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ROBLES | RAEL | ANAYA

April 21, 2023

Re: Officer involved shooting occurring on April 5, 2023

To whom it may concern:

This firm represents the Farmington Police Department officers involved in the April 5, 2023 shooting which took place at 5305 Valley View Avenue.

Yesterday, the family of Robert Dotson and their attorney, Shon Northam, held a press conference. Unfortunately, the inflammatory statements made during this press conference about the Farmington Police Department and the officers involved in this incident attempted to paint a picture that does not align with the facts or the department's commitment to their community. To set the record straight about what actually happened on April 5th, I am compelled to address the various misstatements and omissions made by the family and their attorney.

Without question this is a tragic case. Tragic for the Dotson family, but also for the officers. Even though the officers had to use deadly force to defend themselves from the armed and deadly threats posed by Mr. Dotson. The officers never wanted to shoot Mr. Dotson or at Mrs. Dotson. Sadly, Mr. Dotson created the set of circumstances that gave the officers no real choice but to use deadly force.

Police officers are called upon to protect their community and to serve and defend those in need. FPD remains dedicated to its mission. The officers' response to the Dotson home on April 5th was undertaken in that spirit.

On April 5th, Officers Waylon Wasson, Daniel Estrada, and Dylan Goodluck were dispatched to 5308 Valley View Avenue in reference to a domestic violence call. At approximately 11:30 PM, Officers Wasson, Estrada, and Goodluck walked up to a house in a quiet residential area that they believed to be 5308 Valley View Avenue. However, the house that the officers approached was actually 5305 Valley View Avenue.

The officers proceeded to the front porch. Three times, they knocked on the door. Three times, they announced that they were police. There was a window in the front door, as well as a window next to the front door and a doorbell camera. The porch light was on and the officers were all wearing uniforms and badges, clearly identifying them as police. Anyone inside of the home could have easily looked out and seen that there were police officers outside. Anyone inside of the home could have used the doorbell camera to find out that there were police officers outside.

The officers waited calmly for someone to answer the door, but the longer they waited, the more concerned they became. Before taking further action, Officer Wasson contacted dispatch to verify the address of the calling party.

Then, Officer Wasson heard the distinctive sound of someone inside the house rack a firearm. Fearing that this person was preparing to shoot at them, all three officers quickly backed away from the porch. As they did so, Mr. Dotson abruptly swung the door open with a gun in his hand. The officers drew their service weapons and commanded Mr. Dotson to put his hands up. Mr. Dotson ignored their commands and pointed his gun directly at Officer Wasson.

Fearing for their lives and the safety of their fellow officers, they had no choice but to defend themselves with deadly force. All three officers fired at Mr. Dotson. Mr. Dotson then disappeared inside, and the front door swung shut. The officers immediately ceased fire and retreated away from the porch and out of the front yard.

Then, Mrs. Dotson screamed at the officers, opened the front door, and pointed a gun at them. Again, the officers commanded Mrs. Dotson to show her hands, and again, their orders were ignored. Instead, Mrs. Dotson shot at Officer Wasson. As the three officers watched the muzzle flash, and Officer Wasson felt the bullet zip past him, they knew their lives were once again on the line. The officers had no choice but to return fire.
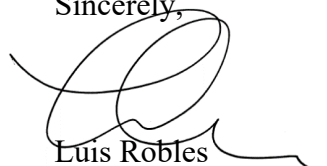
The Second Amendment protects one's right to bear arms. That is not disputed. However, the Second Amendment does not give the Dotsons the right to commit the felony crime of aggravated assault upon a peace officer with a deadly weapon. The Dotsons did not have a right to threaten and shoot at the officers who had done nothing more than knock on the front door and announce their presence. At no time did the officers present a threat to the Dotsons. At no time did the officers attempt to gain entry into the home. Under the facts of this case, the Dotsons' decision to threaten and shoot at the officers was unlawful.

These officers never wanted to use deadly force, but they were put into a dangerous situation where they had no choice but to respond. As police officers, it is their highest duty to protect the community. Deadly force is a tool of last resort, and the decision to use it is never taken lightly. Officers Wasson, Estrada, and Goodluck did what was necessary to defend themselves, and that is a burden that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Dotson's death was a tragedy, and our hearts go out to his family and loved ones. However, it is important to remember that no one forced Mr. and Mrs. Dotson to point guns at the officers. No one forced Mrs. Dotson to shoot at Officer Wasson. The officers were clearly visible, calmly announced themselves multiple times, and did nothing to suggest that they were trying to force their way into the Dotsons' home. There could be no doubt that they were police. And yet Mr. and Mrs. Dotson made an incomprehensible decision that put themselves and these officers in grave danger. The officers' actions were justified, and I stand by their decision to use deadly force.

For additional comments and other media inquiries, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Luis Robles

LR/bdh