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Statement on Feb. 22 Officer Involved Shooting of Mr. Timothy McCree Johnson

March 23, 2023 – Today, in compliance with the Fairfax County Police Department’s (FCPD) policy, the Body Worn Camera footage from the February 22nd officer involved shooting (OIS) of an unarmed Mr. Timothy McCree Johnson, was released. I, like everyone else who has seen the video, am still processing the events we witnessed. Personally, I find the video disturbing to say the least. Under no circumstances should suspicion of shoplifting alone lead to the tragic loss of human life.

I know Mr. Johnson’s family members are still grieving the death of their loved one, and I grieve for them. Understandably they are also demanding answers. I hope the continued progress in this case will bring them a level of assurance that Fairfax County has heard them and is working transparently and with integrity.

Immediately following an OIS, an administrative and criminal investigation are conducted concurrently. The administrative investigation has been completed and Chief Davis has reviewed its findings. Today, a notice of separation was served to one of the officers who discharged their firearm and I support the Chief’s decision. The second officer remains on modified restricted duty.

The criminal investigation is ongoing and it will ultimately be up to the Commonwealth Attorney’s office as to how to proceed upon its completion.

Over the course of the last eight years, the Board and FCPD have worked to ensure transparency, accountability, and the co-production of FCPD policy with our community. These efforts have resulted in the implementation of hundreds of recommendations, policy changes, and trainings to reflect our community’s values and best practices for a police department in the 21st century.

This important progress can be seen in the process that is currently taking place - the timely naming of the officers, more expeditious criminal and administrative investigations, and today’s release of body worn camera footage, are all being done as a result of our reforms. With both investigations occurring concurrently, FCPD can fully investigate and review this incident as it relates to departmental policies and expectations of officers without having to wait for the conclusion of the criminal investigation. Naming the officers within ten days and releasing the video evidence within 30 provide transparency to the family of Mr. Johnson and to the entire community. Moreover, our commitment to our community and that of Mr. Johnson’s family’s right to know exactly what occurred led FCPD to send the body worn camera footage to the FBI for enhancement.

Finally, Fairfax County is committed to ongoing improvements and reforms, and as such have engaged the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to review all Officer Involved Shootings in the County since the start of 2021. PERF will also provide FCPD with guidance regarding foot pursuit policy from best practices across the country.

Jeffrey C. McKay