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No True Bill for Deputies Involved in April 2022 Target Shooting

OSCEOLA COUNTY, Fla. –Two Osceola County Sheriff’s Office deputies involved in an April 2022 shooting that resulted in one man’s death and injuries to two other men will not be formally charged. The decision comes after a grand jury in Osceola County did not believe charges against the two officers were legally appropriate.

On April 27, 2022, detectives from the Osceola County Sheriff’s Office were conducting field training exercises nearby when they responded to the Target store parking lot located at 4795 West Irlo Brunson Memorial Hwy in Kissimmee. Deputies observed a black Audi with a concealed license plate and saw two men from the Audi put on masks and hoodies and enter the store. Detectives notified a Target loss prevention employee who informed officers he observed the men allegedly committing a theft. Once the men returned to the vehicle, multiple deputies used their vehicles to block and apprehend the men. The driver of the Audi attempted to escape, striking several deputies’ vehicles. During the escape attempt, two deputies fired their weapons several times. Three men were struck by gunfire including Jayden Baez, 21, who died from his injuries.

This was the first use of deadly force case to be presented to a grand jury under State Attorney Andrew Bain’s policy where all law enforcement uses of deadly force are presented to a grand jury to determine whether criminal charges for law enforcement officers are appropriate. This ensures a balanced and uniformed approach and community review of use of force incidents.

State Attorney Bain released the following statement:

“This case was at the State Attorney’s Office for 11 months and no resolution was reached during that time. Within three months of my administration implementing this new policy, we have a charging decision made by the grand jury in this case. After listening to substantial evidence and several witnesses presented in a court of law, the grand jury determined the deputies’ use of deadly force that day in April 2022 did not warrant criminal charges.

“This is a tragic situation that has affected many families, individuals, law enforcement members and our community. A young man has lost his life and his loved ones, along with the surviving victims and their families, are still grieving and hurting.

“As with any case in the criminal justice system, the facts must be proven in a courtroom and beyond a reasonable doubt. We hope our community and everyone involved feels confident the grand jury reached a reasonable and impartial decision. We respect their decision and appreciate their diligence and thorough deliberation.”

The new policy allows the grand jury to make a statement regarding policies, procedures and best practice recommendations related to uses of force. The grand jury is not prepared to release a statement at this time. However, they may choose to release one in the future.

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