

State of Connecticut
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Report Concerning the Use of Deadly Force by the West Haven Police Department
on December 1, 2023, Resulting in the Death of Jovan Washington

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Inspector General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
INVESTIGATION	4
OFFICER REPORTS	4
AHMED OUARED	5
CODY BACON	6
ALEX TRISCRITTI	8
STATEMENTS.....	11
COMPLAINANT	11
SCENE.....	12
FORENSICS.....	23
AUTOPSY	25
FINDINGS	26
LEGAL STANDARD.....	27
ANALYSIS.....	29
CONCLUSION.....	29

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West Haven Police Department

Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Connecticut State Police, Central District Major Crime Squad

Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services

State's Attorney's Office for the Ansonia-Milford Judicial District

INTRODUCTION

On December 1, 2023, at approximately 2:00 a.m., at 296 Terrace Avenue, Apt. C-2, West Haven, Connecticut, West Haven Police Officer Alex Triscritti¹ fatally shot Jovan Washington². As required by statute³, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigated this officer-involved shooting. The results of that investigation are contained in this report.

The investigation establishes that on December 1, 2023, at approximately 1:55 a.m., the Complainant's mother contacted the West Haven Police Department and reported that her daughter was being held against her will at 296 Terrace Avenue, Apt. C-2 by her boyfriend, Jovan Washington. Officers responded to the scene and spoke to both Complainant and Jovan. They decided that Jovan would be taken into custody on domestic violence charges. Because he was in his bedroom wearing only a tank top and underwear, the police asked Jovan to get dressed. Jovan moved toward a closet and then quickly turned and reached under his mattress and produced a handgun. A struggle for the gun then ensued between Jovan and Officer Cody Bacon. During this struggle, Jovan fired one round striking Officer Bacon in the upper left thigh. Despite orders to drop the gun, Jovan refused to let go of it. Officer Alex Triscritti then fired three rounds. When the struggle for the weapon persisted, Officer Triscritti fired a fourth round. At this point, Jovan stopped struggling and let go of the firearm.

West Haven officers provided medical aid on scene and Jovan was taken to Yale New Haven Hospital, York Street Campus for treatment. He was pronounced deceased on December 1, 2023, at 3:06 a.m.

I have determined that Officer Triscritti's use of deadly force was justified to defend himself and other officers – particularly Officer Bacon – from the use and imminent use of deadly force. Such use of deadly force was justified under Connecticut law.

INVESTIGATION

Officer Reports

¹ On December 1, 2023, Officer Triscritti was a Caucasian male, age 26. He had been a West Haven police officer for 1.5 months and had previously been an officer with the Westport and Naugatuck Police Departments. He had no disciplinary history for dishonesty or excessive use of force at any of those departments.

² On December 1, 2023, Jovan Washington was an African-American male, age 33.

³ As relevant here, General Statutes §51-277a(a)(1) provides: "Whenever a peace officer, in the performance of such officer's duties, uses physical force upon another person and such person dies as a result thereof or uses deadly force, as defined in section 53a-3, upon another person, the Division of Criminal Justice shall cause an investigation to be made and the Inspector General shall have the responsibility of determining whether the use of force by the peace officer was justifiable under section 53a-22."

Officer Ahmed Ouared

On December 1, 2023, Officer Ouared was dispatched to 296 Terrace Avenue, Apartment C-2 for a report of a domestic dispute. Also dispatched were Sergeant Riehl, Officer Bacon, and Officer Triscritti. Dispatch had advised that responding officers should call the victim by telephone when they arrived to open the door and not to knock due to concerns that the suspect might fight with the cops.

Upon arrival, Complainant opened the door to allow officers into the apartment. Officer Ouared saw a child sleeping in a crib in the living room. Complainant pointed out the suspect's room that was located in the right rear of the apartment with the door closed. Officer Ouared and Officer Bacon opened the door and entered the room. The TV was on and a Black male, later identified as Jovan Washington, was sleeping in the bed. He was wearing a gray T-shirt and was partially covered by a blanket. Washington woke up and Officer Bacon advised him the reason the police were there. Washington said that he and Complainant had argued earlier in the evening. Washington explained that Complainant had come back late, and he needed to do some DoorDash and "things got crazy." Officer Bacon asked if things got physical and Washington said "no." Officer Bacon left to speak with Complainant.

Washington told Officer Ouared that Complainant is not supposed to be in the apartment, but she came because she had no food or groceries.⁴ Washington said that there was no protective order in place. Washington told Officer Ouared that he had lost his job due to drugs, that he was behind in his car payments, and was in a "bad spot."

Officer Bacon came back into the bedroom and asked Washington what happened. He said that Complainant had come back late, and he was supposed to go do DoorDash and take her son to basketball practice, and due to Complainant being drunk, he did not want her to leave. Officer Bacon asked Washington if he "ever grabbed her neck (Complainant) or something" to which Washington replied, "a lot of time when we have sex she likes to be choked and stuff like that." "We argued and then I went to bed." Officer Bacon told Washington that he would be detained. Washington said, "She can go. I never stopped her. I only stopped her because she was too drunk, and I did not want her to leave with the kids."

Washington requested to make phone calls so that he could find someone to take care of his son. He made several attempts with negative results. Washington left a message with an unknown party saying, "I need someone to come and get my son I'm possibly going to jail."

⁴ This was correct. Pursuant to a Post Judgment Stipulation regarding child custody under docket Number NNH-FA21-6118823 filed in New Haven Superior Court and dated May 8, 2023, Jovan and Complainant had agreed that they would have no direct contact with each other except for emergencies regarding the children. All day-to-day contact concerning the children would be through Jovan's mother.

Officer Ouared's report continues:

"Officer Bacon asked Washington to put his pants on, at which time Washington pointed at the bedroom closet. Washington was standing between the bed and the closet, with Officer Bacon on his right, me on Washington's left holding my flashlight to help him locate his pants, and Officer Triscritti behind me. Suddenly, Washington turned around, bent over and reached under the mattress. Because officers removed a large knife from Washington's bedside earlier, I believed that Washington may have been reaching for a weapon. I saw Officer Bacon take hold of both of Washington's hands and he was attempting to stop Washington from taking possession of whatever he was reaching for under the mattress. I assisted Officer Bacon by reaching around Washington's neck and began to pull him away from the mattress. It was at this time that I saw Washington holding a dark colored handgun. I saw Officer Bacon had his hand over the top of Washington's handgun and saw that he was trying to remove it from Washington's possession. Shortly after seeing the handgun, I heard a single gunshot and heard Officer Triscritti announce on the police radio "shots fired." Officers made multiple commands to Washington to "drop the gun" but Washington continued to struggle with Officer Bacon for possession of the handgun. I then heard three rounds being discharged but I did not know who fired them. After the rounds were fired, Washington continued to struggle with officers for possession of the handgun. Washington was slightly less combative at this point so I believed that he may have been struck by the rounds. As Washington continued to fight for possession of the handgun, officers continued to command Washington to "drop the gun" and I saw Officer Triscritti then discharge one round at Washington. It was at this time Washington stopped fighting and Officer Bacon was able to take possession of the handgun."

Officer Ouared heard Officer Bacon say that he was hit and observed blood coming from his upper left leg. Officer Triscritti applied a tourniquet to Officer Bacon's leg. He was assisted out of the apartment for medical treatment.

Officer Triscritti then began chest compressions on Washington and Officer Ouared left to get his medical bag from his cruiser. Officers continued to perform chest compressions until the West Haven Fire Department arrived. Washington was then transported to the hospital.

Officer Ouared was wearing a body worn camera (BWC) that was activated during the incident. To view the relevant portion of the BWC, click [here](#).

Officer Cody Bacon

On December 1, 2023, at 1:59 a.m., Officer Cody Bacon, along with other officers, was dispatched to 296 Terrace Avenue, West Haven on a report of a domestic dispute. In her call to the police the Complainant's mother asked that the police contact her by phone so that she could let the police into the residence without waking up her daughter's boyfriend. The

Complainant's mother was afraid that if the police knocked and woke up the boyfriend, later identified as Jovan Washington, Jovan might become aggressive toward the police and/or the Complainant.

Prior to arrival, Officer Bacon contacted the Complainant and she let the police into the building and into the apartment. Officer Bacon spoke briefly with Complainant before going to the bedroom where he woke Jovan Washington from his sleep. Jovan had a large, fixed blade knife on the nightstand. Officer Bacon took possession of the knife and gave it to Officer Triscritti to secure. Jovan stated that a verbal dispute had taken place between himself and Complainant over her bringing the children home late.

Officer Bacon spoke to Complainant in the living room while Officers Ouared and Triscritti stayed with Jovan in the bedroom. Complainant said that Jovan had been physical with her and had grabbed her neck at one point during the dispute. He also grabbed her phone, threw it, and prevented her from leaving the apartment with her children. Complainant said that the argument had initially been about taking her son to a basketball game and Jovan wanting to do DoorDash. Officer Bacon noted red markings on Complainant's neck that may have been caused by a physical altercation.

Officer Bacon's report continues:

"I returned to the bedroom where I saw Jovan sitting on the bed. I asked him why [Complainant] indicated the dispute was physical and Jovan denied that there was any physical altercation. I informed Jovan that he was to be detained and he indicated that he had a juvenile son who needed to be taken care of if he were to be taken into custody. I instructed Jovan to contact family members to arrange for them to come pick up his juvenile son. Jovan attempted to call multiple numbers on his cell phone, but no one answered the phone. Jovan became increasingly jittery and was shaking and seemed extremely anxious. After providing a reasonable amount of time for Jovan to try to contact a family member, I indicated to Jovan that he needed to stand up and that he was going to be taken into custody. Since Jovan was woken from his sleep, he was wearing only a tank top and boxer underwear. Due to the weather that early morning, I asked Jovan to gather clothing that he would need. Jovan stood up in front of his bedroom closet and indicated that he was going to gather clothing. Jovan then turned suddenly and dove under his bed and reached between the mattress and the bed frame. As he did so, I attempted to grab his hands. Jovan produced a handgun from beneath the mattress and fired one round into my left thigh. I immediately grabbed the firearm with my right hand, and I was able to get my hand in the trigger guard and around the slide of the weapon in an attempt to gain control of it. Ofc. Ouared, Triscritti and I ordered Jovan to drop his gun multiple times but Jovan was refusing to let go of it. At this time, Ofc. Triscritti used his service weapon and fired three rounds at Jovan. Ofc. Ouared and I continued to struggle with Jovan over the firearm, but we were unable to gain control of the weapon. Officers continued to order Jovan

to drop his gun, but he continued to fight for control of it. Ofc. Triscritti then fired a fourth round at Jovan and Jovan stopped struggling with officers, let go of the firearm and said something to the effect of, "I'm dead."

Officer Bacon reported over the radio that he had been shot and that the suspect was down. Officer Triscritti applied a tourniquet to his left thigh and escorted Officer Bacon out of the apartment building. Officer Ouared stayed with Jovan. Officer Bacon turned Jovan's firearm over to Officer Triscritti. He was transported to the hospital for medical treatment.

Officer Bacon was wearing a body worn camera that was activated during this incident. To view the relevant portion of the BWC, click [here](#).

Officer Alex Triscritti

On December 1, 2023, Officer Alex Triscritti was dispatched to 296 Terrace Avenue, unit C-2 on a report of a domestic dispute. Also dispatched were Officer Bacon and Officer Ouared. A female opened the exterior door to the apartment building. The female identified herself as Complainant. She also opened the door to apartment C-2 and Officer Triscritti and the other officers walked down a hallway towards the bedrooms. The first bedroom that they passed had a bunkbed with children sleeping in it. The second bedroom had the door closed. Officer Bacon opened the door, and the officers observed a large male sleeping on the bed. Officer Bacon said "Jovan" and the male woke up. He was wearing a gray tank top and gray underwear. Officer Bacon informed Jovan that Complainant had called us and asked Jovan what was going on. Jovan said that there had been an argument with Complainant over the kids because she brought them in late and she lied about it.

Officer Bacon asked Jovan if he had anything on him. He stated that he had a knife and pointed to the headboard behind where he had been sleeping. Officer Bacon removed a large knife and handed it to Officer Triscritti who secured it in the hallway.

Officer Bacon said, "So you just got into an argument about bringing the kids in late." Jovan stated, "She came in late with the kids and I was supposed to go out and do some stuff and things got crazy." Officer Bacon then asked Jovan, "Did you guys get physical at all?" Jovan stated, "No." Officer Bacon then went to speak to Complainant.

Officer Triscritti asked Jovan if he had any protective orders with Complainant. He said no, but that she was not supposed to be at the apartment, but she had no food. Jovan stated, "[Complainant] is my Ex, my kid's family, but she didn't really have any food or groceries, so she's been staying at my house this past week." Officer Triscritti informed Jovan of Complainant's claim that he would not let her leave with the kids. Jovan replied, "I was going to let them leave. If she wants to go, she can go, I was going to let them leave but she was so

drunk I was scared to let them leave. If she wants to go, she can go.” Jovan stated that they had got into an argument before, went to court and everything. Things were supposed to get better, but it did not work out like that.

Officer Triscritti then went to the living room. He asked Complainant if she had been staying at the apartment, and she said for just a week because she did not have any food or heat at her house. Officer Triscritti informed Officer Bacon that Jovan said that Complainant had been staying there for a week, but she was drunk and wanted to leave and he would not let her. Officer Bacon asked Complainant, “before we go any further, he definitely touched you and grabbed your neck?” Complainant nodded and said, “Yes.” After Complainant related the argument about who would bring the child to the basketball game, and about Jovan going through her phone, she said that she was going to play it cool and wait until Jovan went to sleep. Officer Bacon went back into the bedroom to talk to Jovan.

At this time Complainant’s mother entered the apartment with a young adult male who said that he was Complainant’s brother. The mother said that there had been a history of domestic violence incidents with Complainant.

Officer Triscritti returned to the bedroom where Jovan was attempting to call someone to take care of his son. He was unable to reach anyone. When Officer Triscritti asked Complainant’s mother if she was going to take Jovan’s son, she said no. Jovan continued to make more calls. He said that his mother was in North Carolina and his father was sick. He said there was no one for him to call because it was 2:00 a.m. As a last resort, Officer Triscritti said that the child could come with them and sit at the police department until someone could pick him up. Jovan said multiple times, “please do not do this” while he continued to scroll through his phone. Jovan sent a final text and looked up at Officer Bacon and said “Alright.” Officer Bacon asked Jovan if he wanted to grab some clothes and suggested he put on a pair of sweatpants.

The report continues:

“Jovan stood up and walked to his closet. Jovan stopped, touched his face, let out a deep breath and said, “Fuck, oh my god. god damn.” Jovan then reached into his closet and then back out of the closet without removing anything. Jovan stopped and then put both of his hands in the air for a second. Jovan then suddenly turned and dove toward his mattress. Jovan lifted his mattress and began reaching under it. As soon as this happened, Officer Bacon jumped onto Jovan’s back and attempted to gain control of his arms. Officer Ouared jumped to the right side of Jovan and also attempted to grab his arms. I ran towards Jovan but stopped and drew my issued Axon Taser which was holstered on my left leg. As soon as I unholstered my Taser, I heard a clear and distinct gunshot go off. When the gunshot went off, Jovan rolled over towards Officer Bacon, who was now on top of Jovan’s chest. Officer Ouared was behind Jovan

and was holding onto his upper body. I saw that Jovan was holding a black colored handgun with a laser sight illuminated. When Jovan rolled over, I saw that the laser sight on Jovan's handgun was pointed directly at me. I immediately dropped my Taser and took cover behind the door frame just out in the hallway.

"Using my left hand, I was able to communicate over the radio to other officers and said, "Shots fired shots fired." While doing this, I drew my department issued firearm and began to reenter the room. At this time, I could see Jovan on the ground with both hands on the handgun and saw the laser sight was pointing all around the floor and walls in the area where I was standing. I saw Officer Bacon holding onto the front of the firearm trying to push it to the ground. Jovan was pulling up on the handgun and refusing to drop it. I could see the laser sight coming from Jovan's hand and saw it pointing directly at me. I was in immediate fear for my life and the lives of my brother officers. I moved to get a clear, unobstructed line of sight and discharged my firearm three times striking Jovan in the chest. After firing, Jovan let out a loud groan while still gripping onto his firearm. Jovan refused to let go of the handgun and continued to lift it up in my direction. I could see Officer Bacon struggling to hold onto the firearm with both his hands. I then jumped onto Jovan and tried to grab the firearm out of Jovan's hands with my left hand while still having my firearm in my right hand. At this time, Officer Bacon was holding onto Jovan's handgun. I now also had one hand on the gun and Jovan had two hands on it with his finger still on the trigger. Officer Bacon and I could not force the pistol out of his grip, and I was struggling to push the gun down into the floor. I pointed my handgun at Jovan's chest and shouted at him twice, "Drop the gun. Drop the gun." Officer Ouared was also commanding Jovan to drop the gun. Jovan did not comply, and I could feel him still attempting to pull up on his gun. After Jovan failed to drop and let go of his firearm, I discharged a single additional round into Jovan's chest. Immediately after discharging the last round, Jovan let go of the firearm and Officer Bacon was able to remove it from Jovan's grasp. Jovan then let a loud groan out and said, "I'm dead, I'm dead, I'm dead."

Officer Bacon said that he was hit in the leg. Officer Triscritti observed a large gunshot wound on his upper left leg. A tourniquet was applied to the wound and Officer Bacon was taken out of the apartment and taken by cruiser to the hospital. Responding officers rendered aid to Jovan until the arrival of EMS.

Officer Triscritti took possession of Jovan's firearm and turned it over to West Haven Police Officer Miller and asked him to secure it in a cruiser. CDMCS detectives recovered the gun from West Haven Police Department cruiser #48 that was parked in front of 296 Terrace Avenue. Officer Triscritti was later taken to the hospital for treatment.

Officer Triscritti was wearing a body worn camera that was activated during the incident. To view the relevant portion of the BWC, click [here](#).

Statements

Complainant

On December 1, 2023, OIG inspectors interviewed Complainant. Complainant told the inspectors that she was in an on-and-off dating relationship with Jovan Washington and was the mother of three of his children ages 7, 3, and 11 months. Complainant and the children had been staying at Jovan's apartment for the previous week. She had run out of food and had no heat at her home in New Haven.

Complainant said that the day before the shooting, she and the children had gone to her mother's house for a Christmas decorating event. Jovan was okay with her going but wanted to take his son to basketball practice later that evening. The plans, however, changed and Complainant ended up dropping the younger children at Jovan's and she took the older child to basketball practice.

When Complainant returned to Jovan's house, he was upset. He went on a rant about her lying to him, went through her phone, and threw her phone to the wall. She then said that she was going to take the kids and go home. Jovan said no and locked the door.

When Jovan went through Complainant's phone contacts, he found her ex-boyfriend's number. Prior to throwing the phone, Jovan grabbed Complainant and choked her. Complainant told the inspectors that Jovan no longer uses drugs but had been diagnosed with mental health conditions. Specifically, bipolar, schizoaffective disorder, and PTSD.

After the choking incident, Complainant said that she tried to calm Jovan down. She figured that she would only be able to leave when he fell asleep. Once Jovan did fall asleep, Complainant texted her mother. In the text, Complainant stated that she did not feel safe and asked her mother to come and get her and call the cops. When her mother did not respond, Complainant texted her brother and his girlfriend. Eventually, Complainant's mother texted her back stating that the police were on their way. Later, her mother showed up at Jovan's apartment after the police had arrived.

When the police arrived, Complainant let them in. At that time, Complainant was in the apartment with her three children. Jovan's older son, was in the apartment as well. All of the children were asleep. The police asked Complainant what happened. Two officers went into Jovan's room and talked to him. While she was talking to the police, Complainant's mother and brother came in. Complainant told the police what happened. She said that she wanted to leave and was being held. She figured the safest way to leave was to text her mother.

Complainant told the inspectors that she did not go into the bedroom where Jovan was with the officers. She did, however, hear Jovan's voice getting louder. Then she heard, "Put the gun down." Complainant then heard one shot and after that, other shots. She thought possibly four shots were fired. After hearing the shots, she and her mother got the kids out of the bedroom and left the apartment.

Scene

296 Terrace Avenue, Apartment C-2

Central District Major Crime Squad (CDMCS) detectives arrived at 296 Terrace Avenue, Apartment C-2, West Haven, CT at approximately 6:30 a.m. on December 1, 2023. Apartment C-2 was located within the large apartment building at 296 Terrace Avenue. The building also contains 282 and 288 Terrace Avenue.

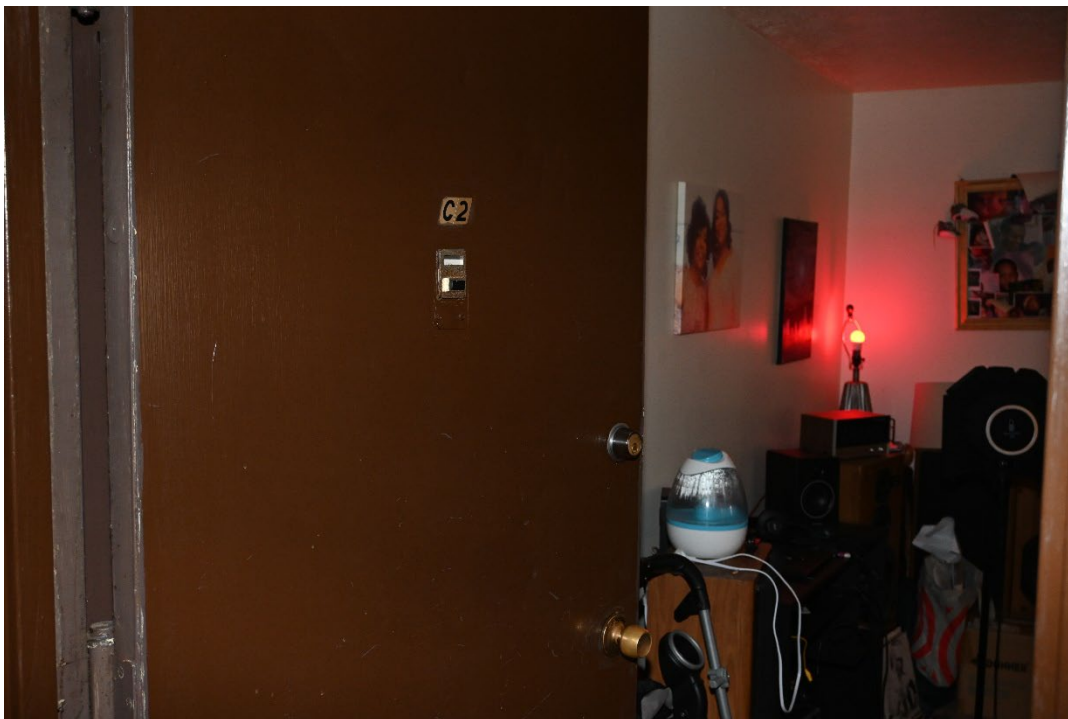


[296 Terrace Avenue]

C-2 was on the third floor of the building.

The apartment was a single-level apartment with two bedrooms and one full bathroom. The living room was located immediately upon entry from the apartment door.





[Apartment Entrance]

Located in the southwest corner of the living room directly across from the apartment's entry door was access to the kitchen area.



[Kitchen]

Located off the living room's western wall was a hallway that led to two bedrooms, two small closets and one full bathroom. At the end of the hallway were multiple trash bags.



[Hallway]

A children's room was located on the northern wall between the first small closet and primary bedroom. The children's room contained gray bunkbed style beds.



[Children's bedroom]

The incident occurred in the primary bedroom located at the end of the hallway in the northwest corner of the apartment. Red blood-like substances were located on the carpet in multiple areas.



[Blood-like stain on carpet]



[Blood-like stain on carpet]

A closet was located on the southern wall containing various clothing on hangers and a black square combination safe. One expended shell casing was observed on the floor of the closet.



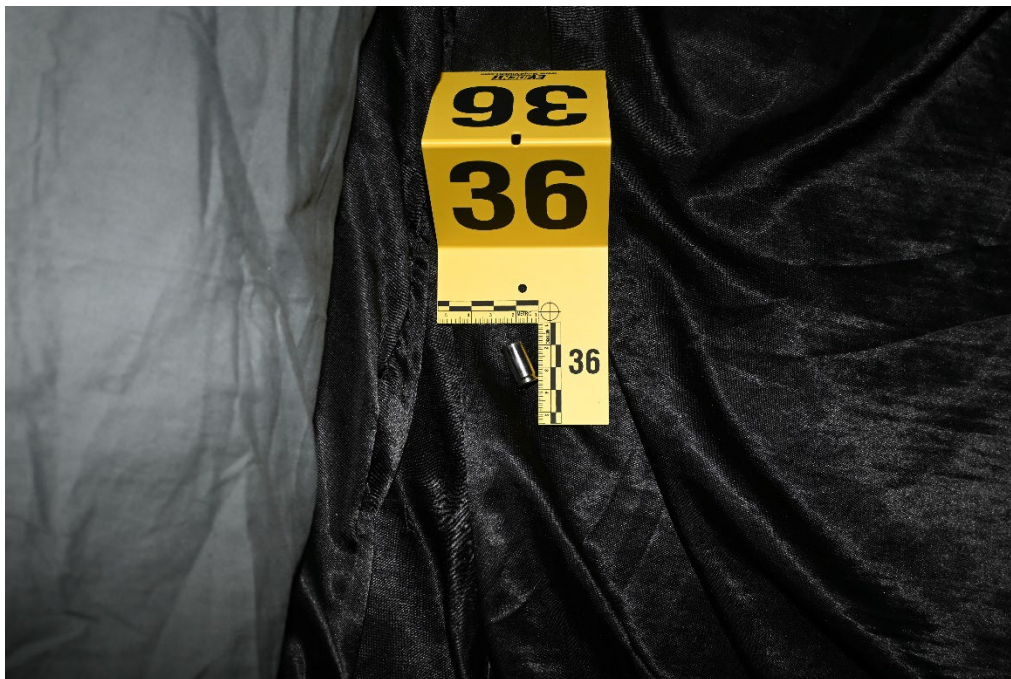
[Expended shell casing]

Along the eastern wall of the bedroom was a television stand. An expended shell casing was observed on the floor between the bed and television stand.



[Expended shell casing]

Detectives located two expended shell casings from the bed.



[Expended shell casing]



[Expend shell casing]

Additionally, CDMCS detectives obtained the projectile recovered from Officer Bacon's leg at Yale New Haven Hospital; as well as his pants that had a bullet strike defect.



[Projectile recovered from Officer Bacon's leg]



[Officer Bacon's pants with bullet defect]

Also seized was Officer Triscritti's Glock 45 handgun (#23) and the Smith & Wesson M&P 40C handgun taken from Jovan Washington (#24).



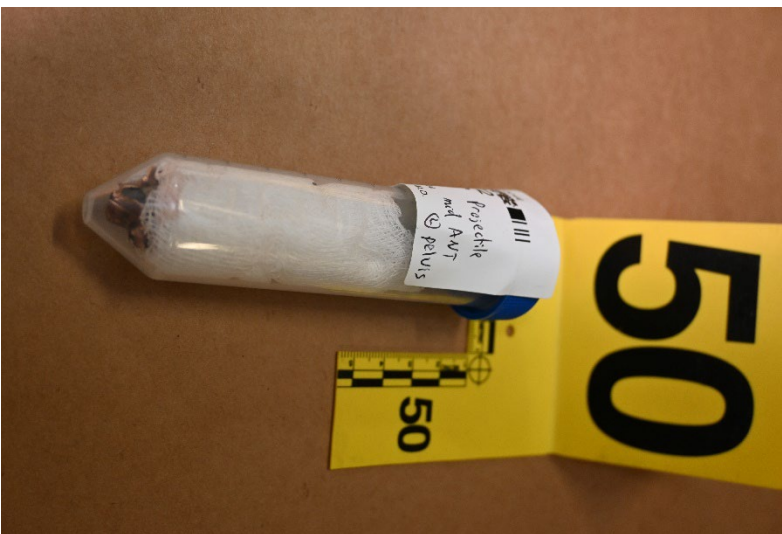
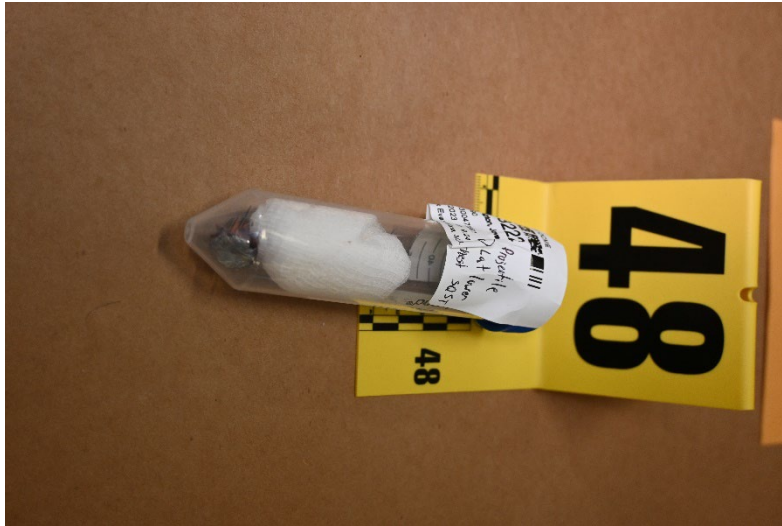


[Officer Triscritti's handgun]



[Jovan Washington's handgun]

From the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, detectives obtained the projectiles recovered during the autopsy and the tank top worn by Jovan Washington with Bullet strikes.



[Projectiles recovered from Jovan Washington]



[Washington's tank top with bullet strikes]

Forensics

Forensic Laboratory

Officer Triscritti's handgun (#23) was a Glock 45 with one round in the chamber and a 17 round magazine containing 13 rounds. The handgun seized from Jovan Washington (#24) was a Smith & Wesson M&P 40C with an expended shell casing (#24B) in the ejection port and a 10 round magazine containing 10 rounds. This handgun was equipped with a Crimson Trace green dot laser.





[Expended shell casing in ejection port]

The two firearms together with the four expended shell casings from the bedroom (#28, #29, #36, #37), the projectile obtained from Officer Bacon's leg at the hospital (#5), the three projectiles recovered during the autopsy (#48, #49, #50) and the swabbing from the Smith & Wesson handgun (#24) were sent to the Forensic Laboratory for analysis.

DNA Report

The Laboratory determined that DNA analysis of the swabbing of the Smith & Wesson M&P handgun (#24) was consistent with Jovan Washington's DNA profile. The DNA profile from the swabbing was a mixture of four contributors and the profile was 100 billion times more likely to occur if one of the contributors was Jovan Washington.

Firearms Unit

The Firearms Unit determined that both Officer Triscritti's handgun (#23) and Jovan Washington's handgun (#24) operated without malfunction.

The Unit also determined that the four expended shell casings recovered from the bedroom (#28, #29, #36, #37) originated from the same source, namely, Officer Triscritti's handgun (#23). Exhibit #24B, the expended shell casing in the ejection port of Jovan

Washington's handgun (#24), did not originate from the same source as #28, #29, #36, and #37. The Unit determined that #24B originated from #24.

With respect to the recovered projectiles, two of the projectiles recovered during the autopsy (#48 and #49) originated from the same source. Exhibit #50 could not be included or eliminated as coming from the same source as #48 and #49. Exhibit #5 recovered from Officer Bacon's leg was eliminated as coming from the same source as the projectiles from the autopsy. As to the question of which guns fired these projectiles, the Firearms Unit found that, due to lack of microscopic detail, the tests were inconclusive as to whether #48, #49, or #50 were fired from Officer Triscritti's handgun (#23) such that the Unit could neither include nor eliminate them from being fired from Officer Triscritti's handgun. The same was true for #5 which could not be included or eliminated as being fired from Jovan Washington's firearm (#24).

OIG inspectors determined that the owner of the firearm taken from Jovan Washington was Krystyna McDuffie. OIG inspectors attempted to interview her to determine how her firearm ended up in the possession of Washington. Ms. McDuffie declined to be interviewed.

Autopsy

On December 1, 2023, at 2:57 a.m., Jovan Washington arrived at Yale New Haven Hospital Emergency Department, 20 York Street, New Haven. No cardiac activity was noted. He was pronounced dead nine minutes later at 3:06 a.m. Washington was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for further examination.

Later, on December 1, 2023, Associate Medical Examiner Frank Evangelista, M.D. performed an autopsy of Jovan Washington. Doctor Evangelista determined the following:

**"CAUSE OF DEATH: GUNSHOT WOUNDS OF TORSO AND EXTREMITIES
MANNER OF DEATH: HOMICIDE"**

The autopsy report describes four gunshot wounds and may be summarized as follows:

1. An entrance gunshot wound is found on the right upper chest. There is black soot and gunpowder stippling around the wound. The wound enters the right upper chest and extends downward perforating (1) the anterior right ribcage, (2) the upper left lobe of the lung, (3) the heart, (4) the liver, (5) the stomach, and (6) the left lateral ribcage. A single metallic projectile was recovered from within the soft tissue of the lower left lateral chest. The path of this wound is front to back, right to left, and up to down.
2. An entrance gunshot wound is found on the left upper chest. No soot or stippling is observed around the wound. The wound enters the left upper chest and extends downward perforating

(1) the left ribcage, (2) the left side of the chest, (3) the left side of the peritoneal cavity extending into the bony tissue of the mid left pelvis. The path of this wound is from front to back and up to down. Although not expressly noted in the report, it appears that a metallic projectile was recovered from the pelvis.

3. An entrance gunshot wound is found on the anterior of the left upper arm. No soot or stippling is observed around this wound. This wound extends through the arm and exits on the medial aspect of the left elbow. An exit wound is found at this location. A reentry wound is found on the mid left abdomen. The path of this wound enters the mid left abdomen and extends to the right. A metallic projectile is recovered from the soft tissue of the left side of the lower vertebral column. The path of this wound is from left to right, front to back, and up to down.

4. An entrance gunshot wound is on the mid left upper abdomen. No soot of stippling is identified in the skin around this wound. The wound extends downward and exits the anterior aspect of the left lower abdomen. An exit wound is observed on the left lower abdomen.

Various bodily fluids, including blood and urine, were sent for toxicologic evaluation. The report from NMS Labs in Horsham, PA indicated no positive findings of toxicological significance.

The three projectiles recovered during the autopsy were turned over to the CDMCS.

FINDINGS

The investigation supports the following findings of material fact:

1. On December 1, 2023, at approximately 1:55 a.m., the Complainant's mother contacted the West Haven Police Department and reported that her daughter, Complainant, was being held against her will at 296 Terrace Avenue, Apartment C-2, West Haven Connecticut by her boyfriend Jovan Washington.

2. Officers Ahmed Ouared, Cody Bacon, and Alex Triscritti responded to the scene. They found Washington sleeping in the rear bedroom of the apartment. The officers spoke with both Complainant and Washington.

3. Based on Complainant's oral statement that Washington had grabbed her neck and would not let her leave the apartment, the officers decided that Washington would have to be taken into custody.

4. The officers allowed Washington to attempt to contact someone to take care of his older son who was sleeping in the apartment, but Washington was unsuccessful.

5. Officer Bacon told Washington to stand up and suggested that he put on some pants. Washington moved toward a nearby closet, but then quickly turned and grabbed a handgun from under his mattress.

6. Officer Bacon and Washington struggled for the gun. Washington fired one shot striking Officer Bacon in the upper left leg. The officers ordered Washington to drop the gun, but he refused to let it go. Officer Triscritti fired three rounds striking Washington. Despite these bullet strikes, Washington persisted in struggling for the handgun. Officer Triscritti then fired a fourth round that struck Washington. At this point, Washington released hold on the gun.

7. Officers provided medical aid to Washington until the arrival of the West Haven Fire Department. He was transported to Yale New Haven Hospital, arriving at 2:57 a.m. He was pronounced deceased at 3:06 a.m.

8. Officer Bacon was transported to the hospital where he received treatment for the gunshot wound to his upper left leg.

9. Police recovered Washington's handgun, a Smith & Wesson M&P 40C. It was found to have an expended shell casing in the ejection port and a magazine containing ten rounds. It is likely that Officer Bacon's hand being on the gun's slide during the struggle prevented the shell casing from being ejected.

10. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner performed an autopsy of Jovan Washington and determined his cause of death to be gunshot wounds of the torso and extremities, and the manner of his death to be homicide. A toxicologic evaluation of bodily fluids yielded no findings of toxicological significance.

LEGAL STANDARD

The use of force by a police officer is governed by General Statutes §53a-22. The version of that statute in effect on December 1, 2023, in relevant part, provides:

(b) [A] peace officer ... is justified in using physical force upon another person when and to the extent that he or she reasonably believes such use to be necessary to: (1) Effect an arrest or prevent the escape from custody of a person whom he or she reasonably believes to have committed an offense, unless he or she knows that the arrest or custody is unauthorized; or (2) defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of physical force while

effecting or attempting to effect an arrest or while preventing or attempting to prevent an escape.

(c) (1) ... a peace officer ... is justified in using *deadly physical force* upon another person for the purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section only when his or her actions are objectively reasonable under the circumstances, and:

(A) He or she reasonably believes such to be necessary to defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force; ...

The statute further provides:

“For the purpose of evaluating whether the actions of a peace officer ... are reasonable under subdivision (1) of this subsection, factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, whether (A) the person upon whom deadly force was used possessed or appeared to possess a deadly weapon, (B) the peace officer ... engaged in reasonable de-escalation measures prior to using deadly physical force, and (C) any unreasonable conduct of the peace officer ... led to an increased risk of an occurrence of the situation that precipitated the use of force.” §53a-22(c)(2).

Accordingly, a police officer is justified in using deadly physical force upon another person when the officer reasonably believes such force to be necessary to defend the officer or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force. “Deadly physical force” means “physical force that can be reasonably expected to cause death or serious physical injury.” General Statutes § 53a-3(5). “Serious physical injury” means “physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health or serious loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ.” General Statutes §53a-3(4).

The reasonableness of a police officer’s belief under § 53a-22 is evaluated pursuant to a subjective-objective formulation. *State v. Smith*, 73 Conn. App. 173, 185, 807 A.2d 500, cert. denied 262 Conn. 923, 812 A.2d 865 (2002). Under this test, the first question is whether, based on the evidence, the police officer in fact honestly believed that deadly force was necessary to defend himself/herself or a third person. *Id.* If it is determined that the police officer honestly believed that deadly force was necessary, the second part of the test asks whether the police officer’s honest belief was reasonable from the perspective of a reasonable police officer in the officer’s circumstances. *Id.* at 198.

The United States Supreme Court has explained: “The ‘reasonableness’ of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on scene rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight. ... [T]he calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance

of the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation.” *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 396-97, 109 S. Ct. 1865, 104 L. Ed. 2d 443 (1989).

ANALYSIS

Officer Triscritti confronted a sudden, unexpected, and dangerous situation when Jovan Washington reached under his mattress and grabbed a handgun. It became more perilous when Washington fired the gun, striking Officer Bacon in the leg. The officers were facing the actual use and imminent continued use of deadly force against them. Under these circumstances, Officer Triscritti’s use of deadly force to defend himself and the other officers was objectively reasonable and justified.

The reasonableness factors in the statute do not undermine this conclusion. Jovan Washington was armed with a deadly weapon. There was no opportunity for de-escalation efforts and the officers did not precipitate the use of deadly force by their tactics.

I am frank to admit that I cannot understand why Jovan Washington would grab a gun and fire it at police. I suppose it was an act of desperation of some kind. Given the threat he posed, however, Officer Triscritti’s actions were appropriate and necessary to eliminate that threat.

CONCLUSION

The investigation establishes that Officer Alex Triscritti’s use of deadly force resulting in the death of Jovan Washington was justified. The Office of Inspector General will take no further action in this matter.

Submitted this 1st day of May, 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert J. Devlin, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.
INSPECTOR GENERAL