage and barricade situations, diplomatic security, and warrant service." Per General Order Ops-49, a "barricaded subject" is "any person in or believed to be in a location who resists being taken into custody. The person may have used, or threatened to use, firearms or other weapons to avoid apprehension" and "poses a threat to himself or others."

IV. Legal Analysis

After a criminal investigation, prosecutors must determine whether to bring criminal charges against a person to hold them accountable pursuant to Maryland law. When making that determination, prosecutors have a legal and ethical duty to only charge a person with a crime when they can meet the State's burden of proof; that is, when the available evidence can prove each element of that crime beyond a reasonable doubt. Prosecutors must also determine whether the accused person could raise an affirmative defense. In those cases, prosecutors not only need to prove the crime, but also must determine whether the evidence could disprove the defense beyond a reasonable doubt. Ultimately, the decision to bring any charges rests on whether the available evidence is sufficient for prosecutors to meet those standards.

Based on the evidence, two relevant offenses were considered in this case. In this case, the IID examined whether the officers had criminal culpability both for Mr. Winslow's death and for the contact shooting that resulted in Mr. Winslow's non-fatal injuries. The two offenses analyzed are a violation of Maryland's Use of Force Statute, which makes it a crime for officers to intentionally use excessive force⁷ and Assault in the First Degree ("First-Degree Assault"), respectively.

The evidence in this case shows that the subject officers did not violate any of the aforementioned statutes. Accordingly, the IID will not pursue criminal charges against any of the subject officers. This report explains in further detail why, based on the evidence, a prosecutor could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that any subject officer committed a crime.

A. Maryland Use of Force Statute

Proving a violation of the Use of Force Statute requires a prosecutor to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that a subject officer:

- (1) used force that was not necessary and proportional to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury to themselves or another person, or to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement objective;
- (2) intended to use force that was excessive, *i.e.*, not necessary and proportional under the circumstances; and
- (3) the use of excessive force resulted in serious bodily injury or death;⁸

First, prosecutors would need to establish that one or more of the officers used force that was not necessary and proportional under the circumstances. Second, prosecutors would need to prove that the officers intended to use force that was excessive. Finally, prosecutors would need to establish that the excessive force used by the subject officers resulted in Mr. Winslow's death. Although it is undisputed that the subject officers fired their weapons and shot Mr. Winslow, it is also undisputed that Mr. Winslow's cause of death was due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound. None of the force used by the subject officers, specifically the three additional gunshot wounds that Mr. Winslow sustained, resulted in serious bodily injury or death.

Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge the subject officers with violating the Use of Force Statute in this case.⁹

⁷ See Md. Code, Public Safety §3-524(d)(1).

⁸ MPJI-Cr 4:36.

⁹ An analysis of the two remaining elements of the Use of Force statute is moot. However, based on the totality of the circumstances, the subject officer's use of force was necessary and proportional to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury to themselves, Witness, and her son. As Mr. Winslow was the aggressor, the kind and degree of force used by the subject officers was necessary and proportional to the imminent threat of harm. For a more detailed discussion of the "necessary and proportional" standard, see [this opinion](#) written by the Office of the Attorney General. 107 Op. Atty. Gen. Md. 33.

B. First Degree Assault

Proving a violation of the First-Degree Assault requires a prosecutor to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officers intentionally or recklessly caused physical harm without legal justification and:

- (1) Used a firearm to commit assault; or
- (2) Intended to cause serious physical injury in the commission of the assault¹⁰

More specifically, we must consider whether the officers committed an assault by firing at and shooting Mr. Winslow.

Law enforcement justification is an affirmative defense, which requires the prosecutor to prove that the subject officer's actions were not justified.¹¹ An officer will not be criminally liable for assault, which includes the use of deadly force, if an officer only uses "force reasonably necessary to discharge his official duties."¹² In assessing the force, the totality of the circumstances must be considered, and the reasonableness must be judged "from the perspective of a reasonable police officer," including whether an officer "reasonably believes that he is in imminent danger of either losing his own life, or suffering great bodily harm."¹³ Further, the affirmative defenses of self-defense and defense of others both require a prosecutor to prove that the subject officers did not reasonably believe that another person or themselves were "in immediate or imminent danger of bodily harm," and that the force was not reasonably necessary in light of the threat.¹⁴

Based on the foregoing and in consideration of the facts, as the initial aggressor, Mr. Winslow posed an active threat of imminent danger to the lives of the subject officers, Witness, and her son. The subject officer's use of deadly force was reasonably necessary because of the imminent threat. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge the subject officers with First Degree Assault or any related offenses.

VI. Conclusion

This report has presented factual findings, legal analysis, and conclusions relevant to the November 30, 2024, police-involved death of Tyree Winslow in Howard County, Maryland. The Office of the Attorney General has declined to pursue charges in this case because, based on the evidence obtained in its investigation, the subject officers did not commit a crime.

¹⁰ MPJI 4:01.1A. (see also MPJI 4:01).

¹¹ See *Riley v. State*, 227 Md. App. 249, 259 (2016)

¹² *Wilson v. State*, 87 Md. App. 512, 519 (1991)

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ MPJI Cr 5:01; MPJI Cr 5:07.