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October 24, 2017

Sheriff Brian Burnett Chelan County Sheriff's Office 401 Washington Street, 1st Floor Wenatchee, WA 98801

Special Operations Detective Jeff Dilks Chelan County Sheriff's Office 401 Washington Street, 1st Floor Wenatchee, WA 98801

Re:

Review of Officer-Involved Shooting

Officer: Wenatchee Police Department Officer Albert Gonzalez

Decedent: Matthew Folden Incident Date: July 27, 2017

Gentlemen:

I have been asked to review investigative materials provided to my office pertaining to the above-referenced matter.

On July 27, 2017, at approximately 10:05 p.m., Officer Albert Gonzalez of the Wenatchee Police Department responded to a 911 report of a person yelling, screaming, and walking around with a knife in the parking lot of Albertson's grocery store in Wenatchee, Washington. Approximately 3 minutes later, Officer Gonzalez entered the Albertson's parking lot and was the first officer on the scene. He parked his patrol car and gave commands to the suspect, later identified as Matthew Folden, to get down on the ground. Matthew Folden died as a result of gunshot wounds from a service revolver fired by Officer Gonzalez.

A review of this incident was prepared by the Special Investigation Unit and lead detective Jeff Dilks of the Chelan County Sheriff's Office. The Special Investigation Unit is a multiagency team which is comprised of members from the Chelan County Sheriff's Office, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, the Wenatchee Police Department, the East Wenatchee Police Department, and the Washington State Patrol. Members of the Wenatchee Police Department had minor involvement in the investigation due to the involvement of their officer in the shooting. Once the report was completed it was forwarded to the office of the Chelan County Prosecuting Attorney for review. It should be noted that the Chelan County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is not part of the Special Investigation Unit and is reviewing this matter to determine if there should be any prosecution under Washington state law. The Chelan County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is not involved in any administrative issues of the Wenatchee Police Department.

This review involves officers' reports, 911 call transcripts, crime scene entry logs and diagrams from the Washington State Patrol, statements from the officers involved and all the officers who were at the scene at the time of the incident or who were involved in the review of the incident. Witnesses of the incident were identified and interviewed or were attempted to be interviewed by members of the SIU investigation team. Further, there is photographic evidence and video evidence from in-car cameras of several police cars. There is also Albertson's store surveillance video and Target store parking lot video and a Facebook post by an individual who showed up to the scene after the incident took place. It is important to have an independent review of shooting incidents of this nature. I have reviewed all the evidence presented to date in this matter.

There are some reports which have not yet been received which include the firearm report from the Washington State Patrol Crime Lab for the purpose of ballistics, and the total station reports from the Washington State Patrol. However, those reports would not be needed for issue of review in this matter as there is no issue as to the bullet ballistics. In addition, the incident scene is a very small area which was easily identified by Detective Richmond of the Washington State Patrol who did prepare a drawing of the incident.

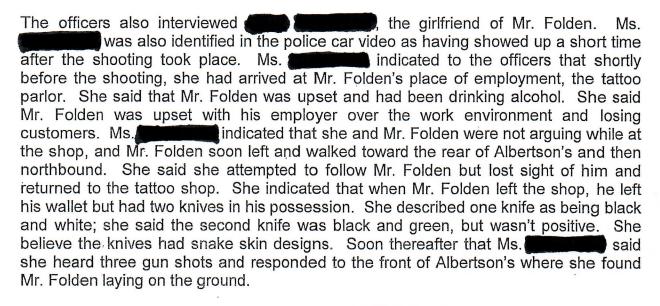
FACTS

The facts and information in this case are clearly established. This incident took place on July 27, 2017 between approximately 9:45 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Based upon the information from the witnesses, it appears there was a party that took place involving tattoo artists at a location near Albertson's on Miller Street. The owner of the tattoo parlor where the party took place is lives above the tattoo parlor and noticed that there were people drinking and it had gotten loud. He asked that the people be a little bit quieter. Mr. was able to identify Matt Folden,

whom he knew, as well as Mr. Folden's girlfriend, and asked that they be quieter. Mr. Folden and Ms. took their discussion outside. Mr. could hear them yelling at each other outside just by Albertson's. Mr. contacted Mr. about Mr. Folden's actions and the yelling. Mr. written statement saying it was clear that Ms. wanted to get Mr. Folden off the premises and that Mr. Folden did not wish to leave. This discussion took place. according to his cell log, at 9:57 p.m. Mr. heard the argument from the parking lot and he observed from a distance. He saw Mr. Folden break away and walk toward the Albertson's parking lot. He then heard a siren and believed he heard gun fire. Mr. walked around and did see Mr. Folden who had been shot and officers in the Mr. again contacted Mr. and noted that the time was approximately 10:10 p.m. Mr. contacted a person who was at the scene by the who saw Mr. Folden and Ms. arguing in the area where name of Mr. had seen them.

The owner of the tattoo parlor, the lattoo parlor, indicated that Mr. Folden had worked for him for several months. He indicated he received a call from at approximately 2158 hours to tell him that Mr. Folden and his girlfriend were arguing outside the studio. Mr. indicated that Mr. asked him if he should call the police, but that Mr. said not to call the police and he would come to the shop to deal with whatever disturbance was happening. Mr. further indicated that he had received a phone call from Mr. Folden's girlfriend and they were not arguing but Mr. Folden was upset and she had heard gun shots and she had to go.

During this period of time, another individual was near the scene who was identified as Mr. indicated that at approximately 10:00 p.m. he was in the parking lot just east of Starbucks and he heard a male screaming at the top of his lungs. He saw the male, subsequently identified as Matt Folden, hanging over a chain link fence that separated the Albertson's parking lot from the Alpha Media parking lot. indicated that Mr. Folden was screaming for 10-15 seconds and then he started sprinting toward Mr. When Mr. Folden got within approximately 10 feet of Mr. Mr. Folden abruptly changed direction and veered toward Starbucks. Mr. 1 noticed that when Mr. Folden was approaching him his left hand was free but his right hand was clutching something in his shirt and he was muttering something. Mr. was inside Albertson's for just a few minutes and came out and he did not see either of the two again. He saw an approaching police car with its emergency lights activated and he made a note of the time being approximately 10:08 p.m. Mr. further indicated that he has a concealed weapons permit and was carrying his pistol that night. He said he was alarmed by Mr. Folden's behavior and put his hand on the weapon in his pocket based upon the way Mr. Folden was acting.



A 911 call was received to RiverCom from who works for a company for whom he was making a delivery of items to Starbucks in the parking lot by The 911 call was transcribed and Mr. said, "There's a guy Albertson's. screaming and yelling and walking around with a knife." He identified where he was and identified the screaming person as wearing camouflage shorts and a darker tank top and had his hair cut kind of like a Mohawk. Mr. further indicated the person was walking toward him and the 911 operator could hear Mr. Folden yelling in the background. The 911 operator dispatched several officers. Mr. Indicated that at some point he couldn't understand everything Mr. Folden was saving but Mr. Folden called him a traitor. Mr. further indicated that he usually carries a firearm unless he is working. Mr. said based upon the yelling and the fact that he saw a knife in Mr. Folden's hand, he felt concerned enough that he reached to where he normally carries his firearm. He further indicated in his statement that Mr. Folden was holding the knife the way you would to use it, and the way Mr. Folden was holding the knife led Mr. to believe that Mr. Folden was going to stab somebody with it. to call 911--because Mr. Folden was acting very out This is what triggered Mr. of normal and screaming. Mr. also mentioned the person with the knife looked "like he was on drugs or not right in the head or something."

evening. He saw Mr. Folden approach Mr. in the parking lot. Mr. recalled seeing Mr. Folden and Mr. about 20 feet apart and Mr. Folden was yelling and screaming. Once the officer got there, Mr. said he looked away to finish loading. He then heard three shots and saw the officer with his gun out and pointed. He could not see Mr. Folden on the ground, but does remember the officer

saying to get rid of the knife. Mr. indicated Mr. Folden was constantly yelling. He was concerned because of Mr. Folden's anger, his body gestures, and the way his was speaking.

A couple was also seen at Albertson's around this particular time and identified as was identified as being one of the people who walked by Mr. Folden in the video from Officer Gonzalez' patrol vehicle. and her younger daughter had already left the store and were sitting in the family truck by the time and their older daughter walked out of the store. As Mr. walked out of the store he identified Mr. Folden approaching and described him as being upset and/or possibly intoxicated. Mr. shielded his daughter from Mr. Folden at the time. Mr. thought that Mr. Folden was wearing a necklace and thought he was clutching something near his chest, assuming it was a necklace. Mrs. never did see a knife but identified Mr. Folden as being agitated and possibly on drugs or drunk. She said Mr. Folden was making arm gestures and flailing his arms about and shouting, and she could hear him a ways away. Mrs. thought Mr. Folden had seen the flashing lights of the officers and was trying to make it into the front door of Albertson's. Mrs. further indicated that she thought Mr. Folden was walking toward the Albertson's door in order to avoid contact with the police. Mr. indicated that when Officer Gonzalez got out of his patrol car he commanded Mr. Folden to put his hands up, or something similar. He further indicated that Mr. Folden turned around and confronted the officer and maybe got into his face a little bit, and felt Mr. Folden was velling something. Although he was not certain, Mr. Mr. Folden initially confronted the officer and he still had his hands clutched to his chest, but he may have dropped his hands at some point. Mr. described Mr. Folden's volume above normal speaking but not as loud as Officer Gonzalez' commands to Mr. Folden. He heard three shots and Mr. Folden fell to the ground. Mr. was asked if he thought Mr. Folden had complied with Officer Gonzalez' commands and replied that no, Mr. Folden had not, and that Mr. Folden confronted the officer.

Officers also interviewed who worked at Sally's Beauty Supply which is located between Starbucks and Verizon in the strip mall by Albertson's. She had gotten off work about 9:30 p.m. and was sitting in her car answering text messages. Ms. Said she heard noises and heard a male voice yelling loudly and using profanity. Through her rear view mirror and by turning around, she saw the person who was yelling. When she saw him he was on the north end of the strip mall walking toward Albertson's. At first, she thought the male was walking after another male whom she assumed was a Starbucks delivery driver. She remembered that the man had been waving his arms around and she assumed someone had called the police because she quit paying attention and lost sight of him. The next thing she

noticed were the emergency lights and police cars in front of Albertson's. Ms. said she heard the officer say don't move, put your hands up. She said the officer's command was loud enough that she thought the officer was speaking through a loud speaker. Seconds later she heard three gun shots.

A 16-year-old person with the initials G.F. was leaving Applebee's after dinner with friends. Her car was parked in the J.C. Penney's parking lot, but she was able to clearly see the west entrance of Albertson's. She said she saw a person who was older come around from the back of Verizon who was wearing a tank top described as being a dark color, possibly dark blue. She further identified that this person had cargo shorts on and that he seemed drunk to her. She said he was being really loud and yelling and cussing a lot. He was swaying his body and moving his arms. She indicated that he walked all the way down to Albertson's and an officer came in super quick to the very front of the store. She said his lights were on and everything and he parked in front of Albertson's at the very end. She saw Mr. Folden come around from the back of the officer's car and thought he took the officer by surprise. She heard three shots. She said she further felt that when Mr. Folden took the officer by surprise, he jumped at the officer or lunged at him. Then a whole bunch of police officers came. She said she was crying and ultimately left the scene.

was leaving work at Target, which is in the parking lot just to the west of Albertson's. The Target video identifies both Ms. and another employee leaving at approximately the same time and walking to their cars. Her car was parked directly across from where the incident took place. She said she saw the officer arriving at Albertson's and parked near the west entrance of Albertson's. Ms. she had a good view and described it like a "movie screen" and she could see everything. She said it appeared that the officer and Mr. Folden had a confrontation. and seconds later she heard the gun shots and saw the officer step back. She said that the officer had not even made it to the front doors of the store before Mr. Folden sprinted toward the officer. She indicated that Mr. Folden sprinted out and assumed the officer had seen the same thing. She said Mr. Folden came right at the officer. She further indicated that Mr. Folden had opportunities to run different directions but ran toward the officer. She said she heard three shots and saw the officer step back and look around with the gun in his hand. A short time later, other officers arrived. Ms. recalled thinking at the time that oh, my gosh, he (Mr. Folden) is going to fight the officer, and that Mr. Folden came at the officer aggressively. She said it appeared to her that Mr. Folden and the officer collided instantly and they were so close she believed they were in a fight. Ms. car is seen in the officer's in-car video and she drives around the Target parking lot and stops to talk to a coworker who was also in a car in the Target parking lot coming from a different direction. She identified without a doubt that it was a police officer and the car lights were flashing.

Inside the Albertson's store was a contract employee who was working janitorial services by the name of was on the other side of the Mr. Albertson's store near glass doors which can be seen through. Albertson's did have a video which shows movement toward the officer by Mr. Folden as he was attempting to get into the store. Mr. and indicated that he had arrived about 5 minutes before the shooting happened, entered the store, walked to the back to check into work, then started sweeping about 50 feet or so away from the entrance. He said he heard a male voice saying don't move, don't move, and then he heard what sounded like three gun shots. Mr. further indicated that he heard don't move or don't do something. After he heard the shots, he walked over to the door and saw a male lying face down on the pavement. Later on during the conversation, he indicated that the male voice may have said don't move or don't reach, but after hearing the shots he didn't hear any other noises or voices. Mr. indicated he heard an officer outside after the male was lving on the ground who said to secure the knife. He did not see a knife, he only heard an officer refer to a knife. Mr. was not near the door at the time of the incident. The Albertson's video confirmed this fact.

An unidentified person was also near the door of Albertson's. However, the SIU team was unable to interview her. She appeared to be looking at her phone when the incident occurred.

Albert Gonzalez is an officer with the Wenatchee Police Department and gave a statement regarding this incident. There is surveillance video from his patrol vehicle from about the time he left from the area of the courthouse to Miller Street and then ultimately turning off Miller Street into the front of Albertson's and going to the west entrance. The video faces front from the car and Officer Gonzalez' microphone is on. The microphone comes on automatically when the vehicle's siren and the lights are deployed. Both can be heard in the video. Information from RiverCom to Officer Gonzalez and other responding officers indicated that there was a confrontational white male wearing camouflage shorts in the Albertson's parking lot armed with a knife. yelling and screaming. Again, Officer Gonzalez' lights and sirens were on according to him based upon the apparent severity of the call. He was further informed by RiverCom that the male had a knife and had approached the 911 caller. Officer Gonzalez drove to the front of the Albertson's parking lot and saw people rapidly walking away from the front entrance of the store. He approached the west corner of the building and noticed a male wearing camouflage shorts and walking quickly toward the west front doors of Albertson's. The officer could see a man clutching a knife with his right hand and it appeared he was trying to enter the store. The man was holding the knife in his fist and holding it up near his neck.

Office Gonzalez exited his vehicle and simultaneously drew his service pistol. He continued to watch the person, ultimately known to him as Matthew Folden, and he yelled at him to get on the ground. The audio and video clearly establishes that the officer yelled at him three times to get on the ground. Emergency lights were on but the siren was not at this point. Mr. Folden walked rapidly to the officer while clutching the knife. The officer attempted to peddle back, but it happened quickly enough that the officer was not even able to shut his driver's door. Mr. Folden did not comply with the officer's command and lowered the knife from his neck down to his chest level and angled toward the officer. The officer then fired his pistol. Mr. Folden fell a few feet in front of the patrol vehicle and was holding the knife. Officer Gonzalez ordered him to drop the knife and show his hands. This command can also be heard on the video. Officer Gonzalez threw the knife to the side and put his hands away from the body lying on the ground. Officer Gonzalez responded via radio that the subject was down and shots had been fired. The officer removed himself from the scene as other officers arrived.

An autopsy was prepared by Dr. Gina Fino, a forensic pathologist, who made findings regarding Mr. Folden's death. There were three gunshot wounds to his torso which resulted in his death. A post-mortem toxicology revealed that Mr. Folden had methamphetamine and alcohol in his system, the amount of which was high and consistent with the behavior he exhibited on the evening of July 27, 2017.

It should be noted that the east doors of Albertson's are locked at 9:00 p.m. On the video from Officer Weatherman's car, you can see the doors being unlocked after this incident occurred.

THE LAW

Law enforcement officers make split-second decisions. They can be confronted by violent persons who are armed with weapons or pose a threat to themselves or others. Officer Gonzalez had been notified that there was a threat in the area of Albertson's with a person who was acting unusual and who had a knife; the knife was seen by others and by Officer Gonzalez. One other person had seen Mr. Folden acting in such a manner that he put his hand on a gun; another person reached for where he would normally have a gun because he felt Mr. Folden posed a threat.

RCW 9A.16.040(3) provides that:

A public officer or peace officer shall not be held criminally liable for using deadly force without malice and with a good faith belief that such act is justifiable pursuant to this section.

Thus, in order to impose criminal liability upon any police officer, the prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the officer acted with malice and without a good faith belief that deadly force was justified. Good faith is not defined in RCW Title 9A. Good faith has been held to mean "a state of mind indicating honesty and lawfulness of purpose." This applies a subjective standard which focuses on the beliefs of the officer at the time of the incident. Therefore, the officer's actions in determining if he had a good faith belief will be looked at from the perspective of the officer during the incident on July 27, 2017.

The State must also prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the officer acted without malice. The term malice is defined in RCW 9A.04.110(12) as:

[a]n evil intent, wish, or design to vex, annoy, or injure another person. Malice may be inferred from an act done in a willful disregard of the rights of another, or an act wrongfully done without just cause or excuse, or an act or omission of duty betraying a willful disregard of social duty.

In order to charge the officer with a criminal violation, there must be a factual basis to find that the officer did in fact act with malice. There is no indication that this officer ever knew Mr. Folden before this incident. In order to charge this officer, there would have to be supporting evidence that he had a particular or general animosity toward Mr. Folden. If the officer was acting out of fear for their own physical safety or the safety of others, the State cannot prove that an officer acts with malice.

RCW 9A.16.050 sets forth the use of deadly force in self-defense which is available to all people and not specific to law enforcement. As with officers, there is no duty to retreat given in this RCW.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This report was turned over to the Chelan County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to determine whether any acts done by Wenatchee Police Officer Albert Gonzalez was reckless or negligent with respect to his dealings with Matthew Folden. As pointed out, in order to charge an officer with a crime of use of deadly force, the prosecution would have to believe the officer was not working with good faith and committed the incident with malice and would not be entitled to the use of self-defense in a matter. The evidence in this report is clear that Officer Albert Gonzalez did not act either recklessly or negligently in dealing with the decedent in this matter. Furthermore, there is no indication that Officer Gonzalez acted with malice or did not act in good faith as a police officer.

This is a tragic loss of life. Condolences do go out to Mr. Folden's family and friends.

Police officers are trained to take a necessary amount of force to stop a threat. We will never know for sure what was going on with Mr. Folden that evening. It does appear that Mr. Folden was involved in drinking alcohol. After the autopsy was performed, and alcohol level was established that would indicate Mr. Folden was intoxicated at the time of the incident. Furthermore, methamphetamines of a substantial amount were found in Mr. Folden's system. The combination of alcohol and methamphetamines certainly created a dangerous situation. Indications from witnesses, who include Mr. the 16-year-old person, Mr. Mr. Mr. Mrs. others, indicate that Mr. Folden was acting intoxicated, upset, and aggressive. For whatever reason, Mr. Folden left his cell phone at his place of employment, but he took his knives. Mr. Folden's aggressive behavior caused one person to put his hand on his weapon and another person to reach for where he would normally keep his weapon. Mr. Folden's behavior caused another citizen to feel he needed to contact 911 and advise the police that there was a dangerous person in the parking lot of Albertson's on July 27, 2017. Furthermore, evidence from the officer indicated that Mr. Folden had a knife out and was coming for the officer.

Two other people, a 16-year-old person and statement, both verified the officer's statement that Mr. Folden ran at the officer. From their viewpoints they could both see this taking place. Further indicated that Mr. Folden could have ran other ways and could have ran into Albertson's as he was at the door, but he chose to run toward the officer. The 16-year-old person indicated that the officer appeared to have been surprised by Mr. Folden's actions. Ms. State said she felt she was going to watch a fight go down from her vantage point in the Target parking lot.

Why Mr. Folden took the fight to the officer on that particular evening, no one will ever know for sure, but the consequences were tragic. However, the officer's requirement as part of his employment was to go to Albertson's based upon the information he had that there was a person acting in an aggressive manner with a knife near Albertson's. The person, Mr. Folden, was at the door of Albertson's. If Mr. Folden would have entered Albertson's without the officer reacting or if the officer had waited for others, the officer would have been derelict in his duties and could have put the community and people in Albertson's at risk.

Mr. Folden had multiple warnings. The police officer's vehicle siren was on when he pulled into the Albertson's parking lot. You can hear his vehicle's siren in the officer's in-car video. The emergency lights in the patrol car were clearly activated at the time, which created an additional warning to Mr. Folden as they appeared right in front of him. The vehicle's siren and emergency lights also drew the attention of other people in

the area as witnesses indicated in their statements they had seen the lights and heard the siren in the background. Furthermore, Officer Gonzalez, upon exiting his patrol vehicle, clearly gave three verbal warnings to Mr. Folden, which can be heard on the officer's in-car video, to get down on the ground. As the officer and other citizens indicated, Mr. Folden did not comply with the officer's commands and took the fight to Officer Gonzalez, which required the officer to respond. It was a very quick decision based upon the actions of Mr. Folden on that evening. All attempts were made to get Mr. Folden to stop doing what he was doing. Officer Gonzalez was fully dressed in his police uniform so there was no doubt as to his identify as a police officer as he stood before Mr. Folden on that evening the incident occurred. Mr. Folden certainly received another warning when Officer Gonzalez displayed his service revolver, and Mr. Folden chose to ignore that warning as well.

RCW 9.94A.411 indicates that "crimes against persons will be filed if sufficient admissible evidence exists, which, when considered with the most plausible, reasonably foreseeable defense that could be raised under the evidence, would justify conviction by a reasonable and objective fact finder." The legal standard by which the State must prove any criminal charge must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. RCW 10.58.020.

Although our condolences go out to the family and friends of Matthew Folden, his actions and failure to follow the officer's orders created the end result. Mr. Folden had a knife, he charged at the officer, and he put the officer in a position to defend himself as he was responding to his duty as police officer for the Wenatchee Police Department. Other citizens had called 911 based upon Mr. Folden's actions that evening within this short period of time. It should be noted that the police department did respond quickly to what was believed to be an aggressive situation. Police officers do not have the benefit of calling 911. Should the officer have ignored Mr. Folden or let him continue to act in the manner in which he was acting, it would have put people in and around Albertson's in potential danger and the officer would have been derelict in his duties.

Based upon the foregoing information detailing this matter, there is no basis for criminal charges to be filed against Officer Albert Gonzalez in this case.

Respectfully submitted

Douglas N. Shae

Chelan County Prosecuting Attorney