



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Milwaukee County

KENT LOVERN · District Attorney

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Matthew J. Torbenson, Megan Newport, Sara N.V. Sadowski, Ann López

May 5, 2025

Chief Elaine Bryant
Columbus Division of Police
120 Marconi Blvd.
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chief Bryant,

This letter summarizes the review by this office of the circumstances surrounding the death of Samuel Sharpe on July 16, 2024, resulting from the use of deadly force by officers with the Columbus Division of Police. The investigation of this incident was conducted by the Milwaukee Area Investigative Team (MAIT), in this case led by the Greenfield Police Department. The MAIT investigation includes the recovery of neighborhood surveillance video, police officer body camera video, and interviews with involved officers as well as civilian witnesses.

On Tuesday, July 16, 2024, at approximately 1:10 pm, fourteen officers of the Columbus Division of Police were conducting a briefing in the northeast parking lot of King Park, located at 1531 W. Vliet Street, in the City and County of Milwaukee. The Columbus Police officers were working under an aid agreement with the Milwaukee Police Department and were assigned as bicycle patrol officers to provide crowd control for the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee during the week of July 14, 2024.

Video surveillance from Repairers of the Breach, located at 1335 W. Vliet Street, showed a group of approximately ten civilians gathered under some trees on the northeast end of King Park. At 1:10:26pm, a subject later identified as Samuel Sharpe was walking toward the group of people in the park. He appeared to have something in each hand, consistent with the size and shape of the knives witnesses observed him carrying and later recovered from his body. At 1:10:48pm, Sharpe was observed near a subject later identified as AB. AB was on his feet, squaring up, but backpedaling away from Sharpe. As AB retreated, Sharpe appeared to lunge and take swings with his arms towards AB while chasing him. At 1:11:01pm, the surveillance video showed the Columbus officers running from an area off camera to the west, towards Sharpe and AB. At 1:11:05pm, AB was backpedaling into Vliet Street, being chased by Sharpe. At 1:11:11pm, some of the officers reached an area near the sidewalk on the south side of Vliet Street, and pointed their firearms in the direction Sharpe and AB were last seen prior to the view being obstructed by the trees.

During the Columbus briefing, some of the officers reported having their attention drawn to a group of citizens to the east of their location, in the park. Some of the officers reported hearing at least one female from the group of citizens state that someone had a knife. Someone can be heard at approximately 13:11:20pm shouting "he's got a knife" in the background of some of the officers' body camera videos. Officer Capretta observed Sharpe wielding a knife in each hand, advancing towards an unarmed AB. Officer Capretta confirmed he observed a knife and notified the group of this, causing several of the officers to unholster their duty pistols while running towards the northeast corner of the park to where Sharpe and AB were observed. All fourteen officers ran toward the area of the disturbance, some ahead of others. Six of the officers reported yelling commands to show that they were the police and for the suspect to drop the knife. Officers' body cameras recorded these commands being shouted by multiple officers, and officers later reported hearing other officers yelling these commands. Thirteen of the fourteen officers observed Sharpe wielding at least one knife in his hand, and eleven of the officers described seeing Sharpe lunge towards AB with the knife. Ten officers advised that they believed Sharpe intended to stab AB with a knife.

Sergeant Adam Groves reported that as he was running towards Sharpe and AB, he repeatedly yelled, "Stop, drop the knives." He said Sharpe ignored these commands. Sergeant Groves observed Sharpe holding a knife in each hand, lunging towards AB, who he saw was unarmed. Just before shooting, Sergeant Groves reported that Sharpe lunged at AB again, and it became apparent to him that Sharpe was not going to stop going after AB. Sergeant Groves discharged his service weapon at Sharpe, who at the time was approximately six to eight feet from AB. Sergeant Groves believed that if he had not shot Sharpe, Sharpe would have killed AB. Sergeant Groves fired six times and heard other officers firing as well. When Sharpe fell to the ground, he stopped shooting. One knife was observed just to the left of his body. A second knife was found under the body, still in Sharpe's right hand. Sergeant Groves advised that Sharpe was placed into handcuffs, and he and other officers began assessing his injuries and rendering aid.

Officer Nick Mason reported that while running towards Sharpe and AB, he was yelling, "Police" and "drop the knife." Mason said he could see Sharpe armed with a knife in each hand. He observed AB in what he believed to be a boxer's stance, backing up, and retreating away from Sharpe. Mason said he believed AB was doing his best to defend himself from Sharpe, who was armed with knives. Mason said he believed that Sharpe intended to stab or cut AB, which he knew could result in death. He observed Sharpe thrust a knife forward towards AB, with the point extended towards AB. Mason believed officers gave Sharpe adequate time to hear their commands to drop the knife and to flee, but because Sharpe did not do this, and continued to close the distance on an unarmed victim, Mason fired three rounds at Sharpe in an attempt to stop the threat he posed towards AB. At the time he fired, Sharpe was within striking distance of AB. Mason stopped firing at

Sharpe when Sharpe fell to the ground. He then began to assist with assessing and rendering aid to Sharpe.

Officer Austin Enos reported that after hearing Officer Capretta inform the group that a subject had a knife, he observed that Sharpe did have an object in his hand. He could see that the second subject, AB, did not. Enos saw Sharpe approaching AB and heard officers yelling commands for the suspect to drop the knife. As Enos approached Sharpe and AB, he saw a knife in Sharpe's hand. Enos said Sharpe looked in the direction of officers running towards him, but did not listen to their commands. Sharpe lunged towards AB with a knife while AB was backpedaling away. Enos said he fired his duty pistol two times at Sharpe when Sharpe was approximately ten feet away from AB. When Sharpe fell to the ground, Enos observed that the knife in his hand had fallen to the ground next to his body. Enos said the threat of death or great bodily harm that Sharpe posed to AB was imminent due to his continued advance toward AB with a knife, while ignoring officers' commands to stop. He said if he had not fired when he did, he believed Sharpe would have stabbed AB.

Officer Karl Eiginger reported he originally observed Sharpe with a knife in his right hand and AB, who was unarmed, backing away from him. Eiginger saw Sharpe swing a knife toward AB. As Sharpe chased AB onto Vliet Street, Eiginger believed AB's life was in danger. Eiginger yelled for Sharpe to drop the knife. Eiginger saw Sharpe look toward the group of police officers who were running toward him. Eiginger thought this indicated that Sharpe heard the officers' commands. Sharpe then lunged toward AB with the knife, as if he were trying to stab him. At this point, Eiginger discharged his firearm four times. He stopped firing when Sharpe fell to the ground. At that time, Eiginger said there was nothing else he could do to stop Sharpe from stabbing AB. Eiginger recalled seeing one knife with Sharpe as other officers rendered aid to him.

Officer Canaan Dick said that when he heard Officer Capretta mention the subject with the knife, he turned around and observed Sharpe holding a knife in his right hand, moving towards AB, who was backing away. Dick said he began to run toward Sharpe and AB repeatedly commanding Sharpe to drop the knife. Sharpe did not comply with his orders. Sharpe continued to move toward AB, who kept backing away. Dick observed Sharpe lunge at AB with the knife. Dick believed there was an imminent threat of death to AB due to Sharpe's behavior and actions. Dick fired his weapon at Sharpe eight times. He stopped firing when Sharpe stopped advancing towards AB. After the shooting, Dick assisted in placing Sharpe into handcuffs and assessing him for injuries. He did this so they could render aid, which he did in the form of holding pressure on one of the wounds he observed on Sharpe's left thigh.

Chief Elaine Bryant
Columbus Division of Police
May 5, 2025
Page 4

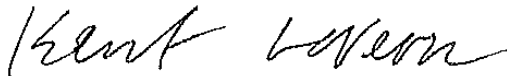
Despite the fact that medical care was immediately administered to Sharpe, he succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead on the scene at 1:33 pm. The autopsy conducted by the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner indicated that the Cause of Death was due to Multiple Gunshot Wounds.

Wisconsin law provides that a person is permitted to intentionally use force against another for the purpose of preventing or terminating what the person believes to be unlawful interference with a third party. An intervening person may intentionally use only such force as the person reasonably believes is necessary to prevent or terminate the interference with the third party. The intervening person may not intentionally use deadly force unless the person reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to the third party.

The evidence in this matter indicates that multiple officers had a reasonable concern for the safety of AB based on the fact that Samuel Sharpe approached AB armed with two knives and chased him on foot in a public street. AB was unarmed during this encounter. Approaching Columbus police officers repeatedly ordered Sharpe to drop his weapons to no avail. Instead, by the time officers shot Sharpe, he was standing within lunging distance of AB. The five officers who fired shots at Sharpe indicated they did so out of concern that AB would be seriously harmed or killed by Sharpe. The officers' use of force, under the circumstances presented to them at the time, was permissible under Wisconsin law in order to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to AB.

Therefore, this office is closing its review of this matter with no further action.

Sincerely,



Kent Lovern
District Attorney

cc: First Assistant Chief Lashanna Potts
Assistant Chief Gregory Bodker
Acting Greenfield Police Chief Eric Lindstrom
Greenfield Police Detective Jason Birschbach
Attorney Nathaniel Cade