



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Michael T. Dougherty, District Attorney

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Press Release

The District Attorney's Office announced today that the investigation and legal analysis of the non-fatal shooting of Leon Gladwell (DOB: 08/03/1980) on September 24, 2020, involving Longmont Police Department Officer Daniel Kilian, has been completed.

The Critical Incident Team for the 20th Judicial District, also known as the Boulder County Investigation Team ("BCIT"), investigated this case. This multi-agency team is designated to investigate use-of-force incidents in which any law enforcement officer used deadly, or potentially deadly, physical force against a person while acting under the color of official law enforcement duties. Following this incident, the Longmont Police Department ("LPD") immediately notified the BCIT. The BCIT quickly responded and conducted a thorough investigation. Consistent with protocol, the LPD did not participate in the investigation.

In 1998, Leon Gladwell was convicted of Murder in the Second Degree for killing his grandmother. He was sentenced to 40 years of incarceration with the Department of Corrections (DOC). Mr. Gladwell had a violent history while in the custody of DOC, including as a member of the Surenos gang. Investigators learned that Mr. Gladwell was considered, and rejected, for transition to three Community Corrections halfway house facilities. In April 2020, despite his violent behavior in DOC and the lack of support available in the community, the state released him to a homeless shelter in Boulder. Five months after his release, he threatened to harm himself and others, blew up a hotel room, and endangered the lives of many people.

At 11:29 a.m. on Thursday, September 24, 2020, a therapist working with Mr. Gladwell contacted the Longmont Police Department because of concerns that Mr. Gladwell was on methamphetamine, was in possession of weapons and a propane tank, and posed a significant threat to other people. Mr. Gladwell told the therapist that he wanted to harm himself and others.

A parole officer and the Longmont Police Department CORE Team responded to the Residence Inn-Marriott, where Mr. Gladwell was residing at the time. The CORE team consists of paramedics, clinicians, and officers who are trained to help people with mental health crises. They contacted Mr. Gladwell in the hallway outside his room.

They removed two knives from Mr. Gladwell and spoke with him. This was the first of several attempts to de-escalate the situation over a period of several hours. However, Mr. Gladwell retreated into his room. During this brief encounter, the parole officer observed what he believed to be a propane tank inside the room. They heard Mr. Gladwell moving things in front of the closed door, in order to barricade himself in the room. The parole officer then applied for an arrest warrant because possession of weapons is a violation of his parole conditions. A judge authorized the arrest warrant.

Once the warrant was approved, a small team of Longmont SWAT members was assigned to execute the warrant. Again, SWAT team members tried to convince Mr. Gladwell to exit the room. Multiple officers then heard a hissing sound. At 7:22 p.m., a large explosion ripped through the third-floor bedroom, endangering the lives of other hotel guests and officers. The force of the explosion caused the window to blow out and become imbedded in the roof of the building immediately to the west. SWAT officers quickly cleared the hotel guests from the building and continued to give multiple commands to Mr. Gladwell.

At 8:47 p.m., Officer Kilian was positioned on the roof of the building immediately to the west of Mr. Gladwell's room. Suddenly, Mr. Gladwell appeared in the blown-out window frame, holding items in his hands, and appeared to start to throw one of the items at the officers on the roof. Officer Kilian believed that Mr. Gladwell was about to detonate another explosive device. Officer Kilian fired three rounds into the hotel room, hitting Mr. Gladwell once in the left chest area. Later, Mr. Gladwell had surgery and was ultimately released from the hospital to the Boulder County Jail, where he is now being held on his parole violation warrant.

Many of these events were captured on video and/or audio from body-worn cameras and drone cameras. The videos are consistent with the voluntary interviews of the officers and civilians.

Under applicable Colorado law, no criminal charges can or should be filed against Officer Kilian or the other police officers. Officer Kilian was legally justified in his use of reasonable and appropriate physical force to effect a felony arrest and in response to the imminent risk of death or great bodily injury to numerous individuals.

District Attorney Michael Dougherty stated, "The decision to release Mr. Gladwell at this point in his sentence is troubling, particularly with his violent conduct in prison and lack of support accessible to him in the community. We are fortunate that no one died as a result of his actions on September 24th. I appreciate that the Boulder County Investigation Team conducted an independent and thorough review. The integrity and outcome of these investigations is critical."

It is expected that Mr. Gladwell will be charged with criminal offenses. As in every case, these criminal charges are an accusation and he is presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty.

The District Attorney's detailed report, along with the video presentation prepared by the Critical Incident Team, can be found here: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/district-attorney/officer-involved-shooting-decision-letters/>. For individuals interested in the process and findings, District Attorney Michael Dougherty will conduct a Town Hall on November 12th from 10:30am to 11:30am. You can submit questions in advance through boulder.da@bouldercounty.org. The link to join is <https://tinyurl.com/y5jbjssa>. Community members are, also, able to call into the meeting: 720-400-7859 with Conference ID# 394 193 141.