



PUBLIC STATEMENT

Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes
Passaic County Prosecutor's Office
401 Grand Street
Paterson, NJ 07505
(973) 881-4800

GRAND JURY FINDS PASSAIC COUNTY SHERIFF OFFICER'S USE OF NON-FATAL DEADLY FORCE TO BE JUSTIFIED

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

January 10, 2018

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes issues a public statement regarding the outcome of an investigation into a police use-of-force incident that occurred in Paterson. This statement is issued in accordance with the July 28, 2015, Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive Amending Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2006-5.

On October 27, 2014, Passaic County Sheriff's Officer Fernando Sanchez discharged his service weapon while off duty. An investigation by the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Shooting Response Team commenced. The matter was reviewed by the County Prosecutor and all relevant provisions of the Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive have been complied with following its issuance.

The Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Shooting Response Team conducted an investigation that included neighborhood canvassing, civilian and police witness statements, review of video footage, review of 911 and radio transmissions, submission of ballistic evidence, and examination of physical evidence.

The results of the investigation were presented to a Grand Jury in Passaic County and the Grand Jury declined to issue an indictment regarding Officer Sanchez's use of force. His use of force was found to be justified.

On October 27, 2014, at approximately 5:30 p.m., Officer Sanchez discharged a firearm in the area of Belmont Avenue and North 9th Street. The Passaic County Prosecutor's Office Shooting Response Team was activated and investigated the use-of-force incident. Information developed during the investigation indicates that Paterson Police Officers were dispatched to the area on a report of a shooting, where a 24-year-old male had been struck and injured. Officer Sanchez, who was traveling in the area in his personal vehicle, had witnessed the shooting and pursued the suspect on foot. Officer Sanchez had just completed his scheduled shift and was dressed in full uniform at the time. Officer Sanchez reported that while he was pursuing the suspect through backyards, he identified himself and commanded the suspect to stop and show his hands. In response, the suspect reportedly turned toward the officer in an aggressive manner and removed a handgun from his pocket. At that time, Officer Sanchez fired a single round from his duty weapon, which did not strike the suspect. The suspect then turned and fled. No parties were physically injured as a result of Officer Sanchez's use of force.

To date, the suspect has not been identified. The Passaic County Prosecutor's Office asks anyone with additional information to contact us on our tips line at 1-877-370-PCPO or tips@passaiccountynj.org.

Further information on the July 28, 2015, Supplemental Law Enforcement Directive Amending Attorney General Law Enforcement Directive 2006-5 may be found at: http://www.state.nj.us/lps/dcj/agguide/directives/2006-5_SRT_OIS.pdf.