



*State of North Carolina*  
*General Court of Justice*  
*Twenty-Sixth Prosecutorial District*  
**MECKLENBURG COUNTY**

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August 11, 2025

Chief Johnny Jennings  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department  
601 East Trade Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Re: Reggie Allen Knight Death Investigation; Complaint No. 2025 0307 1347 00

Dear Chief Jennings:

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7A-61, my office has reviewed the investigation surrounding the March 7, 2025, shooting death of Reggie Allen Knight. The case was investigated under case number 2025 0307 1347 00. The documentation considered for the purposes of this review was provided by CMPD in May 2025. The purpose of this review was to examine whether the actions of Officers Austin Bartlow, Charles Lineberger, Jonathan Nicholas, and Michael Wilson, Jr. were unlawful in the incident leading to the death of Reggie Allen Knight.

The incident occurred at approximately 4:41 p.m. on the afternoon of March 7, 2025, at 12524 Headquarters Farm Road in Charlotte, North Carolina. Earlier that day, CMPD received a 911 call stating that Reggie Knight was wanted by police and had recently been seen at that residence. Officers Bartlow, Lineberger, Nicholas, and Wilson, along with Officers Travis Honeycutt and Timothy Manning, responded to that call for service. Prior to approaching the residence, the officers met at a nearby location to brief. As part of their preparations, the officers reviewed the decedent's photograph and criminal history contained on a law enforcement database. The officers determined the decedent had unserved Mecklenburg County arrest warrants for possession of methamphetamine, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, carrying a concealed weapon, resisting a public officer, possession of drug paraphernalia, communicating threats, domestic violence, two counts of assault on a female, assault with a deadly weapon, and assault by strangulation. Additionally, the decedent had pending orders for arrest for a felony probation violation, intoxicated and disruptive, driving while license revoked, and driving while impaired.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The criminal history of the decedent is offered here, not to suggest that it justified a use of force, but to be considered for the impact it may have had on the actions of the responding officers.

After researching the subject and his criminal history, the officers developed a plan for approaching the residence. That plan consisted of Officers Manning, Honeycutt and Lineberger knocking on the front door of the residence. Officer Nicholas would be stationed on the left side of the house. Officer Bartlow would be stationed on the right side of the house. Officer Wilson would cover the rear of the house. The officers then approached the residence and took their respective positions.

The decedent's mother answered the front door, informing police the decedent was not present and that she had not seen him in a while. While Officer Manning, Honeycutt, and Lineberger were speaking with the decedent's mother at the front door, Officer Wilson observed the decedent exit the house from the rear second floor deck, walk down the stairs leading to the yard, and then through the backyard toward the rear of 12516 Headquarters Farm Road. The decedent was wearing sweatpants and no shirt, with a pair of jeans draped over and concealing his right hand. Officers Wilson and Bartlow issued multiple commands for the decedent to get down on the ground. The decedent continued walking past Officer Bartlow, then he ran toward the backyard of 12516 Headquarters Farm Road, and the officers pursued him on foot. As Officers Wilson and Lineberger closed in on the decedent, the decedent turned and fired a Hi-Point JHP45 [\[1\]](#), which was concealed under the pair of jeans, twice in quick succession in the direction of Officers Wilson and Lineberger. [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#).

Officer Lineberger, having been shot in the belt, fell backward to the ground. Officer Wilson, having been shot in the left thigh, took the decedent to the ground where he and the decedent struggled over the decedent's firearm. [\[5\]](#). Officers Nicholas and Bartlow moved to opposite sides of the struggle. [\[6\]](#). Officer Wilson drew his firearm while managing to extricate the decedent's firearm from his grasp. Simultaneously, Officers Bartlow, Nicholas, and Wilson fired their service weapons multiple times, striking the decedent.

Officers Lineberger and Wilson then retreated to the front of the residence. Officers determined that Officer Wilson had been shot in the left leg and provided first aid until he was transported to the hospital. Officers also determined that the shot that hit Officer Lineberger did not penetrate his belt and that he was physically uninjured. Meanwhile, Officer Bartlow located the decedent's firearm on the ground where it had been dropped by Officer Wilson prior to his seeking medical assistance. [\[7\]](#).

During this incident, Officers Bartlow and Wilson fired their weapons seven times, Officer Nicholas fired five times, and Officer Lineberger fired once. An autopsy conducted on the decedent found the decedent suffered numerous gunshot wounds and the cause of death was determined to be gunshot wounds of the head and torso.

As you know, this letter specifically does not address issues relating to tactics, nor whether officers followed correct police procedures or agency directives.

I personally responded to the scene of this incident and monitored the investigation along with a senior Assistant District Attorney (ADA). I reviewed the investigative file as provided by CMPD. Finally, consistent with the District Attorney's Office Officer-Involved Shooting Protocol, this case was presented to the District Attorney's Officer-Involved Shooting Review Team, which is comprised of the office's most experienced prosecutors.

**A. The role of the District Attorney under North Carolina law**

The District Attorney (DA) for the 26<sup>th</sup> Prosecutorial District is a state official and, as such, does not answer to city or county governments within the prosecutorial district. The District Attorney is the chief law enforcement official of the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, the boundaries of which are the same as the County of Mecklenburg. The District Attorney has no administrative authority or control over the personnel of CMPD or other police agencies within the jurisdiction. That authority and control resides with each city or county government.

Pursuant to North Carolina statute, one of the District Attorney's obligations is to advise law enforcement agencies within the prosecutorial district. The DA does not arrest people or charge people with crimes. When the police charge a person with a crime, the DA decides whether or not to prosecute the charged crime. Generally, the DA does not review police decisions not to charge an individual with a crime. However, in officer-involved shooting cases, the DA reviews the complete investigative file of the investigating agency. The DA then decides whether he agrees or disagrees with the charging decision made by the investigating agency. If the DA concludes that uncharged conduct should be prosecuted, the case will be submitted to a Grand Jury.

If no criminal charges are filed, that does not mean the District Attorney's Office believes the matter was in all respects handled appropriately from an administrative or tactical viewpoint. It is simply a determination that there is not a reasonable likelihood of proving criminal charges beyond a reasonable doubt unanimously to a jury. This is the limit of the DA's statutory authority in these matters. The fact that a shooting may be controversial does not mean that criminal prosecution is warranted. Even if the District Attorney believes a shooting was avoidable or an officer did not follow expected procedures or norms, this does not necessarily amount to a violation of criminal law. In these circumstances, remedies (if any are appropriate) may be pursued by administrative or civil means. The District Attorney has no administrative or civil authority in these matters. Those remedies are primarily in the purview of city and county governments, police departments, and private civil attorneys.

**B. Legal standards**

The law recognizes an inherent right to use deadly force to protect oneself or others from death or great bodily harm. This core legal principle is referred to as the right to "self-defense." A police officer does not lose the right to self-defense by virtue of becoming a police officer. Officers are entitled to the same protections of the law as every other individual. An imminent threat to the life of a police officer or others entitles the officer to respond in such a way as to stop that threat.

Under North Carolina law, the burden of proof is on the State to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a defendant did not act in defense of himself or others. N.C.G.S. §14-51.3 provides that a person is justified in the use of deadly force and does not have a duty to retreat in any place he or she has the lawful right to be if he or she reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another.

**C. Use of deadly force by a law enforcement officer**

The same legal standards apply to law enforcement officers and private citizens alike. However, officers fulfilling their sworn duty to enforce the laws of this State are often placed in situations in which they are required to confront rather than avoid potentially dangerous people and situations. A situation in which an officer is confronting an armed person with uncertain motives is, by definition, dangerous, and such a circumstance will almost always be tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving. In these circumstances, we are not deciding whether the officer's belief in the need to use deadly force was correct but only whether his belief in the necessity of such force was reasonable.

The United States Supreme Court stated, "[t]he 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight." Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386, 396 (1989). The Court further explained that "[t]he calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments – in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving – about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation." Id. at 396–97. Moreover, the analysis "requires careful attention to the facts and circumstances of each particular case," including "whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officers or others," as well as "the severity of the crime at issue" and whether the suspect "is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight." Id. at 396.

In conducting a legal analysis, this office must take its guidance from the law, and a decision must not be based upon public sentiment or outcry. The obligation of a District Attorney is clear; he must simply apply the law to the known facts.

What the law demands is an evaluation of the reasonableness of the officer's decision at the moment he fired the shot. The Supreme Court of the United States has provided guidance on what is objectively reasonable and how such an analysis should be conducted. That guidance indicates that it is inappropriate to employ "the 20/20 vision of hindsight," and an analysis must make "allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments." *See* Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. at 396. The Court suggests that when reviewing use of force cases, caution should be used to avoid analysis "more reflective of the 'peace of a judge's chambers' than of a dangerous and threatening situation on the street." Elliot v. Leavitt, 99 F.3d. 640, 643 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996).

**D. The officer-involved shooting of Reggie Allen Knight**

Officer Michael Wilson, Jr.

Investigators interviewed Officer Michael Wilson, Jr. on March 26, 2025, at the CMPD Law Enforcement Center located at 601 East Trade Street. During that interview, Officer Wilson stated that he was hired by CMPD in October 2023. Prior to his employment with CMPD, he served in the Army Reserve.

Officer Wilson recalled that he and other officers responded to a service call relating to the service of arrest warrants. He and the other officers met at the entrance to the neighborhood to brief. At that time, they sought the decedent's profile in a law enforcement database to view his picture and confirm the decedent's existing warrants and orders for arrest. Officer Wilson had not previously had any interaction with the decedent. During that briefing, the officers strategized as to how to best approach the house. Officer Wilson volunteered to cover the rear of the house. He parked on the street behind the residence, Hammersmith Court, and crossed through the yard of a house on that street to take a position behind a tree with a view of the rear of 12524 Headquarters Farm Road. Officer Wilson described the rear of the residence as having a top and a bottom porch.

From his vantage point, he could see police cars approaching the house and saw the decedent come out on the upstairs porch approximately two to three minutes later. Officer Wilson recalled that the decedent walked out of the sliding door as he was getting dressed. He described the decedent as wearing gray pants and no shirt, with what appeared to be a jean jacket in his hand. Officer Wilson recounted that he called out a description of the decedent over the radio to other officers. The decedent walked down the stairs then through the middle of the backyard. Officer Wilson advised that when the decedent got to the middle of the backyard, he drew his service weapon and told the decedent to stop. He recalled that the decedent paused and stared at Officer Wilson for approximately two seconds, then began to run.

Officer Wilson stated he re-holstered his service weapon and began to chase the decedent. The decedent crossed a bed of rocks, went between two trees, then stopped. At that point, Officer Wilson heard two shots. Officer Wilson recalled that he had not yet seen the decedent's weapon, but he knew he had been shot. He then tackled the decedent to the ground. Officer Wilson recounted that he grabbed at the decedent's wrist and gun, attempting to disable the decedent's gun. He believed the decedent fired his weapon while Officer Wilson and the decedent were struggling over the gun. Officer Wilson's recollection was that he pulled his service weapon, shot at the decedent twice, then backed away. Officer Wilson could only recall firing his weapon twice, but noted he could have fired more. He did not remember that he was able to get the gun away from the decedent or what he did with the decedent's gun afterward. Officer Wilson recalled that, after he fired his weapon, he ran toward the front of the subject residence to attend to his gunshot wound where other officers applied a tourniquet and rendered medical aid.

#### Officer Charles Lineberger

Officer Charles Lineberger was interviewed by investigators on March 26, 2025, at the CMPD Law Enforcement Center. During that interview, Officer Lineberger stated that he was hired by CMPD in October 2023.

Officer Lineberger recounted that on the afternoon of March 7, 2025, he was assisting with a call for service regarding the service of outstanding arrest warrants. He recalled that the decedent had extensive warrants from Charlotte and other jurisdictions. Officer Lineberger recalled that prior to approaching the residence, the officers briefed nearby. The plan was for Officer Wilson to cover the rear of the residence, while Officer Nicholas would be on the left side and Officer Bartlow would be on the right side. Officers Lineberger, Honeycutt, and Manning would go to the front door.

Officer Lineberger advised that once Officer Wilson was in position, he and the other officers knocked on the front door. While waiting at the front door, he saw someone peek out a window, but he could not tell who it was. Officer Lineberger advised that a female answered the door and, while officers were speaking to her, Officer Wilson relayed over the radio that he could see the decedent exiting onto the rear porch. Officer Lineberger recalled that he began walking toward the backyard, heard someone giving commands to "stop," then began running to the backyard. Officer Lineberger stated that he first saw the decedent when the decedent was standing in the backyard. He recalled that the decedent was wearing pants, no shirt, and had what looked like a jacket covering his right hand.

Officer Lineberger advised that he drew his weapon but did not give commands as other officers were already giving commands and he did not want to cause confusion. He noted that the decedent ignored the commands, walked toward the neighbor's house, then began running toward the neighbor's backyard. Officer Lineberger stated that he re-holstered his weapon and ran after the decedent. He recalled that the decedent jumped a creek bed, then stopped running and turned toward Officer Lineberger. The decedent pointed his right hand, which was covered, at Officer Lineberger. He could tell there was something in the decedent's hand and he believed the decedent was pointing a gun at him. Officer Lineberger recalled that he heard a shot and felt a small impact. Officer Lineberger fell, then drew his weapon. Officer Lineberger stated that Officer Wilson then engaged with the decedent, and, when there was a moment of separation between Officer Wilson and the decedent, Officer Lineberger fired his weapon one time at the decedent. He heard more gunfire but could not recall how many shots were fired or who was firing.

Officer Lineberger advised he briefly checked himself for injuries, then saw Officer Wilson run back toward the front of the house. At this point the decedent was lying on his back, not moving. Officer Lineberger advised that he also ran to the front of the house believing that he had been shot. He recalled that two officers remained behind to deal with the decedent. When Officer Lineberger arrived at the front of the house, he informed officers that he believed he had been shot. He recalled that Officer Manning checked him for gunshot wounds.

#### Officer Austin Bartlow

Officer Austin Bartlow was interviewed by investigators on March 26, 2025, at the CMPD Law Enforcement Center. During that interview, Officer Bartlow stated that he was hired by CMPD in October 2021.

Officer Bartlow recounted that he was dispatched to a warrant call for service. Officer Bartlow stated that he had never had prior contact with the decedent, but he and the other officers looked up reports involving the decedent before attempting to serve the warrants. He recalled that the police dispatcher confirmed the outstanding warrants. He advised that one of them was for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon as well as drug, domestic violence, and assault charges. Officer Bartlow believed it was safe to assume the decedent was armed and dangerous.

During the briefing, the officers determined where they would position themselves for the encounter. Officer Bartlow was responsible for covering the right side of the house, with Officer Nicholas on the left side and Officer Wilson in the rear. Officer Bartlow advised that Officer Honeycutt made contact with the decedent's mother and, 30 seconds later, he heard Officer

Wilson advise that someone was coming out of the rear upstairs balcony and walking down the wooden steps. He heard Officer Wilson giving the decedent commands, and the decedent did not comply. Officer Bartlow recounted that the decedent started walking in his direction and he positively identified the decedent as the person with outstanding warrants. He drew his firearm, pointed it at the decedent, and told him to get on the ground. At this point, the decedent's left hand was free, but his right hand had clothing wrapped around it.

Officer Bartlow recalled that the decedent looked at him, then ran toward the neighbor's house. He advised there was not much time to continue giving commands. He recalled that officers came around from the front of the house, and they all engaged in a foot pursuit. Officer Bartlow explained that he re-holstered his weapon to avoid running with his gun drawn. When Officers Wilson and Lineberger were right next to the decedent, he heard two shots and saw a gun in the decedent's right hand. He described the gun as having a teal grip. Officer Bartlow stated that he redrew his service weapon, but he did not have a clear shot because other officers were very close to the decedent. He did not know the extent of anyone's injuries at that point, but he believed it was up to him to act. Officer Bartlow stated that he ran to position himself at a better angle for a higher probability shot and to avoid crossfire. During this time, he believed Officers Wilson and Lineberger were still struggling with the decedent. He knew the suspect had a weapon and believed there to be an imminent threat to the officers and other members of the community in the area. After he was in position, he fired his weapon seven times. Officer Bartlow recalled seeing Officer Nicholas fire as well, but he did not know how many times. He estimated that the entire encounter took 15-20 seconds.

He recalled that Officers Wilson and Lineberger went to the front of the residence, and he was made aware that Officer Wilson had been shot. He then located the decedent's weapon a few feet away from the decedent. He recalled that Officer Nicholas rendered aid to the decedent while Officer Bartlow stood by, guarding the decedent's weapon until the two of them switched positions.

#### Officer Jonathan Nicholas

Officer Jonathan Nicholas was interviewed by investigators on March 26, 2025, at the CMPD Law Enforcement Center. During that interview, Officer Nicholas stated that he was hired by CMPD in August 2012.

Officer Nicholas recalled that on March 7, 2025, he was assisting with a warrant call for service. Prior to engaging with the decedent, the officers met at the entrance of the neighborhood, briefed, and searched for the decedent in a law enforcement database. He reported to investigators no prior interactions with the decedent.

Officer Nicholas advised that he took a position on the left side of the house where he could hear the other officers knocking at the front door. Shortly thereafter, Officer Nicholas heard Officer Wilson advise over the radio that the decedent was coming out onto the rear balcony. Officer Nicholas started to make his way around the house to converge on the decedent with other officers. He heard officers giving the decedent commands, but he could not hear exactly what they were.

Officer Nicholas recounted that he saw the decedent, who started running or jogging toward the neighbor's house. He was able to positively identify the decedent as the subject of the active warrants. He noted that the decedent stopped as Officer Wilson was about to make contact with him, and then Officer Nicholas heard a shot. Officer Nicholas did not recall any physical contact between the decedent and officers prior to the shot being fired. Officer Nicholas advised that, once he heard the shot, he realized that the decedent had a gun in his hands and a jacket over the hand holding the gun. He saw gun smoke coming from the decedent's direction. Officer Nicholas recalled that at this time, Officers Wilson, Lineberger, and Bartlow were all near the decedent, and the decedent had fired in the direction of Officers Wilson and Lineberger. Once the initial shot was fired, Officer Nicholas heard several more shots. He believed the decedent was shooting, so he returned fire. He fired five rounds and stopped firing once it was clear the decedent was no longer a threat.

After the shooting stopped, Officer Nicholas handcuffed the decedent and performed CPR while Officer Bartlow tried to find the decedent's gun. After Officer Bartlow found the gun, he and Officer Bartlow traded places.

#### Officer Travis Honeycutt

Officer Travis Honeycutt was interviewed by investigators on March 7, 2025, at the CMPD Law Enforcement Center. During that interview, Officer Honeycutt stated that he was hired by CMPD in June 2020.

Officer Honeycutt recalled that he and other officers were participating in a call for warrant service. He had never been to the subject address before. He stated the officers met at the front of the neighborhood, briefed, and reviewed the warrants for the decedent. He then approached the front of the house with Officers Manning and Lineberger. Officer Honeycutt stated that they knocked on the front door and the decedent's mother answered. The decedent's mother stated that the decedent was not present and that she denied knowing where he was. At that point, Officer Honeycutt recalled either hearing something on the radio or running and yelling from behind the house. He recalled that he ran down the steps and to the right side of the house where he could see the decedent through the brush. He saw the decedent running, and then saw the decedent turn and face back toward officers. Officer Honeycutt recounted that he heard gunshots, but he could not see who was shooting. From his vantage point, he could not see whether the decedent was holding a weapon.

Officer Honeycutt advised that he saw that Officer Wilson was hit and assisted him to the front yard. Officer Lineberger advised he had been hit as well. Officer Honeycutt recounted that he applied a tourniquet to Officer Wilson's leg, then took him to a patrol car that arrived after the shooting. Those officers transported Officer Wilson to the hospital. He recalled seeing Officer Nicholas performing CPR on the decedent. He did fire his service weapon and was not physically injured in the incident.

#### Officer Timothy Manning

Officer Timothy Manning was interviewed by investigators on March 7, 2025, at the CMPD Law Enforcement Center. During that interview, Officer Manning stated that he was hired by CMPD in May 2024.



Officer Manning stated that he participated in a warrant call for service on March 7, 2025. He advised that he had previously been to the residence trying to serve a warrant on the decedent but that he had never interacted with the decedent before. Officer Manning advised that the officers briefed at the front of the neighborhood. He was to approach the front of the house with Officers Honeycutt and Lineberger. Officer Manning recalled that the decedent's mother answered the door and stated that the decedent was not present. Officer Manning then heard shouting from the back of the house, indicating that someone was running. He could not make out specific verbal commands, but he heard yelling. He recalled that he ran to the back of the house and saw the decedent running away, with officers chasing him. Officer Manning recounted that he heard gunshots, but he was not sure where they came from. He then saw Officer Wilson on top of the decedent fighting over a gun in the decedent's hand. He advised that Officers Bartlow and Lineberger had their guns drawn. Officer Manning recalled that he saw the gun break free and saw Officer Wilson start to roll away. He then heard shots from the officers, but he was unsure who fired first.

Officer Manning noted that Officers Wilson and Lineberger came to the front yard, and both stated they were hit. Officer Honeycutt applied a tourniquet to Officer Wilson while Officer Manning checked Officer Lineberger for injuries. At this point, other officers arrived and transported Officer Wilson to the hospital and Officer Manning saw Officer Nicholas performing CPR on the decedent. He did not fire his weapon and was not physically injured during the incident.

#### **E. 911 Call**

Notes from the 911 call were entered into the computer-aided dispatch system for the officers to review as part of their response to the call for service. Through the computer-aided dispatch system, the officers were advised that the decedent had previously stated he would start disguising himself as a woman so that police would not be able to recognize him. Furthermore, the officers were advised that the caller stated that the decedent had previously made comments about not going back to prison.

#### **F. Video evidence**

Body-worn camera video was collected from all six officers present for the incident. This video evidence establishes that Officers Honeycutt, Manning, and Lineberger approached the front of the residence while Officer Wilson positioned himself in the rear of the residence. Officer Nicholas was positioned on the left side of the house and Officer Bartlow was stationed on the right. The video shows that the decedent exited the upstairs rear balcony of the residence, walked down the stairs, and through the backyard. Officer Wilson gave the decedent multiple audible commands to "get down," which the decedent ignored. The decedent then began running through the backyard toward the house next door. Officers Wilson, Bartlow, and Lineberger chased the decedent with Officer Nicholas close behind. The decedent crossed over a rock irrigation ditch, up a hill, then stopped and turned in the direction of Officers Lineberger and Wilson. The outline of a gun covered by a pair of jeans is visible in the decedent's right hand. Officer Lineberger's body-worn camera captured the moment the decedent fired his first shot at Officers Wilson and Lineberger, and the resulting hole the bullet created in the jeans which were concealing the firearm. Officer Lineberger's body-worn camera recorded him firing a single round at the decedent after recovering from the fall caused by the decedent's shots. Next, Officer

Wilson's body-worn camera recorded Officer Wilson's struggle with the decedent over the gun, during which the decedent continued to point the gun in Officer Wilson's direction. Officer Wilson ultimately dislodged the gun from the decedent's possession and tossed it to the ground nearby where it was later located by Officer Bartlow. The body-worn camera captured Officers Wilson, Bartlow, and Nicholas returning fire at the decedent simultaneously with Officer Wilson's step backward as he dislodged the firearm from the decedent.

#### **G. Physical evidence**

Investigators conducted round counts on the service weapons belonging to Officers Wilson, Manning, Nicholas, and Lineberger. The counts concluded that Officers Wilson and Bartlow each fired seven rounds. Officer Nicholas fired five rounds. Officer Lineberger fired one round. As such, the round counts suggest officers fired a total of 20 rounds. The officers each carried weapons loaded with WIN 9mm ammunition. Investigators managed to recover 18 WIN 9mm discharged cartridge cases from the brush surrounding the scene.

Investigators located the decedent's .45 caliber Hi-Point JHP 45 on the ground near the decedent by Officer Bartlow. Investigators recovered two .45 caliber USA 45 Auto discharged cartridge cases from the scene.

#### **H. Autopsy report**

Although the autopsy report for the decedent has not been finalized at this time, the Medical Examiner who performed the autopsy has been consulted. The Medical Examiner determined that the decedent incurred numerous gunshot wounds. The cause of death was determined to be gunshot wounds to the head and torso. Additionally, toxicology testing on the decedent's blood showed the presence of illicit fentanyl and methamphetamine.

#### **I. Conclusion**

It is undisputed that Officers Wilson, Bartlow, Lineberger, and Nicholas fired at the decedent. The central issue in this review is whether these officers were justified under North Carolina law in using deadly force in the protection of themselves or another. A police officer – or any other person – is justified in using deadly force if they, in fact, believed that they or another person was in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death from the actions of the person who was shot, and if their belief was reasonable.

The available evidence in this case conclusively establishes that Officers Wilson, Bartlow, Lineberger, and Nicholas were attempting to serve multiple warrants and orders for arrest on the decedent. When officers knocked on the front door of the residence, the decedent exited from the rear, concealing a firearm in his right hand. The decedent ignored multiple clear commands given by officers and instead fled on foot toward a neighboring residence. As officers chased the decedent, the decedent stopped, turned, and fired in the direction of Officers Wilson and Lineberger. Officer Wilson was shot in the leg and Officer Lineberger was hit in the belt. Officer Wilson then wrestled with the decedent over the firearm, during which time the firearm continued to be pointed in Officer Wilson's direction and then Officer Lineberger fired one round. As Officer Wilson dislodged the firearm from the decedent's grasp, Officers Nicholas, Wilson, and Bartlow returned fire at the decedent, striking him multiple times, resulting in his death. Although the decedent was ultimately disarmed, the timing of these shots fired by Officers

Wilson, Bartlow, and Nicholas occurred simultaneously with Officer Wilson's dislodging of the firearm from the grasp of the decedent. Under these circumstances, a reasonable police officer would justifiably believe that they or their fellow officers were in imminent danger of great bodily harm or death. It is therefore without question that these officers were justified in returning fire at the decedent in defense of themselves and each other. Accordingly, the State will not pursue criminal charges related to the death of Reggie Allen Knight.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Spencer B. Merriweather III". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Spencer B. Merriweather III  
District Attorney

## Exhibits

The Hi-Point JHP 45 fired by the decedent in the direction of Officers Wilson and Lineberger.

[Return](#)





The decedent preparing to fire in the direction of Officers Wilson and Lineberger.

[Return](#)





The hole in the jeans and smoke from the firearm created by the decedent's first shot in the direction of the officers.

[Return](#)



The hole in the jeans after the decedent's second shot as captured by Officer Wilson's body-worn camera.

[Return](#)





Officer Wilson and the decedent struggled on the ground over the decedent's firearm.

[Return](#)





Officers Nicholas and Bartlow took positions on either side of the struggle between the decedent and Officer Wilson.

[Return](#)





The decedent's Hi-Point JHP 45 was located on the ground by Officer Bartlow.

[Return](#)

