



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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Colorado's 4th Judicial District - Serving El Paso & Teller Counties

March 31, 2025 Officer Involved Shooting

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Colorado's 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the officer-involved shooting that occurred on March 31, 2025, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 16-2.5-301 peace officer-involved shooting investigations protocol, all officer-involved shootings that result in injury or death shall be reviewed by a multi-agency team: A Deadly Force Investigation Team.

On March 31, 2025, at approximately 2:20 p.m., officers with the Colorado Springs Police Department were dispatched to the 100 block of North Nevada Avenue in response to a call for service from a civilian who reported a man was stealing items out of vehicles parked in the lot behind City Rock. The reporting party told dispatch he had confronted the suspect and that, in response, the suspect pointed a gun at him.

Multiple other witnesses also called dispatch to report seeing a man break into multiple cars.

Colorado Springs Police Department Officers began arriving on scene at 2:31 p.m. and quickly located the suspect, later identified as Nathaniel Altman, rummaging through a white Toyota RAV4.

Officers noted multiple civilians were present in and around the parking lot. They worked quickly to try to detain Mr. Altman, by first issuing multiple verbal commands for him to show his hands, but Mr. Altman did not comply. Officers also clearly announced to Mr. Altman that he was under arrest.



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Colorado Springs Police Officer Carlos Pittman arrived on scene at 2:32 p.m. and was tasked with providing long-range, lethal cover for fellow law enforcement officers. Officer Pittman checked his initial vantage point and determined his backdrop was unsafe for innocent bystanders in the area. He repositioned himself to ensure a better angle on the suspect and a safer backdrop.

Meanwhile, officers closer to Mr. Altman visually confirmed he was in possession of a firearm. They continued to issue verbal commands that he show his hands. Mr. Altman refused to comply and, still carrying a gun, started to run away from law enforcement, towards Pikes Peak Avenue. His path veered in the direction of an occupied vehicle. In the meantime, additional bystanders had gathered in the area where Mr. Altman was running.



Image: Image of suspect holding a loaded firearm.

At that time, CSPD Officer Michael Jelmo yelled, “He’s got a gun! He’s got a gun!” Mr. Altman continued to run. Seeing the immediate threat the suspect had created for the individual located inside the parked car as well as to the civilians nearby, Officer Pittman fired his weapon three times. Mr. Altman was struck by two rounds and fell to the ground, onto his chest. Once officers determined the threat had been neutralized, they immediately began to render medical aid. Despite life-saving efforts, Mr. Altman died on scene.

Officers recovered Mr. Altman’s firearm, a Beretta BU9 Nano, loaded with one round in the chamber and an additional five rounds in the magazine.

The El Paso County Coroner’s Office later ruled Nathaniel Altman died as the result of two gunshot wounds caused by bullets fired by Officer Pittman. A toxicology report revealed Mr. Altman also had illegal narcotics in his system at the time of his death.

All CSPD officers involved had their body worn cameras activated, and their recordings of this incident were successfully downloaded in their entirety. All BWC recordings are incorporated into this report by reference as video evidence of the facts.



Image: The suspect's Beretta BU9 Nano recovered by CSPD officers.

Post-Shoot Interviews

Aside from the facts outlined above, there were multiple relevant statements made by law enforcement officers during their post-shoot interview.

Officer Carlos Pittman, a certified Designated Marksman, has been employed by the Colorado Springs Police Department since September of 2021.

In a post-shooting interview conducted by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, Officer Pittman stated, "I see him running with the gun. I immediately see it, uh unoccupied truck in front of him, but to his immediate right, there is an occupied vehicle with two people in there. And there's multiple people in the direction of travel he's going."

Further, Officer Pittman said, "I believe that he was a threat. He could have killed those guys in the vehicles or the individuals, the bystanders that were on the, the street because of how packed it was - or one of us."

Officer Pittman also spoke to his belief of the imminent danger that had been created at the scene, stating, "As he was running, I saw the civilians. I 100 percent believe he was going to engage the civilians or the officers. And was going to cause more of a mass casualty incident. Life, uh, the life risk was too high. I was more concerned about the civilian populace being shot or a hostage situation or one of us getting shot at that point. He put his life above everybody else and disregarded all our legal authority, all our commands."

Analysis

CRS 18-1-704, Use of physical force in defense of a person, defines each person's right to defend themselves against the use, or the imminent use, of unlawful physical force by another person.

This statute states, in relevant part:

A person is justified in using physical force upon another person in order to defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the use of unlawful physical force by that other person, and he may use a degree of force which he reasonably believes to be necessary for that purpose. Deadly physical force may be used only if a person reasonably believes a lesser degree of force is inadequate and the actor has a reasonable ground to believe, and does believe, that he or another person is in imminent danger of being killed or of receiving great bodily injury.

The facts relevant to analysis under this standard of review include that Officer Carlos Pittman was a sworn peace officer employed by and carrying out his official duties on behalf of the Colorado Springs Police Department, a law enforcement agency. All officers involved in this incident were in official police uniforms and driving fully marked police patrol vehicles.

The initial information Officer Pittman had received was that an armed male suspect was confronted by a citizen as the suspect was breaking into cars. The citizen reported that the suspect pointed a firearm at him. These initial facts satisfy the elements of Menacing, a felony.

When officers advised Mr. Altman he was under arrest, he began running from police with a gun in his right hand. Mr. Altman ran directly toward an occupied vehicle in the parking lot. Officer Pittman also observed multiple bystanders in the general direction the suspect was running.

Officer Pittman had an objectively reasonable belief that the suspect posed an imminent threat to cause serious bodily injury or death to either the occupants of the vehicle or one or more of the numerous bystanders.

CRS 18-1-707, Use of force by peace officers, dictates a peace officer's duty to use only a degree of force consistent with the minimization of injury to others.

This statute states, in relevant part,

(1) Peace officers, in carrying out their duties, shall apply nonviolent means, when possible, before resorting to the use of physical force. A peace officer may use physical force only if nonviolent means would be ineffective in effecting an arrest, preventing an escape, or preventing an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the peace officer or another person. A peace officer is justified in using deadly physical force to make an arrest only when all other means of apprehension are unreasonable given the circumstances and:

(a) The arrest is for a felony involving conduct including the use or threatened use of deadly physical force; [and] The suspect poses an immediate threat to the peace officer or another person; [and]

(b) The force employed does not create a substantial risk of injury to other persons.

The facts relevant to analysis under this standard of review include that a lesser degree of physical force would have been inadequate. The speed at which Mr. Altman was running, in combination with the distance (20 to 30 feet) created between himself and Officer Pittman, would have made the use of a less-lethal option, such as a taser, impracticable and ineffective.

Further, the force Officer Pittman employed did not create a substantial risk of injury or death to other people. His backdrop was an unoccupied vehicle.

CRS 18-1-707 (4.5) dictates that, when using deadly force, a peace officer must believe a threat to his/her personal safety, or the safety of a third party would be otherwise unavoidable.

This subsection states:

(4.5) Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, a peace officer is justified in using deadly force if the peace officer has an objectively reasonable belief that a lesser degree of force is inadequate and the peace officer has objectively reasonable grounds to believe, and does believe, that he or another person is in imminent danger of being killed or of receiving serious bodily injury.

Given the totality of the circumstances, Officer Pittman had an objectively reasonable belief that a lesser degree of force would be inadequate to address the threat posed by the suspect. Officer Pittman knew Mr. Altman had previously pointed a gun directly at someone who confronted him about his criminal activities in the parking lot and therefore was willing and able to utilize the firearm in his possession in furtherance of his objectives. In this case, Mr. Altman's objective was to evade capture and arrest by police. It was objectively reasonable for Officer Pittman to believe any lesser use of force would be inadequate to stop the suspect seriously injuring or killing a civilian.

Officer Pittman did have objectively reasonable grounds to believe, and did believe, that Mr. Altman posed an imminent danger of causing death or serious bodily injury to another person. Officer Pittman objectively believed that Mr. Altman posed an imminent threat to the people in the occupied vehicle he was running toward, and secondarily, was a threat to the bystanders in his general direction of travel.

Conclusion

After completing a thorough review of the facts and evidence, Colorado's 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office has determined the use of deadly physical force by Colorado Springs Police Officer Carlos Pittman on March 31, 2025, was justified, based on all the facts and circumstances of this case under the laws of the State of Colorado. No charges will be filed based on the statutes outlined previously, as well as the necessary application of ethical rules.

Note to the Media: All updates will only come from Communications when available.

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