



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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TO: KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE      DATE: JULY 24, 2018  
State Attorney

FROM: STAFFING/REVIEW TEAM      RE: POLICE SHOOTING  
CASE #: FDLE MI-27-0055  
INJURED: Christopher Goa

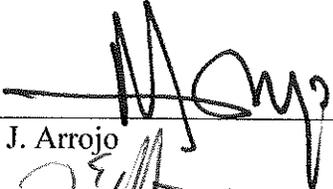
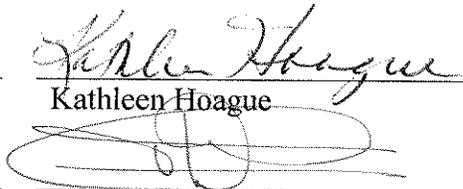
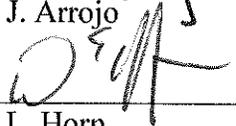
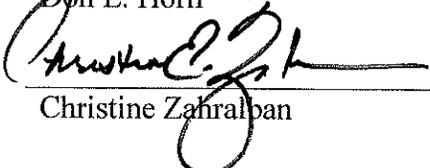
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Based on the information obtained and reviewed during the course of the investigation, the conclusion of the staffing/review team is the following: The investigation has determined that Detectives Coppet and Eugene attempted to conduct a traffic stop on a vehicle that had left the scene of an accident. The front passenger, Christopher Goa, exited the vehicle and started shooting with a pistol over the hood of the vehicle at the Detectives. Detectives Coppet and Eugene returned fire. The subject then fled in the same direction in which Sgt. Corey Jones had arrived. The Sergeant confronted Mr. Goa, who subsequently laid down on the ground and threw his firearm to the side.

It is reasonable to believe that the Detectives considered it necessary to use deadly force to prevent injury to themselves and others.

We find that Detective George Eugene (#8113) and Detective Demetrius Coppet (8082) were legally justified in the use of force by firing their weapons.

The members of the staffing/review team for this case are:

 _____ Jose J. Arrojo	 _____ Kathleen Hoague	 _____ Esther Jacobo
 _____ Don L. Horn	 _____ Frank Ledee	_____ Reid Rubin
 _____ Christine Zahralpan	_____ Responding Member of Shooting Team	_____ Responding Member of Shooting Team

Approved by State Attorney on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2018.

  
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KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE  
State Attorney





INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: STAFFING/REVIEW TEAM

DATE: JULY 24, 2018

FROM: ALEJANDRA LOPEZ  
REID RUBIN  
Assistant State Attorneys

RE: POLICE SHOOTING CLOSEOUT MEMO  
SAO Case #62/17/03/09/003

OFFICER(S) INVOLVED:	Detective George Eugene MDPD Id # 8113 Detective Demetrius Coppet MDPD Id # 8082
INJURED:	Christopher Goa DOB 5/11/1993 (24 y.o.a)
INJURIES:	Gunshot wound to the upper back
DATE & TIME:	March 9, 2017 at 12:07 A.M.
LOCATION:	NW 172 Terrace and NW 29 Place
WEAPONS:	Detective George Eugene MDPD: 9mm Glock 17 Gen 4 Serial Number REF289 Detective Demetrius Coppet MDPD: 9mm Glock 17 Gen 4 Serial Number REF017
LEAD:	FDLE SA Terrance Brinson
CASE #:	FDLE Case Number MI-27-0055
SAO CASE #:	#62/17/03/09/003



### SUMMARY OF FACTS

On March 9, 2017, at approximately 12:05 A.M., MDPD Detectives George Eugene ("Eugene") and Demetrius Coppet ("Coppet") were conducting an investigation on an unrelated case when they observed a hit and run crash involving a Chevy Impala occupied by three (3) males at the intersection of NW 175th Street and NW 32nd Avenue. Detective Eugene and Detective Coppet entered their unmarked white Dodge Charger and pursued the Impala with their police lights and sirens on. When they caught up to the Impala, the officers initiated a traffic stop with the lights and sirens still on. As the driver, Wently Phenelon, stopped his vehicle, the front passenger, Christopher Lamont Goa, jumped out the car with a firearm in hand and began shooting at the officers. Detectives Eugene and Coppet discharged their firearms and exchanged fire with Goa while taking cover behind their Dodge Charger. While the exchange of gunfire was taking place, the backseat passenger, Demetrius Walker, bailed out of the back seat of the Impala and laid down on the ground. Phenelon sped away in the Impala and was later stopped by MDPD officers at a nearby gas station.

When the exchange of gunfire commenced, Detectives Eugene and Coppet radioed for backup over police channels. Sgt. Corey Jones (Id #5625) was the first to arrive to the intersection. When he arrived, he observed Goa running in his direction, pointing a gun behind him toward the other detectives. He further observed Goa continue to discharge the firearm as he ran. He also observed the officers maintain their positions behind their vehicle. When Jones confronted Goa, Goa got down on the ground and threw the firearm off to the side. Emergency personnel and other MDPD officers arrived.

Goa was taken by Miami Dade Fire Rescue to Aventura Hospital for treatment. Doctors determined that he had been shot one time. Entry of the projectile was at the upper left portion of his back, and the projectile came to rest in the upper right portion of the chest. After being treated, Goa was arrested for two (2) counts of Attempted Second Degree Murder of a Law Enforcement Officer in case F17-5123. Goa gave a statement in which he admitted being a passenger in the Impala and fleeing the scene, but denied firing at the officers.

Police officers and crime scene technicians responded and processed the scene of the shooting. In addition to recovering Goa's 9mm Sig Sauer pistol, model P250 (SN# EAK003618) and its extended clip, they also recovered a total of forty-one (41) spent casings and nine (9) spent projectiles. Three (3) casings could not be evaluated because they sustained significant damage. Twenty-two (22) casings and one (1) of the projectiles matched Officer Coppet's firearm. Sixteen (16) casings and two (2) of the projectiles were consistent with Officer Eugene's firearm. One (1) projectile was consistent with either Officers Eugene or Coppet's firearms, but the damaged condition of the projectile precluded more certain identification. Three (3) casings were fired in Goa's firearm. One (1) of the projectiles was consistent with Goa's firearm, but the damaged condition of the projectiles precluded a more certain identification.

One resident in the neighborhood, Luis Berrios, saw part of the shooting. He observed Goa shooting first at the officers and then he saw the officers shoot back. He then saw Goa run and then fall or lay down on the ground a block away. Wently Phenelon stated that he knew before he stopped his car that he was being stopped by police after the hit and run crash. He stated that he had no idea the front passenger (Goa) had a firearm and was shocked when the front seat passenger got out of his car and started to shoot at the officers. He stated that he then left the area out of fear of being killed. Upon

being shown a sequential photo lineup, Phenelon was unable to identify the front passenger as Goa. He identified a "filler photograph" of a random person unrelated to the incident. Demetrius Walker stated he was asleep in the backseat when the shooting started. However, he confirmed the front seat passenger was the only occupant outside of the car shooting at the officers. He also stated that when the shooting started, he heard the police officers say, "He got a gun! He got a gun!" and "He's running." Walker stated he saw the front seat passenger run away from the car. He did not identify anyone after being presented with a lineup that included a photograph of Goa.

Detectives Eugene and Coppet provided statements at the scene that were limited to the issue of the identity of the shooter. Detective Coppet positively identified Goa as the shooter, while Detective Eugene was unable to identify a photograph of the shooter. Both detectives provided additional detail during a pre-file conference in case number F17-5123 that after the traffic stop, the front passenger (Goa) exited the vehicle and fired at them and they returned fire. Ultimately, Goa pled guilty to both counts of Attempted Murder to a Law Enforcement Officer on November 16, 2017. He was sentenced to state prison.

### CONCLUSION

The role of the State Attorney in this investigation and in conducting this review is limited to determining whether a criminal violation of Florida law has occurred, whether any person may be held criminally responsible, and whether such criminal responsibility can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. The State Attorney does not establish agency policy, procedures, and training requirements. Nor does the State Attorney have any responsibility for determining disciplinary action or pursuing civil litigation in these matters. In other words, given the applicable law, the State Attorney's role is to determine whether the actions of Detective Eugene Coppet constitute a criminal act that can be proven beyond and to the exclusion of every reasonable doubt.

The undersigned Assistant State Attorneys have reviewed the entire Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) file regarding the Police Use of Force in this incident including all reports and statements. We find the FDLE summary and report to be complete thorough and consistent with the witness statements. We adopt and attach the FDLE Investigative Summary report to this memorandum and offer our conclusion based upon the results of our independent review of the evidence. In addition, we both responded to the scene of the police involved shooting on the night of the incident and attended witness interviews.

Detective Coppet heard a traffic collision and saw an Impala separate from the other vehicle and drive away from the scene with smoke coming from the engine compartment. Detective Coppet and Detective Eugene had a lawful basis to stop the vehicle occupied by Goa when it left the scene of a property damage accident. When they located the Impala nearby, they conducted a traffic stop by activating the emergency lights on their unmarked Dodge Charger. The detectives then exited their vehicle wearing protective vests with the word "police" across the front and back of the vests.

The driver of the Chevy Impala, Wently Phenelon, initially stopped his vehicle in response to the police vehicle lights. The rear passenger, Demetrius Walker, exited and lay down on the ground. The front passenger, Goa, exited the Impala, raised his arms, and then starting shooting with a pistol, over the hood of the Impala, at Detective Eugene and Detective Coppet. A neighbor, Luis Berrios, who was

looking out his window, saw someone shooting at the police officers. The detectives returned fire. Goa started running in the same direction in which Sgt. Corey Jones had arrived. Sgt. Jones saw Goa with his arm extended behind him still pointing the firearm toward Detective Eugene and Detective Coppet as he ran away from them. Sgt. Jones confronted Goa. Goa lay down on the ground, and threw his firearm to the side.

A 9mm Sig Sauer pistol was recovered on the ground near Goa. The pistol's slide was locked back, which is consistent with running out of ammunition. The pistol has a seventeen (17) round capacity and it was out of ammunition. This might explain why Goa submitted to Sgt. Jones. There were numerous strike marks on the officers' Dodge Charger. Three (3) of the fired casings from the scene matched the 9mm firearm possessed by Goa. These three (3) casings were recovered on the ground south of where the Charger had three projectile entry holes, and were consistent with being fired from that location at the police vehicle. Another recovered casing could have been fired in Goa's pistol based upon class characteristics, but it was too damaged to permit a more conclusive determination.

Wently Phenelon drove the damaged Impala away from the shooting scene to a nearby gas station where he was stopped by detectives and surrendered. In his sworn statement, Phenelon said when he initially stopped his vehicle, "Big D" (Demetrius Walker) exited the rear seat. Phenelon said the front passenger (Goa) exited the Impala and just started shooting at the police officers, so he drove away. Both Detective Coppet and Detective Goa said the front passenger got out and opened fire on them. Detective Coppet positively identified Goa as the front passenger who exited the vehicle firing at Detective Coppet and him. Sgt. Jones positively identified Goa as subject he saw with the firearm pointed at the other detectives.

Goa pled guilty to two counts of attempted armed second-degree murder of a law enforcement officer in case number F17-5123, and violation of his probation in case number F15-7208. He was sentenced to prison for those offenses. Florida Statute section 776.012 provides that every person has the right to use deadly force in order to protect themselves or others from a reasonable threat of imminent death or great bodily harm. This statute applies with equal force to police officers. Therefore, Detective Eugene and Detective Coppet were legally justified in discharging their firearms at Goa in self-defense under Florida Statute 776.012. Additionally, Florida Statute section 776.05 provides that a police officer may use any degree of force reasonably necessary to defend themselves from bodily harm in making an arrest. Detective Eugene and Detective Coppet were legally justified in using deadly force to arrest Goa.

Prepared by:

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Alejandra Lopez  
Assistant State Attorney



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Reid Rubin  
Assistant State Attorney