



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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Press Release

The District Attorney's Office announced that the investigation and legal analysis of the fatal traffic crash that resulted in the death of Mason Farnsworth involving Colorado State Patrol Trooper Tim Kridel has been completed.

The Critical Incident Team for the 20th Judicial District investigated this case. This multi-agency team is designated to investigate fatalities in which any law enforcement officer operating within the 20th Judicial District used physical or deadly force against a person while acting under the color of official law enforcement duties. This definition is broader than that required by state law. For that reason, the District Attorney's Office wants to acknowledge the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) for immediately contacting local law enforcement following the crash. By doing so, CSP prompted an extremely thorough, multi-agency investigation. Consistent with the Boulder County protocol, the Colorado State Patrol did not participate in the investigation.

Under applicable Colorado law, no criminal charges can or should be filed against Trooper Kridel. The investigation in this instance was conducted for the purpose of determining whether criminal charges were warranted in connection with the fatal traffic crash that resulted in the death of Mason Farnsworth. The investigation and review of this incident does not evaluate nor review the appropriateness of police tactics, nor does it limit administrative action by the Colorado State Patrol or any civil actions where less stringent laws, rules, and levels of proof would apply.

The evidence established that, at the time Colorado State Trooper Kridel initiated a Tactical Vehicle Intervention (TVI), the State Trooper had reason to believe that Mr. Farnsworth was driving a stolen car, fleeing from the police, and that the stolen car might contain weapons. At the time of the TVI, Mr. Farnsworth attempted to accelerate out of contact with Trooper Kridel's police vehicle and flee from the police. It is clear from all the evidence in this investigation that the intended consequence of the TVI was to end the pursuit by forcing the stolen car to come to a stop in the roadway rather than engaging in a high-speed chase in a residential area of Longmont.

Instead of the car turning counterclockwise to a stop as intended, because Mr. Farnsworth accelerated out of the spin, the car slid sideways across the road and collided with a tree on the driver's side door. A crush analysis showed that the minimum speed at which the Saturn impacted the tree was at least between 19 mph and 24 mph.

Mr. Farnsworth was sixteen (16) years old at the time of the incident and his death was tragic. Unfortunately, Mr. Farnsworth had encountered some recent difficulty in his life and was a runaway at the time of the incident, which may explain his driving conduct. Regardless, it remains incredibly tragic to lose someone as young as Mr. Farnsworth -- especially under these circumstances.

At the time of the pursuit, Trooper Kridel was unaware of the identity or age of the driver of the stolen car. Trooper Kridel acted in accordance with his training, CSP policy, and his prior experience with TVIs. Under an objective legal analysis, Trooper Kridel's use of force was reasonably necessary to effectuate a felony arrest of a fleeing suspect and did not violate the criminal laws of Colorado.

District Attorney Michael Dougherty stated, "Mr. Farnsworth's death was tragic. It happened so quickly and, although the Trooper's conduct was legally justified under Colorado law, this brief encounter ended Mr. Farnsworth's life and will forever impact his family. Whenever a person dies from an interaction with law enforcement, the family and our community deserve a thorough investigation. For that reason, I truly appreciate the exhaustive work of the multi-agency Critical Incident Team."

The District Attorney's detailed findings and the video presentation prepared by the Critical Incident Team can be found here: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/district-attorney/officer-involved-shooting-decision-letters/>. Earlier today, members of the District Attorney's Office again met with the family of Mr. Farnsworth, along with members of the Critical Incident Team, and provided all this information to them.

Due to the ages of Mr. Farnsworth and his younger passenger, there are restrictions on what information can be provided to the public. Based on privacy restrictions for juveniles, there are details that will be redacted from the letter made available to the public. Specifically, the District Attorney's Office will not share specific details about Mr. Farnsworth's history or the name of the passenger. The complete information has, however, been shared with the family of Mr. Farnsworth and the Colorado State Patrol.

For community members interested in discussing the detailed findings, District Attorney Michael Dougherty and members of the team will be available at 3:30 pm on Friday, July 10, 2020. You can submit questions in advance through boulder.da@bouldercounty.org. The link to join the meeting is <https://tinyurl.com/yavxk5ge>. Community members are, also, welcome to call into the meeting by using Phone Number: 720-400-7859, Conference ID: 13798519#.