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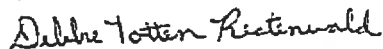
Dear Mr. Hansberry,

As requested, I am writing in regard to our prior phone conversations and written summary, concerning an incident involving Chief Walker with Bridgeport Police Depart. I am a retired West Virginia State Police 1/Lieutenant who honorably retired on July 31, 2008. During my twenty- five years of service, my duties consisted of criminal investigations, accident investigations, road patrol, and numerous other law enforcement duties. I spent approximately ten years in the field with the remainder of my career being assigned to Department Headquarters, Governors Security, and the West Virginia State Police Training Academy. The last eight years of my career were spent at the WVSP Training Academy, where I was third in charge with duties which included supervising, teaching, and assisting in the overall day to day function of the Academy.

Upon reviewing the circumstances of this incident as reflected in the attached summary, it is my opinion to a reasonable degree of certainty based upon my professional experience, that Chief Walker's actions were appropriate and consistence with acceptable practice.

A law enforcement officer may only have a second to react if a suspect(s) draws a weapon. By having a duty weapon drawn in a ready position, it gives the officer a quicker response time to a potential threat, and increases officer safety. Unholstering a weapon is a decision that can only be made at the officer's discretion, based upon the specific set of circumstances. I am not aware of any law or practice that would prohibit an officer from drawing his weapon as such in this situation. Based on my twenty- five years in law enforcement, and from a training standpoint, I feel Chief Walker's actions were reasonable and justifiable.

Respectfully,



Debbie Totten Rectenwald

On February 15, 2022, Chief Walker received a transmission via police scanner regarding a hit and run involving two vehicles. The victim had followed the perpetrator to Sheetz in Bridgeport.

Chief Walker, who was in the area at the time of the transmission, pulled into Sheetz and observed the perpetrator's vehicle, which had a Georgia license plate. Chief Walker did not leave his vehicle at that time. While at Sheetz, Chief Walker observed that the perpetrator was out of his (*i.e.*, the perpetrator's) vehicle and had something in his (*i.e.*, the perpetrator's) hand. The perpetrator then got back into his vehicle and left Sheetz, at which point Chief Walker began to follow him.

Chief Walker did not know the perpetrator's purpose for stopping at Sheetz. Chief Walker did not see the perpetrator getting gas. Chief Walker assumed the perpetrator was confirming in his mind (*i.e.*, the perpetrator's mind) the victim had been following him (*i.e.*, following the perpetrator).

From Sheetz, Chief Walker followed the perpetrator to the Crestview apartment complex, which is approximately three minutes from Sheetz in Bridgeport. Chief Walker observed three individuals exit the perpetrator's vehicle and enter a second-floor apartment at the Crestview apartment complex. Thereafter, two Bridgeport police officers arrived at the apartment complex.

The two Bridgeport police officers ultimately proceeded to the second-floor apartment. One officer was near the door of the apartment, and one officer was near a window to the apartment. Chief Walker was positioned on a landing below where the two officers were standing. It was nighttime.

Given the circumstances (*e.g.*, nighttime, position of the two police officers and their surroundings, response to a hit and run, Chief Walker having observed the perpetrator out of his car with something in his hand at Sheetz, three individuals having exited the perpetrator's vehicle and entered the second-floor apartment, and Chief Walker's suspicion the perpetrator knew he had been followed), Chief Walker drew his sidearm to the high-and-ready position, not aimed directly at anyone, as the officer at the apartment door attempted to have the perpetrator respond to the door. Chief Walker felt it was appropriate to do so to ensure the safety of the two officers above him and to mitigate against any potential threat under the circumstances. Chief Walker held his sidearm in the high-and-ready position for approximately five seconds. Once he felt the two officers above him were sufficiently safe, Chief Walker holstered his sidearm.