

State of Connecticut
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Report Regarding the Death of Michael Brown on June 5, 2024
While in the Custody of the Milford Police Department

Robert J. Devlin, Jr.
Inspector General

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office of Inspector General acknowledges the assistance provided to this investigation by the following:

Milford Police Department

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

INTRODUCTION

On June 5, 2024, at approximately 10:36 a.m. at the Big Y Supermarket located at 150 Boston Post Road, Milford, Connecticut, Milford police officers attempted to take Michael Brown¹ into custody and arrest him for shoplifting. Brown, who was seated in an automobile, resisted their efforts and a struggle ensued. Ultimately, officers extracted Brown from the vehicle, placed him on the pavement and handcuffed him. During the struggle, Brown complained of having a broken leg and, after being handcuffed, said that he could not breathe. Milford Fire Department paramedics responded and transported Brown to the Milford Campus of Yale New Haven Hospital. During the short ride to the hospital, Brown went into cardiac arrest. He arrived at the hospital at 11:12 a.m. Efforts to treat him were unsuccessful and he was pronounced dead at 11:32 a.m.

As required by statute², the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigated this in-custody death. The results of that investigation are set forth in this report. The investigation establishes that, although the struggle with the police was a precipitating event in Brown's death, his death was not the result of excessive physical force or criminal conduct by the Milford police officers.

INVESTIGATION



Ford Focus parked at Big Y parking lot

¹ On June 5, 2024, Michael Brown was a 52-year-old African-American male.

² See General Statutes §51-277a(a)(2)(A) (Inspector General to determine whether physical force was used upon a person who dies in police custody, or, if no physical force used, whether the person died as a result of criminal action).

Police Reports

Sergeant Douglas S. Youd

Sergeant Youd was assigned to compile a police report regarding the events that led to the arrest of Michael Brown. Sergeant Youd's report may be summarized as follows:

On Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at approximately 10:36 a.m., Milford police officers were dispatched to Stop & Shop store located at 855 Bridgeport Avenue, Milford on a report of Michael Brown concealing store items. Brown was a well-known shoplifter and Milford police had several active arrest warrants for Brown for shoplifting.³ Two Stop & Shop loss prevention officers saw Brown enter the store. He went to the detergent aisle, opened a black trash bag, and filled it with multiple cleaning products. One of the loss prevention officers called the Milford Police Department and then waited for Brown near the store exit. Brown saw him and left the carriage (containing the concealed items) in the store's front area and left the store. Michael Brown then drove from the Stop & Shop parking lot in the red Ford. The value of the items concealed by Michael Brown was \$648.91.

The vehicle was identified as a red Ford Fusion with a partial plate of "9824."⁴ Officer A. Groves and G. Marriner located the vehicle a short distance away at the Big Y store at 150 Boston Post Road, Milford. When the officers approached the vehicle, Brown was not present. A person sitting in the front passenger seat was identified as Jeffrey Johnson. There was also a small dog in the car. Johnson told Officer Grove that he was with "Michael." Officer Marriner went to the Big Y looking for Brown. As he approached the store, Officer Marriner observed Brown exit the store and proceeded into the parking lot.

Officers Grove and Marriner approached Brown. When Officer Grove asked Brown to identify himself, Brown told the officers that his name was "Peter Jacobs." Brown continued walking toward the red Ford and got into the vehicle despite the directions from both officers not to. In an effort to remove Brown from the vehicle, officers used force in pulling and pushing him from the driver's seat.

After being removed from the vehicle and while handcuffed, Brown was placed in a prone position in the parking lot. Once handcuffed, Brown was placed on his side to facilitate his breathing. Brown complained of a broken leg and said he needed water. Water was

³ In fact, Brown had 25 active arrest warrants out of Milford and the surrounding communities, mostly for shoplifting.

⁴ The vehicle turned out to be a red Ford Focus.

provided to Brown, and the police requested the Fire Department to respond to a medical emergency.

The Fire Department arrived and began to provide medical treatment to Brown. He was transported to Yale New Haven Hospital (Milford Campus), 300 Seaside Avenue, Milford. At the hospital, Brown was treated by medical staff.

Officer Austin Groves

Officer Groves submitted a police report detailing his actions on June 5, 2024. That report may be summarized as follows:

On June 5, 2024, at approximately 10:30 a.m., Officer Groves was dispatched to Stop & Shop for a shoplifting in progress. Stop & Shop loss prevention officers identified the subject as Michael Brown. While enroute, Dispatch advised Officer Groves that Brown had left Stop & Shop in a red Ford sedan, CT registration 98234.

Officer Groves went to the Big Y store at 150 Boston Post Road and checked the parking lot. He observed a red Ford (CT reg 98234) parked and occupied by one male. Officer Marriner arrived and positioned his patrol vehicle in front of the red Ford, while Officer Groves positioned his patrol vehicle behind it. Officer Groves asked the occupant of the Ford, Jeffrey Johnson, if Michael had been with him. He said "yes," and that Michael was in Big Y.

Officer Groves saw Brown exit Big Y. He approached Brown, called him "Michael" and asked him to stop. Brown said that his name was not Michael and gave the name "Peter Jacobs." As Brown approached the red Ford, Officer Groves told him to wait where he was and not to get back in the vehicle. Brown ignored these commands. Officer Groves grabbed Brown to prevent him from entering the vehicle. Brown, however, pushed past Officer Groves and entered the driver's seat.

Brown then reached toward the vehicle's ignition. Officer Groves believed that Brown intended to start the vehicle and drive away while Officers Groves and Marriner were holding on to him. The officers attempted to pull Brown from the vehicle. Brown began complaining of a broken leg. With the assistance of Sergeant Edward O'Keefe and Officer Peloso, the officers were able to pull Brown from the driver's seat. When he was pulled out, he landed on the ground positioned on his stomach. Brown resisted the officers' efforts to secure him in handcuffs. After some effort, the officers successfully placed Brown in handcuffs at approximately 10:46 a.m.

Milford Fire Department arrived at 10:52 a.m. They assisted Brown to his feet and walked him to a stretcher. Brown was then secured in the Milford Fire Department ambulance. At approximately 11:00 a.m., Officer Groves learned that Brown had gone unresponsive in the ambulance.

Officer Stephani Peloso

Officer Peloso submitted a police report regarding the action on June 5, 2024. That report may be summarized as follows:

Officer Peloso was dispatched to the Big Y store on June 5, 2024, at approximately 10:30 a.m. Upon arrival, she observed Officers Groves and Marriner actively attempting to gain control of Brown as he was not complying with their commands. Officer Peloso approached the front passenger seat and climbed toward the driver's seat, pushing Brown toward the driver's door. The three officers were able to get Brown to the ground and attempted to place him in handcuffs. Brown resisted this and pulled his arms away. Ultimately, using two sets of handcuffs, the officers placed Brown in handcuffs and sat him upright.

Brown complained about his leg being broken and that he could not breathe. Brown asked for water, and it was provided for him.

Officer Gregory Marriner

Officer Marriner submitted a police report detailing his actions on June 5, 2024, at the Big Y parking lot. He described the confrontation with Brown and Brown's use of a fake name. The report noted that Brown walked toward a red sedan and stated that his identification was in the vehicle.

Officer Marriner's report continues:

"Michael Brown attempted to get into the vehicle as Officer Groves told him not to get in the vehicle. I then observed Officer Groves grab Michael Brown's arms to prevent him from getting into the vehicle and I moved closer to assist Officer Groves. Michael Brown was able to get into the vehicle, via the driver door and was seated in the driver seat. Officer Groves told Michael Brown to exit the vehicle while we attempted to physically remove him from the vehicle. I attempted to grab Michael Brown's left and right arm, which he continued to pull away from me. Officer Groves attempted to gain control and remove Michael Brown from the vehicle by grabbing his arms and shoulders and attempting to pull Michael Brown from the vehicle.

“While attempting to remove Michael Brown from the vehicle, I observed Michael Brown’s right foot depress the brake pedal and his right hand manipulate the parking brake and transmission gear selector. I also observed keys hanging from the ignition and believed the vehicle’s engine to be running. I reached into the vehicle and turned the ignition key rearward but was unable to remove the key from the ignition. I left the transmission gear selector in gear, knowing the vehicle could not be restarted without being placed back in park.

“Michael Brown later removed the keys from the ignition. I removed the keys from Michael Brown’s hand as Officer Groves continued efforts to gain control of Michael Brown. Michael Brown began to yell that his leg was broken. I did not observe any bandages or casts on either of Michael Brown’s legs.

“Officer Peloso and Sergeant O’Keefe arrived on scene and assisted in removing Michael Brown from the vehicle. I grabbed Michael Brown’s right arm, Officer Groves grabbed Michael Brown’s left arm, Officer Peloso pushed Michael Brown from the passenger side of the vehicle, and Sergeant O’Keefe pulled on Michael Brown’s shirt. Michael Brown continued to scream that his leg was broken. Michael Brown was removed, pulled out of the driver door and placed face down while we attempted to handcuff him.

“I attempted to place Michael Brown’s right hand on the small of his back. Officer Groves attempted to place Michael Brown’s left hand behind his back, while Michael Brown attempted to roll onto his right side. Due to Michael Brown’s continued resistance, Michael Brown ended up face down. This allowed Officer Peloso to apply (2) sets of handcuffs to Michael Brown. While we were attempting to place Michael Brown into handcuffs, he screamed that he could not breathe and that his leg was broken.

“Once Michael Brown was placed into handcuffs, he was rolled onto his right side. Michael Brown was sat in an upright position. I, along with Officer Brooks who had arrived on scene, assisted Michael Brown in sitting upright. Medical assistance was requested. Michael Brown continued stating that his leg was broken and requested water. Michael Brown was provided water. Officer Brooks and I continued providing Michael Brown assistance while we waited for Milford FD to arrive. Prior to arrival of Milford FD, I removed a large black plastic bag tucked in the waistband of Michael Brown’s person.”

Jeffrey Johnson

On February 26, 2025, OIG inspectors interviewed Jeffrey Johnson at the Milford Police Department. Johnson had been identified as the person inside the car with Brown at the Big Y parking lot.

Johnson stated that he drove with Mike to Big Y. Mike was driving. Johnson was watching his dog. Johnson said that he told Mike to relax because he was fighting with the police. When asked why he thought Brown would not comply, Johnson said, “Mike said he’d rather die than go to back to prison.” Brown had told this to Johnson before the date of the incident at the Big Y.

Johnson related that he was sitting in the car and was startled when the police tapped on the window. As he got out of the car, he saw Mike trying to get in. He said, “Mike, stop fighting” and that he “was making it worse by fighting.”

Digital Evidence

Big Y

The Big Y store provided six video clips of Michael Brown at the store on June 5, 2024.

Brown 1 – Brown drives the red Ford Focus into the Big Y parking lot. He exits the vehicle, opens the trunk, and walks toward the store. To view this video, click [here](#).

Brown 2 – Brown walks into Big Y. He is pushing a carriage. To view this video, click [here](#).

Brown 3 – Brown is pushing the carriage down a store aisle. To view this video, click [here](#).

Brown 4 – Brown pushes the carriage out of the store. Officer Marriner walks into the store, turns and follows Brown out. To view this video, click [here](#).

Brown 5 – Officers are walking with Brown in the parking lot. To view this video, click [here](#).

Brown 6 – Police vehicles stop in front of and to the rear of the Ford Focus. Officer Groves speaks to Jeffrey Johnson who is seated in the passenger seat. Officers Groves and Marriner approach the Ford with Brown. Brown attempts to enter the driver’s door. Police struggle with Brown.

3:30 – Other Milford police officers arrive.
3:52 – Brown pulled from car. Police put Brown in handcuffs.
6:15 – Police sit Brown up.
7:56 – Big Y employee brings a bottle of water that is given to Brown.
9:25 – Brown sat up on curb.
11:30 – Milford Fire Department arrives.
13:30 – Brown stands and walks to stretcher.
15:15 – Stretcher rolled out of camera view.

To view this portion of Brown 6, click [here](#).

Officer Gregory Marriner

Multiple Milford police officers had their body-worn cameras activated during the encounter with Brown. Officer Marriner's shows the best view of the struggle.

Officer Groves is speaking with Brown as he walks to the red Ford. Brown enters the Ford and the police struggle to extract him. Once out of the car and on the pavement, officers attempt to put Brown in handcuffs. Brown repeatedly claims that his leg is broken, and he could not breathe. To view this portion of Officer Marriner's body-worn camera recording, click [here](#).

Milford Fire Department

On the day of the incident, OIG inspectors interviewed Lieutenant Josh Stanton, a paramedic with the Milford Fire Department. Lieutenant Stanton related that a call came into the Milford 911 regarding a male experiencing shortness of breath. He and other firefighters responded to the Big Y Supermarket. They arrived at approximately 10:52 a.m.

On arrival, Lieutenant Stanton observed Brown handcuffed, sitting on the ground, and complaining of shortness of breath. With the assistance of officers and firefighters, Brown got to his feet and walked the short distance to a stretcher. Once he was on the stretcher, Lieutenant Stanton noted that Brown was breathing heavily and fast – in the 20 to 25 range per respiration. He was sweating and his skin was warm to the touch. Lieutenant Stanton made the decision to immediately take Brown to Milford Hospital, which was only a few minutes away.

During transport to the hospital, Brown was given oxygen, and his vital signs were checked. Lieutenant Stanton directed that a bag valve mask (BVM) be applied to assist Brown's breathing. Since Brown's pupils were dilated, and he was experiencing agonal breathing,

Lieutenant Stanton suspected narcotic intake. He administered two milligrams of Narcan. While in the ambulance, Brown's body went limp, and he lost pulse. On arrival at the hospital, Lieutenant Stanton advised medical staff that Brown was in cardiac arrest.

Hospital Records

Brown was transported to the Milford Campus of Yale New Haven Hospital arriving on June 5, 2024, at 11:12 a.m. He presented at the Emergency Department (ED) in cardiac arrest. He showed no cardiac activity, and no respiratory activity. There were no overt signs of trauma.

The medical staff utilized a bag mask valve and chest compressions. He was given epinephrine among other drugs. Once Brown was identified, the medical staff learned his history of hypertension and diabetes. While at the ED, Brown went through multiple rounds of ventricular fibrillation. His electrocardiogram showed pulseless electrical activity that ultimately gave way to asystole (complete cessation of electrical activity in the heart).

When a bedside ultrasound showed no cardiac activity, Dr. Zev Balsen pronounced Brown's time of death to be 11:32 a.m. Dr. Balsen's differential diagnosis included myocardial infarction versus flash pulmonary edema versus arrhythmia versus toxic ingestion. The hospital contacted the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to arrange an autopsy.

Officer of the Chief Medical Examiner

On June 6, 2024, Cori Breslauer, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner performed a postmortem examination of the body of Michael Brown. Dr. Breslauer's Final Anatomic Diagnosis was listed as:

"I Cardiac Arrhythmia Following Physical Altercation with Restraint due to Hypertensive and Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (Comment: during arrest by Police)

A Hypertensive and Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease

- 1 Venous Stasis Dermatitis of Legs
- 2 Cardiomegaly (660 gm)
- 3 Left Ventricular Hypertrophy (2.0 cm)
- 4 Coronary Artery Atherosclerosis with 60% Stenosis of Left Anterior Descending Coronary Artery
- 5 Cerebrovascular Atherosclerosis

- 6 Pulmonary Edema (Combined Lung Weight 1930 gm)
 - B Blunt Force Injuries of Torso and Extremities
 - 1 Dermal Abrasions and Soft Tissue Contusions
- II Substance Use
 - A Fentanyl and Oxycodone Detected in Postmortem Femoral Blood
 - B See Separate Toxicology Report
- III Status Post Remote Orthopedic Repair of Right Ankle with Hardware in Place
 - A No Acute Fracture
- IV Obesity with Umbilical Hernia and Peritoneal Adhesions
- V Status Post Attempts Resuscitation (Comment: Complaining of shortness of breath while on stretcher with EMTs and became unresponsive)”

Doctor Breslauer’s report then states the following:

“CAUSE OF DEATH: CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIA FOLLOWING PHYSICAL ALTERCATION WITH RESTRAINT DUE TO HYPERTENSIVE AND ATHEROSCLEROTIC CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

CONTRIBUTORY: OBESITY

MANNER OF DEATH: HOMICIDE (ALTERCATION UNDER POLICE ARREST)”

The report details the external and internal examination. The external examination notes several bruises and abrasions on Brown’s arms and legs. The internal examination revealed that the left descending coronary artery demonstrated up to 60% focal stenosis. The toxicology report regarding the analysis of femoral blood was positive for fentanyl, oxycodone, and Delta-9 THC (principal psychoactive ingredient of marijuana).

On May 9, 2025, I spoke to Dr. Breslauer about her classification of Brown’s death as a homicide. This classification relates to Brown’s struggle with police as they sought to remove him from the car. The doctor indicated that, while the cause of Brown’s death was a heart attack, it was the struggle with the police led to the heart attack. Dr. Breslauer further indicated, however, that Brown’s cause of death was less about the actions of the police and more about Brown’s heightened arousal during the struggle. She did not believe that the struggle would have been lethal to a person without the underlying health problems exhibited

by Brown. For Brown, however, the duress of the struggle with the police tipped the scales leading to the cardiac arrhythmia that caused his death.

FINDINGS

1. On Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at approximately 10:30 a.m., Michael Brown attempted to shoplift \$648.91 worth of cleaning supplies from the Stop & Shop store at 855 Bridgeport Avenue, Milford. Brown abandoned the items in the store when he saw a loss prevention officer watching him. He drove away from Stop & Shop in a red Ford automobile.
2. Milford Police Officers Austin Groves and Gregory Marriner located the red Ford a short distance away at the Big Y store at 150 Boston Post Road, Milford. Officer Marriner went to the Big Y looking for Brown and saw him exit the store and proceed into the parking lot.
3. Officers Groves and Marriner approached Brown. Officer Groves called him "Michael" and asked him to stop. Brown said his name was not Michael and gave the name "Peter Jacobs." As Brown approached the red Ford, Officer Groves told him to wait and not to get into the vehicle. Brown ignored these commands and entered the driver's seat of the red Ford.
4. Officers Groves and Marriner told Brown to exit the vehicle. They then attempted to pull him from the vehicle. Brown resisted. Other Milford police officers arrived on scene, and, with their assistance, Brown was pulled from the vehicle and onto the pavement.
5. When officers attempted to place Brown in handcuffs, he continued to resist. Ultimately, Brown was secured using two sets of handcuffs. During this process, Brown yelled that his leg was broken, and he could not breathe. The officers got Brown into a sitting position and provided him with water. The police called the Milford Fire Department for medical assistance.
6. Upon arrival, the Fire Department paramedics got Brown to his feet and walked him to a stretcher. He was transported to the Milford Campus of Yale New Haven Hospital. During the short ride to the hospital, Brown lost pulse. At the time of his arrival at the Emergency Department, he was in cardiac arrest.
7. The medical staff made multiple efforts to restore Brown's cardiac activity but were unsuccessful. He was pronounced deceased at 11:32 a.m.

8. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner performed an autopsy of Brown. The report by Cori Breslauer, M.D., Associate Medical Examiner notes that Brown suffered from cardiac arrhythmia, hypertension, and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. His toxicology screen was positive for fentanyl and oxycodone. Brown's cause of death was listed as cardiac arrhythmia and the manner of death as homicide (altercation under police arrest).

9. Dr. Breslauer's opinion is that, given Brown's underlying medical issues, the stress of the struggle with the police tipped the scales leading to cardiac arrhythmia that caused his death.

LEGAL STANDARD

Under Connecticut law, the Office of Inspector General is charged with, inter alia, investigating the death of persons who die while in the custody of a peace officer or law enforcement agency. Specifically, the Inspector General shall determine whether physical force was used by a peace officer upon the deceased person and, if so, whether the use of physical force by the peace officer was justifiable under § 53a-22. In addition, if the person's death was not due to a peace officer's use of force but from some criminal action, the Inspector General is to refer the matter for potential prosecution. The version of that statute in effect on June 5, 2024, in relevant part, provides:

General Statutes §51-277a(a)(2)(A) provides in part:

"... whenever a person dies in the custody of a peace officer or law enforcement agency, the Inspector General shall investigate and determine whether physical force was used by a peace officer upon the deceased person, and if so, whether the use of physical force by the peace officer was justifiable under section 53a-22. If the Inspector General determines that the person died as a result of possible criminal action not involving the use of force by a peace officer, the Inspector General shall refer such case to the Division of Criminal Justice for potential prosecution."

Neither General Statutes Chapter 886, nor the penal code define the terms "physical force" or "criminal action." For purposes of this report, I apply such terms in accord with their ordinary meanings.


ANALYSIS

The Milford officers who responded to the Big Y parking lot on June 5, 2024, were appropriately attempting to take Michael Brown into custody based on the complaint of shoplifting for Stop & Shop and the multiple outstanding warrants that he had issued for his arrest. He was uncooperative. The officers did not use excessive force in extracting him from the vehicle he was in, nor in placing him in handcuffs. His medical reaction was not due to the officers' use of force but to his precarious medical condition which, under the stress of the struggle, caused Brown to go into cardiac arrest. I do not find that Brown's death was due to excessive force by the police nor to any criminality.

CONCLUSION

The death of Michael Brown was not due to the use of excessive force by Milford police officers nor to was it the result of criminality. To the contrary, it was rooted in Brown's underlying cardiovascular disease. The Office of Inspector General will take no further action in this case.

Submitted this 10th day of June 2025.

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

ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.
INSPECTOR GENERAL