



July 8, 2015

Mr. Rick Raemisch  
Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Corrections  
2862 S. Circle Dr.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

Re: Investigation of the parole officer-involved shooting of Michael Shannon Meeks  
(DOB 3/26/1976) on June 8, 2015 in Aurora, Colorado.

Dear Mr. Raemisch,

The Seventeenth Judicial District Attorney's Office has completed the review of the investigation regarding the parole officer-involved shooting of Michael Shannon Meeks occurring on June 8, 2015 in Aurora. The Aurora Police Department conducted the investigation into this matter. Detective T.J. Welton presented the factual findings of the investigation to my office on June 25, 2015. Detective Welton presented law enforcement reports, audio and video recorded interviews, photographs, and diagrams of the crime scene. The Office of the District Attorney concludes that the investigation was thorough and complete.

The District Attorney's review is limited to determining whether criminal charges should be filed against the involved officer or other involved parties. The standard of proof for filing a criminal case is whether there is sufficient evidence to prove any criminal violations beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury. In this instance, the prosecution also has the burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the use of force was not justified pursuant to Colorado law. This review does not evaluate the appropriateness of the actions of the involved officer, whether department policies or procedures were followed, or whether the policies, practices, or training at the involved agency were sufficient. That evaluation is left to your agency.

As further set forth herein, based upon the evidence presented and applicable law, there is no reasonable likelihood of success of proving the parole officers committed a crime beyond a reasonable doubt at trial. Therefore, no criminal charges will be filed against the parole officers involved in this incident.

## OVERVIEW OF THE INCIDENT

On June 8, 2015, at approximately 7:30 p.m., Colorado Community Corrections parole officers Laurie Strong and Wesley Trissel responded to 2014 North Emporia Street, #306, Aurora, Colorado to conduct a home visit of parolee Jermaine Cloud. This location is in Adams County, Colorado. The nature of the visit was related to potential violations of the conditions of Mr. Cloud's parole agreement with respect to overnight guests. Officers Strong and Wesley identified themselves as law enforcement officers and displayed their official badges. Once inside the apartment and during conversation with Mr. Cloud, Officers Strong and Trissel encounter two other individuals, Jerri Jarvis and Michael Meeks. Shortly after the officers identified themselves as law enforcement, a physical altercation ensued between the officers and Mr. Meeks in which Mr. Meeks pulled a .45 caliber semi-automatic handgun from his waistband. Officer Strong, perceiving a threat to herself and others, fired her service weapon at Mr. Meeks, striking him one time in the abdomen. Officer Strong immediately seized Mr. Meeks' handgun and placed it away from his reach. She then applied pressure to the gunshot wound while she waited for medical to arrive. Mr. Meeks was subsequently released from the hospital and charged with assault in the first degree.

Aurora Police Department Major Crime/Homicide Unit Detective T.J. Welton was assigned to investigate this incident.

## INVOLVED PAROLE OFFICER

Officer Laurie Strong has served with the Colorado Department of Corrections as a Parole Officer for the past seven years. She has approximately eighteen (18) to nineteen (19) years of law enforcement experience in Colorado. At the time of the incident, Officer Strong was on duty and wearing civilian clothing consisting of dark pants, a plain dark-colored jacket and dark-colored polo shirt with a stitched Colorado Parole badge on it. She also displayed an official Colorado Parole badge on her waist belt above her right pants pocket. Officer Strong was carrying her duty weapon, a Glock .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun in a holster affixed to her waist belt. She was not wearing a bullet-proof vest.

Officer Strong participated in a recorded interview at the Aurora Police Department with her attorney, Mark Colin, and the following information was learned:

On June 8, 2015, at approximately 7:30 am, Parole Officers Laurie Strong and Wesley Trissel were conducting a home visit at 2014 North Emporia Street #306, Aurora, Colorado. Officer Strong had received information through Ken Sandoval with Mental Health Services that, her parole client, Jermaine Cloud, DOB: 03/19/83, was receiving overnight visitors. Jermaine Cloud was in what is called the C-sharp program, and as a condition of his parole he was not allowed to have guests spend the night or reside at 2014 North Emporia Street #306.

Parole Officers Strong and Trissel attempted to contact Jermaine Cloud at 2014 North Emporia Street #306, by knocking on the door several times and identifying themselves as Parole Officers. After receiving no response from inside the apartment, Officer Strong utilized a key to unlock the door. Officer Strong stated that because Jermaine Cloud is on Parole and the State of Colorado leases the one bedroom apartment, she is authorized to enter and search the apartment without a warrant.

After Officer Strong unlocked and pushed open the front door, she made several announcements and called out for Jermaine Cloud. Mr. Cloud then emerged from his bedroom. Officer Strong had him sit on a couch that was situated in the living room. Shortly after Mr. Cloud exited the bedroom, a female identified as Jerri Joan Jarvis, DOB: 08/09/72, exited from the bedroom. Officer Strong had Ms. Jarvis sit on the same couch with Mr. Cloud.

Officer Trissel then walked into the bedroom and observed a white male still inside the bedroom. The white male, was originally identified only as "Pete" emerged from the bedroom wearing several layers of clothing, sunglasses and was clutching a red, black, & gray Eddie Bauer backpack. This individual was later identified through official records as Michael Shannon Meeks, DOB: 03/26/76.

Officer Strong said she did not know Mr. Meeks and thought he was acting oddly. Officer Strong asked Officer Trissel if Mr. Meeks had been patted down for weapons as Mr. Meeks appeared to be trying to leave the apartment. Officer Trissel said that he had not patted the Mr. Meeks down, and Officer Strong advised him that she wanted to pat him down for her safety.

As Officer Strong was attempting to identify Mr. Meeks, Mr. Meeks asked "who are you?" Officer Strong identified herself as a Parole Officer. Mr. Meeks then pulled away from Officer Strong and made a move towards the bedroom. Officer Trissel then grabbed hold of Mr. Meeks' jacket at which time Mr. Meeks pulled a handgun from his waistband and began raising it towards Officer Strong. Officer Strong observed the handgun to be in Meeks' right hand.

Officer Strong withdrew her duty weapon, stating that she could not remember when she pulled her weapon out, but that she was in fear for her safety as well as the safety of her partner and the other occupants of the apartment when she fired it one time at Mr. Meeks, striking him in the abdomen. Mr. Meeks dropped his handgun and fell to the floor. Officer Strong stated that she had only fired one time because Mr. Meeks fell to the ground, dropped the gun and she perceived no further threat to herself and others.

## WITNESS INTERVIEWS

On June 8, 2015, Jermaine Cloud participated in a recorded interview at the Aurora Police Department. During that interview, Mr. Cloud stated the following:

He resides at 2014 Emporia St #306, and is currently on parole after recently being released from prison. A female he knows only as "J.J." showed up at his house on Friday, June 5, 2015 and had with her a male, who she introduced as "Pete." The two spent the night at Mr. Cloud's apartment.

At about 7:30 a.m. the next morning, as Jermaine Cloud was getting dressed after taking a shower, Officer Strong and her partner knocked on his door. When Officer Strong arrived, J.J. and Pete were in Jermaine's bedroom, and Officer Strong asked everyone to come to the living room.

Mr. Cloud sat on the couch and J.J. followed, but "Pete" later came out of the bedroom with his backpack slung over his shoulder and approached the door saying that he was going to leave. He stated that Officer Strong verbally identified herself as a Parole Officer and showed her badge. Officer Strong told "Pete" that she wanted to search his bag before he left, at which time "Pete" became irate, turned away from her and started walking back towards the bedroom.

Officer Strong's partner attempted to stop "Pete" from leaving the area, but "Pete" attempted to push past him. Officer Strong's partner and Pete struggled against each other briefly and, during this struggle, Pete reached into his own waistband and grabbed a gun.

Officer Strong yelled at "Pete" to "Drop the gun", or "Freeze", or words to that effect and then fired her weapon. Pete went to the ground and Officer Strong told Jermaine Cloud to call 911. Officer Strong ordered "Pete" not to reach for the gun. Mr. Cloud retrieved his phone and dialed 911, but Officer Strong's partner spoke with the 911 operator and Mr. Cloud went outside to flag down emergency responders.

Jermaine Cloud said that he didn't know that "Pete" had a gun prior to "Pete" producing it from his waistband. He said that he could only see the handle and back of the gun in "Pete's" hand, which he described as a Glock.

On June 8, 2015, Jerri Jarvis was interviewed by uniformed APD officers at the scene and stated the following:

She had stopped by her friend Jermaine's to grab some clothes. At approximately 7:45 am, she heard a knock at the door. Ms. Jarvis said she was in the bedroom putting on her sandals when she was told by parole officers to have a seat on the couch. She said that "Pete" was in the bedroom placing clothes into his backpack. Ms. Jarvis said that the female parole officer asked the male parole officer to have "Pete" exit the bedroom. Ms. Jarvis said that when "Pete" exited the bedroom, he attempted to walk out the door, at which time the

female parole officer grabbed him. She stated that "Pete" then pulled out a gun from his waistband and the female parole officer pulled out her gun. Ms. Jarvis heard one shot fired. Ms. Jarvis later repeated the details from this statement in a recorded interview with detectives.

On June 8, 2015, Officer Wayne Trissel participated in a recorded interview at the Aurora Police Department with Detective Chuck Mehl. Officer Trissel stated the following:

Jermaine Cloud is on parole and assigned to Laurie Strong's case load. Jermaine Cloud is in the C-sharp program, meaning that the state pays for his apartment while Mr. Cloud is in transition from incarceration to a community setting. Officer Trissel stated that Mr. Cloud is not allowed overnight guests while being in this program. The parole officers suspected that Mr. Cloud was violating this rule.

Officer Trissel stated that he and Officer Strong were at 2014 North Emporia Street #306 early the morning of June 8, 2015 to investigate Mr. Cloud's violation of the overnight guest rule. Officer Trissel stated that Mr. Cloud was just getting out of shower when the parole officers arrived. Officer Trissel said that he and Officer Strong entered the apartment and asked Mr. Cloud if anyone else was there. They observed a male and female in the bedroom. Officer Trissel said that they ordered everyone come out to the living room. The female was later identified as Jerri Jarvis. The unknown male was carrying a black and red back pack and attempted to leave the apartment. Officer Trissel said that this male tried to walk out the front door and ignored their orders.

Officer Trissel described the male's behavior as "paranoid and erratic." Officer Trissel informed the male that he was not allowed to leave. Officer Trissel informed the male that he was uncomfortable with his actions and demeanor and was going to pat him down for officer safety. The male said he was not going to allow that and started walking back toward the bedroom.

Officer Trissel said that he grabbed the male by the back of the collar and a brief struggle ensued during which the male pulled a black handgun from his waist band. The male then raised the gun and started to turn around toward Officer Trissel.

Officer Trissel said he observed the gun in the male's right hand and was fearful for his life. Officer Trissel said he pushed the male away to gain distance and safety. Officer Trissel said that the male with the gun fell forward into the refrigerator of the kitchen.

Officer Trissel said that as he backed away from the male Officer Strong shot the male. The male fell to the floor in the kitchen. They picked up his gun and moved it away from him placing it on the bathroom sink and called the police.

## WEAPONS AND EVIDENCE

Detective T.J. Welton and Detective Mark Yakano conducted an inspection of Officer Strong's duty weapon. The weapon is a Glock, Model 22 .40 caliber semi automatic handgun displaying serial number KXL790. The weapon contained one (1) magazine with a maximum capacity of thirteen (13) .40 caliber cartridges. Upon inspection, the magazine was discovered to contain twelve (12) .40 caliber cartridges. In addition, Officer Strong had two (2) magazines on her duty belt, each containing thirteen (13) .40 caliber cartridges.

At full capacity, Officer Strong was equipped with forty (40) rounds of .40 caliber ammunition: three fully-loaded magazines containing thirteen (13) total rounds, and one round loaded in the chamber of the weapon. At the time of the examination, Officer Strong was in possession of thirty-nine (39) rounds .40 caliber ammunition, confirming that the weapon was fired one time.

The handgun that Mr. Meeks was possessing is identified as a Springfield XD .45 caliber semi- auto handgun displaying serial number XD658602. Upon examination of this handgun, Detective Alton Reed found twelve (12) 45 caliber cartridges loaded in the magazine. There was no cartridge found in the chamber of the handgun. During a search of the red, black & gray Eddie Bauer backpack, Detective Reed located a second fully loaded magazine for the Springfield XD .45 caliber semi-auto handgun.

Crime Scene Investigator Nick Carroll conducted a complete inventory of Mr. Meeks' red, black & gray Eddie Bauer backpack. During that inventory, CSI Carroll recovered two bottle caps containing pieces of brown cotton, and a zip lock bag containing a piece of plastic with brown chunk material, which later tested positive for heroin.

## SUSPECT INFORMATION

On June 8, 2015, at approximately 08:05 hours, commissioned Aurora Police Officer Clark Orchard responded to the University of Colorado Hospital emergency room. Officer Orchard learned from Dr. Davis that Michael Meeks had received a single gunshot wound to the left side of his back. The bullet traversed his back and was lodged near the right side of his back.

Michael Meeks had two felony no bond warrants for his arrest issued by the Denver Sheriff's Department under Denver County case numbers 14CR1010 and 13CR5926. On June 10, 2015, at approximately 5:15 pm, Mr. Meeks was released from the hospital and taken into custody on his arrest warrants. He refused to release his medical records to law enforcement and exercised his fifth amendment rights by refusing to give a statement connected with this investigation.

Mr. Meeks' criminal history consists of a number of felony convictions: possession of burglary tools, a class 5 felony, first degree criminal trespass, a class 5 felony, theft, a class 6 felony, and possession of a weapon by a previous offender, a class 6 felony.

Following this investigation, Mr. Meeks was charged with two counts of assault in the first degree and one count of possession of a weapon by a previous offender.

### LEGAL ANALYSIS

As was previously noted, this review is limited to determining whether criminal charges should be filed against the involved parole officer. The decision to file criminal charges involves an assessment of all known facts and circumstances as well as an evaluation of whether there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction at trial under the applicable law. Generally speaking, criminal liability is established when the evidence is sufficient to prove all of the elements of a crime beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition to proving the elements of a crime, the prosecution must also disprove any statutorily recognized justification or defense beyond a reasonable doubt. In this instance, in order to file a criminal charge the District Attorney's office must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Parole Officer Strong's actions were not justified under the circumstances surrounding this incident and the applicable law.

There is no dispute that Officer Strong fired her weapon and wounded Mr. Meeks and that she is a law enforcement peace officer. The legal question presented to the Office of the District Attorney is whether, at the time Officer Strong fired her weapon, the Office of the District Attorney can prove beyond a reasonable doubt that her actions were not justified under Colorado law.

The use of force by a law enforcement officer necessarily invokes an analysis under C.R.S. § 18-1-707, the law applicable to the use of force by a peace officer. In pertinent part, the language of the statute reads as follows:

- (1) A peace officer is justified in using reasonable and appropriate physical force upon another person when and to the extent that he reasonably believes it necessary:
  - (a) To effect an arrest or to prevent the escape from custody of an arrested person unless he knows that the arrest is unauthorized; or
  - (b) To defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of physical force while effectuating or attempting to effect such an arrest or while preventing or attempting to prevent such an escape.
- (2) A peace officer is justified in using deadly physical force upon another person for a purpose specified in subsection (1) of this section only when he reasonably believes that it is necessary:

(a) To defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of deadly physical force; or

(b) To effect an arrest, or to prevent the escape from custody, of a person whom he reasonably believes:

(I) Has committed or attempted to commit a felony involving the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon; or

(II) Is attempting to escape by the use of a deadly weapon; or

(III) Otherwise indicates, except through a motor vehicle violation, that he is likely to endanger human life or to inflict serious bodily injury to another unless apprehended without delay.

(3) Nothing in subsection (2) (b) of this section shall be deemed to constitute justification for reckless or criminally negligent conduct by a peace officer amounting to an offense against or with respect to innocent persons whom he is not seeking to arrest or retain in custody.

(4) For purposes of this section, a reasonable belief that a person has committed an offense means a reasonable belief in facts or circumstances which if true would in law constitute an offense. If the believed facts or circumstances would not in law constitute an offense, an erroneous though not unreasonable belief that the law is otherwise does not render justifiable the use of force to make an arrest or to prevent an escape from custody. A peace officer who is effecting an arrest pursuant to a warrant is justified in using the physical force prescribed in subsections (1) and (2) of this section unless the warrant is invalid and is known by the officer to be invalid.

"Deadly physical force" is defined as "force, the intended, natural, and probable consequence of which is to produce death, and which does, in fact produce death." C.R.S. §18-1-901(3)(d).

At the time that Officer Strong fired her service weapon, she had an unknown male acting suspiciously clutching a backpack as her partner, Officer Trissel, was attempting to restrain the male and the male pulls a handgun out of his waistband. Officer Strong indicated that she felt her life as well as the lives of the other people in the apartment were in grave danger at the time she fired her weapon. Based upon the circumstances known to Officer Strong, this was a reasonable conclusion that when this unknown male pulled his handgun out of his waistband he put the lives of Officer Trissel, Jerri Jarvis, Jermaine Cloud and herself in danger of serious bodily injury or death.

Under these facts, the Office of the District Attorney cannot prove that Parole Officer Strong's actions were not justified as applied to C.R.S. § 18-1-707. Therefore, the prosecution is unable to prove the elements of any crime beyond a reasonable doubt with regards to Officer Strong.

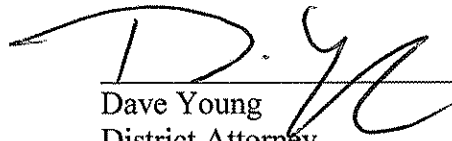


**CONCLUSION**

Applying the facts of this incident to the applicable law, the evidence does not support the filing of any criminal charges against Officer Strong for this shooting incident involving Michael Shannon Meeks on June 8, 2015.

Therefore, it is the conclusion of the Seventeenth Judicial District Attorney's Office that no criminal charges will be filed against Officer Strong. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or further investigation is needed.

Respectfully,

  
Dave Young  
District Attorney