

OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA

BREVARD AND SEMINOLE COUNTIES

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April 21, 2021

Today I'm announcing my decision not to pursue any criminal prosecution involving the use of deadly force by Brevard County Sheriff's Deputy JAFET SANTIAGO MIRANDA, that resulted in the deaths of 16 year old ANGELO CROOMS and 18 year old SINCERE PIERCE on November 13, 2020, on Stetson Drive in Cocoa.

This decision comes after an exhaustive inquiry by my office into the findings of investigations conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Brevard County Sheriff's Office (BCSO), and Brevard County Medical Examiner.

I know my decision today does nothing to lessen the horrific impact on the surviving families of Mr. Crooms and Mr. Pierce. Anytime a parent loses a child it is a tragic and heartbreaking circumstance. To lose a child in such a violent manner is beyond comprehension. But my responsibility is to set aside feelings of emotion or sympathy and make a decision based solely on the facts and evidence, according to the laws of Florida as applied to those facts.

Role of the State Attorney

The role of the State Attorney in any investigation into the use of deadly force by law enforcement, is limited to determining if a criminal violation of Florida Law has occurred, if any individual may be held criminally responsible, and if that finding can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt at trial. The State Attorney does not establish agency policy, procedures, and training requirements. Nor does the State Attorney have any responsibility for determining disciplinary action or pursuing civil litigation in these matters.

Public Records Access

There have been numerous inaccurate, speculative, and sometimes intentionally false statements made to the press and on social media platforms, describing the facts and evidence in this case. To ensure a clear and transparent record is available, the entire investigation has been prepared for release as a publicly available record.

Additionally the FDLE investigative summary, along with the original wide angle video and digitally enhanced in-car camera video from Deputy Santiago's patrol unit, are all available as directly viewable media, and linked files via our website at <http://sa18.org/>

Central Issues to be Established

Was the use of deadly force by Deputy Jafet Santiago on November 13, 2020, legally justified based on Florida law?

Were Deputies Jafet Santiago and Carson Hendren engaged in lawful law enforcement activity, at a place and time they were legally entitled to be?

The Stolen or Not Stolen Car

I first want to address the confusion on whether the vehicle Mr. Crooms was driving was stolen or not. It was not. However, there is no question that the two deputies involved in this incident, Deputy Jafet Santiago and Deputy Carson Hendren, although incorrect, reasonably believed that the car being driven by Mr. Crooms was a stolen vehicle and was the same vehicle that had unlawfully fled during an attempted traffic stop for illegal tint by another deputy approximately 15 minutes earlier around 10:18 a.m.

The vehicle involved in the earlier felony fleeing was reported as a gray Volkswagen Passat with dark tinted windows with a registered address on Ivy Drive in Cocoa, Fl. That same vehicle was then reported stolen by the owners at approximately 10:30 a.m. from its registered address on Ivy Drive and the information was broadcast to all on duty deputies. The tag number on the stolen vehicle (NWE22) was only 2 numbers off from the gray Volkswagen Passat being driven by Mr. Crooms (NWE04).

In a series of incredible and unfortunate coincidences, Mr. Crooms was driving a nearly identical vehicle with a very similar tag number in the area of Ivy Drive in Cocoa where the vehicle was reported stolen at the same time this information was being broadcast to deputies. Deputy Hendren and Deputy Santiago were in the area of Ivy Drive looking for that stolen vehicle when they observed Mr. Crooms driving his vehicle which closely matched the description of the stolen vehicle.

Deputy Hendren, followed by Deputy Santiago, immediately began to follow Mr. Crooms so they could stop the vehicle and verify whether it was the stolen vehicle. Deputy Hendren radioed the Florida tag number on Mr. Crooms' vehicle to verify whether it was the same vehicle just as Mr. Crooms turned from Ivy Drive and into a driveway on Stetson Drive and stopped. Deputy Hendren did not get a response from dispatch before she and Deputy Santiago began to engage Mr. Crooms in the attempted felony traffic stop of Mr. Crooms.

The Felony Stop

The moments leading up to the attempted felony stop of Mr. Crooms are captured on the in-car camera video. The BCSO in-car camera system installed in Deputy Santiago's unit is automatically activated whenever the emergency lights are activated. The system then automatically retains 60 seconds of video recording captured prior to the emergency lights activation. There is a six second delay from the time when the emergency lights are activated, until the wireless body worn microphone syncs with the system, and audio recording begins. In this instance, audio began after Deputy Santiago has exited the patrol unit. It is worth noting that contrary to repeated and incorrect assertions in Florida Today, Deputy Santiago's emergency lights were activated. As previously noted, the camera is activated when the lights are turned on and the blue lights can also be seen in the reflection off the side of Mr. Crooms' vehicle.

A felony stop is a high-risk law enforcement activity and is appropriately employed whenever the person (s) either operating or riding in a motor vehicle, is reasonably believed to have committed, or are committing a felony level offense. At that point, both deputies have testified that they believed that this was a felony traffic stop of a stolen vehicle also involved in a felony fleeing and eluding. This was a reasonable belief, although ultimately found to be incorrect.

Yes, both Deputies Santiago and Hendren had drawn their firearms as they exited their patrol units and attempted to effectuate the felony stop, an action that some have criticized. Anyone that would suggest this was improper is grossly misinformed. Even an ordinary traffic stop is one of the most potentially dangerous encounters that any law enforcement officer can face. In fact, there have been several recent news reports of officers being shot and killed during what they believed to be was a routine traffic stop. There really is no such thing as a routine stop. It was highly reasonable for them to draw their duty firearms under these circumstances. Especially, in light of the fact that Mr. Crooms continued to move his vehicle several times in spite of repeated demands of both deputies that he stop the vehicle.

Failure to Comply

As seen on the video, both Deputy Hendren and Deputy Santiago positioned their patrol units to block the roadway as Mr. Crooms pulled into a private driveway. However, instead of remaining and surrendering within the driveway, Mr. Crooms proceeds to back the vehicle out into the street and then pulls forward and stops facing the patrol units. During this entire time, you can hear both deputies repeatedly yelling at Mr. Crooms to "stop the vehicle". However, instead of complying with the deputies' commands, Mr. Crooms then backs up the vehicle again and stops with the vehicle this time facing directly at Deputy Santiago. Again, you can hear both deputies repeatedly yelling at Mr. Crooms to "stop the vehicle". Seconds later, Mr. Crooms begins accelerating directly at Deputy Santiago.

Surviving Witness Testimony

Which brings us to another widely circulated falsehood in Florida Today news reports about whether the occupants of the vehicle heard the deputies' commands to "stop the vehicle". A second and surviving passenger in the front seat of the Volkswagen driven by Mr. Crooms was Jaquan Kimbrough-Rucker, age 20. Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker provided a sworn statement to the FDLE on November 13, 2020, the same day as the incident. He told investigators that prior to the confrontation with deputies, that Mr. Crooms and he had discussed obtaining some marijuana. As a result, Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker got into the Volkswagen driven by Mr. Crooms and went to the home of Mr. Pierce on Exeter Drive in Cocoa. Mr. Pierce got into the back seat of the Volkswagen and the group left the residence traveling toward and ultimately onto Ivy Drive. Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker noticed two BCSO patrol vehicles following them, saying he initially observed the units in the area of the ABC store near the intersection of Clearlake Road and Dixon Blvd.

He confirmed that Mr. Crooms continued to Stetson Drive and turned into a driveway. Almost immediately Mr. Crooms backed out of the driveway and positioned the Volkswagen facing the intersection of Stetson and Ivy Drives. Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker described the two BCSO units as parked in the roadway attempting to block the Volkswagen from exiting onto Ivy Drive. He observed Deputies Santiago and Hendren standing in front of the patrol units with their "guns raised" toward the Volkswagen driven by Mr. Crooms. He recognized them to be deputies based on their uniforms and marked units. The deputies "kept yelling [at] him, telling him to stop."

Initially Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker stated that the Volkswagen was "nowhere near" the deputies when the shots were fired, but then estimated the Volkswagen came within 6 feet of the deputy at the time the shots were fired. When asked if anyone had made statements prior to the shots being fired, Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker claimed he told Mr. Crooms to drive away in the opposite direction from the deputies, with Mr. Crooms responding "Sit back" before the car began to accelerate towards the deputy.

Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker was later interviewed by reporters with the Florida Today newspaper who subsequently published his account of the incident. That account includes statements that he never heard the deputies yell "stop the vehicle" prior to shots being fired. He also said that he was unaware of any firearms in the Volkswagen, which is contradicted by the discovery of two firearms at the scene including one associated with him.

These statements witnessed and reported by employees of the Florida Today newspaper stand in direct contradiction to Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker's sworn statements to the FDLE. At the very least they provide evidence that Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker has offered false statements to reporters, bringing his credibility into serious question. Perhaps it would be a better practice to wait for the completed investigation to be released before interviewing key witnesses and repeatedly printing their false statements.

The In-Car Camera Video

A portion of the in-car video of this incident has been widely broadcast and not unsurprisingly, people have reached different conclusions as to what it shows. While many have declared this early release video definitive, it does not provide a completely accurate depiction of the incident. Because of the nature of the wide-view panoramic camera and the limitations of the original format release, the publicly released video did not accurately depict the physical positioning of Deputy Santiago in relation to the vehicle driven by Mr. Crooms.

To more accurately establish this critical positioning, FDLE experts were able to provide a digitally enhanced video in both real time and in slow motion. The enhanced video corrects the wide-view panoramic distortion and more accurately reflects the positional relationships providing greater insight as to the events of the incident. Another reason why it is irresponsible to make definitive statements about an incident until the investigation is complete.

In this enhanced version, it's clear that Deputy Santiago did not approach Mr. Crooms' vehicle as it was moving forward. The video reflects that Deputy Santiago was stationary, positioned in front of and to the passenger side of the Volkswagen, when the vehicle began moving forward directly towards Deputy Santiago.

Corroboration of the video is found in the forensic analysis of the shots fired by Deputy Santiago into the vehicle, establishing that the initial shots were fired and entered the front windshield at an angle moving from the passenger side of the front hood, to the driver's side of the vehicle. This places Deputy Santiago to the front and slightly to the passenger side of the vehicle when he began to fire. In addition, the casings that were recovered are also consistent with the initial shots being fired from the front and slightly to the passenger side of the vehicle and all shots are consistent with Deputy Santiago directing his shots at the driver as the vehicle continued to move forward.

Tragically, the decision by Mr. Crooms to drive toward Deputy Santiago placed Mr. Pierce, who was seated behind Mr. Crooms, into the line of fire being directed by Deputy Santiago at Mr. Crooms. Forensic analysis determined that Mr. Pierce was struck and killed by one of the initial shots that entered the Volkswagen from the front. The last shot taken by Deputy Santiago hit the rear driver side window, but did not strike Mr. Pierce, as it was directed toward the driver Mr. Crooms. Under Florida law, since the shooting of Mr. Crooms by Deputy Santiago was justified then the unintended shooting of Mr. Pierce would also be justified and not subject to criminal charges.

No Duty to Retreat

I also address the issue of whether Deputy Santiago could have retreated or done anything else to protect himself from being hit by Mr. Crooms as he attempted to get Mr. Crooms to comply with his commands to stop the vehicle. First of all, the enhanced in-car camera video shows that as the Volkswagen started accelerating forward towards Deputy Santiago, he began moving

backwards and away as he was firing. Not forward as has been repeatedly and inaccurately reported.

Under Florida law there is no duty to retreat if a person is in a place where they have a lawful right to be and are not involved in criminal activity. Even though Deputies Santiago and Hendren were mistakenly attempting to stop the wrong Volkswagen, those efforts, based on their knowledge at the time, were reasonable and lawful.

Florida law no longer carries a duty to retreat, but even when it did there was an exception if doing so would have placed the person into more danger. Examination of the scene by investigators revealed there was no cover near Deputy Santiago that he could have reasonably reached without sacrificing his safety at the point the vehicle began moving towards him. The evidence shows that Deputy Santiago was standing directly in front of an accelerating car, essentially a 3,000-pound deadly weapon, and in a sworn statement said that he was in fear for his life.

Tragically, there have been hundreds if not thousands of incidents across this country where law enforcement officers have been killed or critically injured by persons using a vehicle as a deadly weapon. Data recovered from the Volkswagen's "black box" computer shows that the accelerator had been fully depressed and was rapidly accelerating prior to the time that the initial shots were fired. While only reaching a top speed of 12 mph before the accelerator was released, there is no question that this vehicle could have caused death or great bodily harm to Deputy Santiago.

Deputy Santiago has testified, and the video confirms he was in close proximity to the Volkswagen, with no accessible cover, when it began accelerating towards him. Deputy Santiago testified that he believed that his life was in danger and discharged his firearm at the driver in an attempt to stop the threat aimed at him. Deputy Hendren also testified that after hearing Mr. Crooms revving the engine, she believed Mr. Crooms was driving the Volkswagen towards Deputy Santiago in a fast and threatening manner.

Under Florida law any person that is not engaged in an unlawful activity and is attacked where he has a right to be, has no duty to retreat and has the right to use deadly force if they reasonably believe that it was necessary to do so to prevent death or great bodily harm. Given the facts and specific evidence of this case, prosecutors cannot disprove that Deputy Santiago reasonably believed he was facing death or great bodily harm and was justified in his decision to use deadly force.

Role of Previous Criminal History – Deputy Santiago

Many have expressed concern over any disclosure of any information regarding the criminal backgrounds of Mr. Crooms, Mr. Pierce and Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker as being irrelevant as to whether Deputy Santiago was justified in his actions since he was not aware of their backgrounds at the time. In this they are correct. However, it is just as irrelevant as to issues in

the background of Deputy Santiago but that has not stopped those allegations from being voiced publicly against the deputy, even if inaccurate. Let me begin there.

In April of 2020, Deputy Santiago was investigated by the Titusville Police Department for an act of Battery Domestic Violence and Child Neglect alleged to have been committed against his estranged spouse, an officer with the Titusville Police Department, during an altercation that occurred at Deputy Santiago's separate residence over a dispute regarding child custody for the day. Deputy Santiago was not arrested, but the investigation was turned over to our office for review. I immediately transferred the review to my Seminole County Domestic Violence Division for a prosecution determination which is a routine practice when a complaint involves a Brevard County officer. This case involved not one but two officers from different agencies. Ultimately, after a careful review by Division Chief David Whateley, no charges were brought against Deputy Santiago. A disposition summary was issued by Mr. Whateley who wrote:

“After reviewing the cameras and sworn statements, the State cannot conclusively determine if the complainant entered the residence prior to the use of physical force. The suspect claims that the complainant unlawfully entered his residence and he was restraining her until law enforcement arrival. There are conflicting statements between the witnesses (child and sister of the complainant) as to whether the entry occurred prior to the use of physical force. Furthermore, the facts do not rise to the level of child neglect as the child did not suffer any injury or show any facts that there was a likelihood of injury. Mental injury requires an expert opinion per statute, which is absent in this case. Even though there is a statement indicating that the child will be sent for therapy, this does not automatically support that there was a mental injury. For the above reasons, the State cannot successfully prosecute this case to the burden of beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Role of Previous Criminal History – Mr. Crooms, Mr. Pierce and Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker

I do believe the prior criminal histories of Mr. Crooms, Mr. Pierce, and Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker are relevant to the issue of why Mr. Crooms refused to comply with the deputies' commands, and why all three were motivated to avoid being stopped by deputies.

Mr. Crooms had a pending charge of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon and was on probation for Carrying a Concealed Firearm. He had also absconded from his home in violation of his probation and had an active juvenile arrest warrant (known as a TICO or Take Into Custody Order), issued on November 2, 2020, less than two weeks prior to this incident. Mr. Pierce also had an active TICO for his failure to appear for a court hearing on a Burglary arrest, as well as pending Burglary and Grand Theft Motor Vehicle charges. Perhaps most significantly, Mr. Pierce was illegally possessing a firearm in his waistband where it was discovered by rescue workers attending to him during this incident. Had Mr. Crooms stopped and complied with the deputies' commands, both he and Mr. Pierce would have been taken into custody for the outstanding TICO's and Mr. Pierce's concealed firearm would have been discovered adding an additional new felony offense.

Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker has prior convictions for Possession of a Firearm by a Delinquent and Burglary and has served time in prison. More importantly, upon search of the scene in this incident, a firearm was found on the ground under the front passenger side of the vehicle where Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker had exited the vehicle. DNA testing on that firearm shows that he is a potential contributor to the mixed DNA profile on the firearm, and it is consistent with one seen in his possession on a snap-chat video. Possession of a firearm by a person previously convicted of a felony is a second-degree felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Since this incident, Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker has been arrested twice for multiple charges including Trafficking in Fentanyl, Possession of Cocaine, Possession of Alprazolam, Driving without a License, and Fleeing and Eluding a Police Officer when he rammed a patrol unit while attempting to escape.

Mr. Crooms, Mr. Pierce, and Mr. Kimbrough-Rucker have all been identified in incidents that had been plaguing the Cocoa area for several months and as I have detailed, they have had multiple contacts with law enforcement. In addition, there are multiple social media posts depicting them handling and in possession of firearms. This does not paint a picture of kids that feared harm from the police as expressed in news conferences and social media posts. Rather, it lends credibility to the belief that Mr. Crooms and his passengers were likely acting out of a collective and well-founded concern they would all be searched, arrested, and face prosecution for some very serious charges.

Not Attempting to Hit the Deputy

There have been repeated claims that Mr. Crooms was only attempting to flee from the deputies and did not intend to hit Deputy Santiago as if this was acceptable behavior. Even if true, Deputy Santiago had no way of knowing that. As you recall, the intersection of Stetson Drive at Ivy Drive was blocked by the patrol units of Deputies Santiago and Hendren. This meant that the only way for Mr. Crooms to flee would be to drive through a front yard, over a sidewalk and into the adjacent street. This would still be an unlawful action that constitutes a serious felony of Fleeing and Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer, and a dangerous and unacceptable action. The close proximity of the Volkswagen to Deputy Santiago, the revving of the engine, the decision not to comply with the verbal commands to stop the vehicle, and the sudden acceleration of the vehicle directly towards him made it impossible for Deputy Santiago to distinguish an attempt by Mr. Crooms to flee, from an attempt to strike him with the motor vehicle.

A Troublesome Trend

It is now common knowledge in the criminal community that law enforcement will no longer participate in a high-speed chase for most traffic and minor offenses due to the real danger it poses to the public. This was borne out when the deputy attempted to stop the actual stolen Volkswagen that instead fled, resulting in this tragic encounter. All of us have seen countless

news accounts of innocent citizens being killed by reckless and speeding criminals fleeing from the police.

We must stop the narrative that it is understandable, or even acceptable to flee from the police and refuse to obey lawful commands. We do great harm to our children, our law enforcement officers and to the general safety of our community when we publicly justify these unlawful actions. The messaging should instead be crystal clear: STOP AND COMPLY.

If you believe that any actions taken by the officer are improper, excessive or unwarranted then there are many avenues to address those complaints in a legal, safe and proper manner. And I assure you, there are plenty of attorneys out there willing to sue the police if they believe there are monies waiting to be recovered.

Contacts with Families and Attorneys

I want to address several inaccurate statements in the press and on social media regarding lack of contacts with the families of Mr. Crooms and Mr. Pierce. On November 27, 2020, two weeks after the incident, we received written notice that both the Pierce and Crooms families were represented by counsel. We are very mindful of our legal obligation to honor the attorney client relationship and all communications from that point forward were sent through these attorneys. This path of communication was especially essential considering press statements and social media posts by these same attorneys demanding the filing of charges and threatening litigation before the investigation by FDLE was even completed or submitted to my office. It was made abundantly clear to all that we would not make any statements about the case or take any action until after FDLE completed their investigation and submitted the case to my office.

My office received the case file from FDLE on Friday, February 5, 2021. All use of force cases are independently reviewed by two of my most senior prosecutors. My Felony Chief of Intake, Michael Hunt, with 42 years of experience, and my Chief Trial Attorney, Bill Respass, with 33 years of experience. On Monday, February 8, 2021, one official workday after receiving the case, Mr. Respass contacted the attorney who sent the November 27th letter by phone to advise them that we had received the case and the process by which we would proceed. Mr. Respass also invited the attorney to provide any information on behalf of the families that they would like for us to review as part of our investigation. This call was acknowledged by a letter from two more of the family's attorneys dated February 15, 2021, in which they provided a summary of the facts and law that they believed supported the filing of criminal charges.

There were also numerous contacts throughout the months of February and March between Mr. Respass and an attorney for the families as they shared information. In fact, a March 5th email from one of the attorneys specifically thanked Mr. Respass for the information he provided concerning the steps my office was taking to thoroughly review the case and looked forward to a meeting with the families to discuss our charging decision.

Never once did any of my staff fail to respond or speak with an attorney representing the families of Mr. Crooms or Mr. Pierce. At any point in this process those attorneys could reach out to

confirm the status of the review and provide any additional comment or input from the families. Which they did on several occasions. For Florida Today to repeatedly insist that no effort was made to communicate with the families or that there was no avenue for communication to be shared with the families is not only false but completely irresponsible.

Florida Today knew that these families were represented by counsel because they quoted the attorneys numerous times for news stories. Therefore, they either failed to contact them to discuss this issue or knew the truth and intentionally failed to report the facts. Neither is acceptable. Florida Today is clearly more interested in fanning the flames and creating conflict rather than reporting the facts. This is dangerous to our community and a clear threat to the safety of our law enforcement officers that must deal with these issues on the street.

Release of the Decision

On Monday morning, April 19th, we reached out to the family's attorneys providing them with our decision not to pursue criminal prosecution. We also offered to meet privately with them and the families before making any public announcement, for the purpose of reviewing the specifics of the FDLE investigation and our reasoning behind this decision.

However, it became apparent after learning of the press conference by Cynthia Green and others held yesterday demanding the release of our decision and the continued inaccurate statements to the media over the past several weeks claiming a lack of communication with my office, that we could not allow this false narrative to continue. This was confirmed in a phone call with the attorneys yesterday when we learned that they were unaware of the numerous news reports, editorial and an appearance by Ms. Green before the Cocoa City Council last week about this same issue but assured us that the families knew they have had communications with my office. Obviously, someone is wrong.

While I would have preferred to do otherwise, I cannot justify further prolonging the announcement without the belief that our good faith efforts were being returned in kind.

The Review Process

I would also like to respond to criticisms that our review took too long. First of all, this is obviously a serious and impactful case not only for the families involved but also for our community. We will never rush our careful review just to satisfy demands for expediency.

In addition to reviewing the extensive investigation as submitted, Mr. Hunt and Mr. Respass requested and obtained additional information from the agencies. Once Mr. Hunt and Mr. Respass completed their review the case was handed over to me so that I could complete my own independent review. My review took about two weeks, and I then met with Mr. Hunt and Mr. Respass on April 6th to discuss our findings and analysis of the evidence. All three of us came to the same independent conclusion that we were unable to disprove that Deputy Santiago was justified in his use of deadly force on November 13, 2020. Ultimately, the final decision is mine.

I believe my office reviewed this case in a thorough and deliberate manner and as expeditiously as possible given the importance and seriousness of the case.

The delay between April 6th and announcing our decision today is attributable to several factors. First was the need to thoroughly review and redact the case file to prepare for the expected onslaught of public record requests. In addition, we worked on and completed a short power point presentation that could be presented to the families and their attorneys to lay out a timeline of the events and include crucial segments of testimony and forensic evidence. It also gave me time to complete this detailed and exhaustive analysis of the facts and evidence and the basis for my decision.

It was also important to give local law enforcement sufficient time to prepare for any issues that might occur from any protests related to this decision. I know that some will disagree with my decision and some will strongly disagree. Peaceful protest is always acceptable. Violent protest is not and given the incidents we have seen around the country it would be irresponsible for us not to give law enforcement time to implement security and safety measures in advance of this announcement. It really is a sad commentary on the state of our nation that we must prepare for such contingencies.

All of these factors had to be completed and in place before a meeting could be scheduled with the families and their attorneys preceding our public announcement. Unfortunately, for the reasons previously outlined, that meeting was not able to be scheduled prior to the release of the decision.

Further Considerations

I am concerned anytime an officer is in a physical position where it becomes necessary for them to shoot into a moving vehicle in order to eliminate the threat solely from that moving vehicle. Even though our role is limited in these use of force cases, it is a legitimate concern that needs to be examined by the experts.

To that extent, I am sending a letter to the Eastern Florida State College and Seminole State College law enforcement training academies requesting that these institutions consider a review of the tactical and operational decisions made in this case to determine whether there are any changes or modifications that may be appropriate in the training they present to officers in the academy.

I am also confident that Sheriff Ivey and the professional staff of his agency will likewise, if they haven't already done so, do a complete analysis of this incident to determine whether any changes or modifications to their internal training and policies are necessary.

I want to personally thank the agencies and their staff for their professional and thorough investigations. We appreciate your service to our community and for keeping us safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Archer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Archer