

Weber County Attorney rules 2 Ogden police - Standard-Examiner (Ogden, UT) - March 15, 2019

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OGDEN — The Weber County Attorney has ruled that two Ogden Police officers were justified when they shot and killed a man who charged at officers with a rock after fleeing from police in November.

In a letter dated March 5, county attorney Christopher Allred told Ogden Police Chief Randy Watt that officers Brandon Sevenski and Tyson Embley acted within their rights when they shot 33-year-old **Christopher William Parrish** on Nov. 9, 2018.

The report indicates the incident began when Ogden Police Officer Jordan Gustin was approached by a man at a Walmart located at 1959 Wall Ave. in Ogden. The man told Gustin that he was approached by another man — who was identified as Parrish — in the parking lot who challenged him to a fight in an "extremely confrontational manner," according to the report.

After the confrontation, Parrish walked into the Walmart. The man entered the store as well and reported the incident to employees. Parrish was reportedly still in the store when the man told Gustin about the incident.

The man also gave Gustin a description of Parrish's pickup, which pulled into the southbound lanes of Wall Avenue before Gustin initiated a traffic stop. The vehicle turned west onto 21st Street and came to a stop.

Gustin asked him about the confrontation in the parking lot, and Parrish said it was the other man who was acting strange. Parrish also said that he did not have a drivers license on him, and identified himself as "Adam McCoy."

The report notes that Parrish was cooperative at the beginning of the traffic stop, but became agitated and aggressive when asked again about his identity. Parrish claimed he was being harassed and slid over to the passenger seat of the pickup. Gustin asked for his social security number to confirm his identity, to which Parrish said he didn't know the number.

Gustin then asked Parrish to step out of the car. Parrish motioned to the driver's side as if he was complying, but instead started the pickup, put it in gear and drove away. A witness to the traffic stop said Parrish nearly hit Gustin with the pickup as he drove away.

The pickup went between 100-200 yards on 20th Street before sliding off the roadway while trying to make a turn and hitting a guide wire and fence.

Gustin drove to where the pickup crashed and radioed for additional patrol units, saying the suspect was out of the pickup and running away. At some point, Gustin briefly turned off his body

camera to review the footage, then turned it back on.

Embley arrived in the area of 20th Street shortly after Gustin said over the radio the suspect had crashed the car and was on foot.

OPD Officer Jarrad Pullam pulled up next to Embley's car and the two later found Parrish lying against a dirt pile south of the car crash. They both commanded Parrish to show his hands. Parrish picked up a rock, stood up and responded with "f- — you guys" before running away from officers going south through a field.

Pullam and Embley went after Parrish, who ran south across 21st Street and south on Union Avenue into a wooded area just west of Union. Parrish circled back around north toward the officers. Sevenski came from the west in his marked patrol car and stopped on the south curb of 21st Street with his car pointing to the southeast.

When Sevenski parked his police lights were on, which helped him identify the man he was seeing as the same man who fled from police moments before. He then got out of his vehicle.

As Parrish circled around to the north, Pullam told Embley that "he's coming for you." Embley, who had his gun drawn with a flashlight attached to it, found Parrish kneeling behind a fencepost. He again commanded Parrish to show him his hands, and Parrish began moving toward Embley in a fighting stance. Embley then holstered his gun and pulled out a Taser. He then shot the Taser at Parrish, who was roughly 20 feet away, and the Taser was ineffective, the report said.

Embley then pulled out his gun once again. During an interview with investigators, Embley said he estimated that Parrish was roughly 3 to 7 feet from Sevenski when he "reared his arm back" with the rock in his hand. Fearing for Sevenski's life, Embley said he shot one time at Parrish, who fell face first into a patch of grass with his hands laying under him.

Sevenski said during his interview that he got out of his car and heard the Taser deploy, but it was not effective. At this time, he observed Parrish walking slowly and appearing agitated, as if "he was no longer trying to get away."

When he exited his car, Parrish saw him and began running toward him. Sevenski then saw the rock in Parrish's right hand, prompting him to pull out his gun. Sevenski then moved in a "C type pattern" because he was afraid that if he used his gun he'd be shooting in the direction of other officers.

Sevenski described Parrish as being "in an attack mode" and was no longer trying to get away. Parrish continued to run toward Sevenski when the officer fired his gun four times, causing Parrish to fall to the ground. Sevenski said Parrish was roughly six feet away from him when he began shooting. He said he thought Embley had fired shots, but did not know how many times.

When Parrish went down, his hands were covered by his body. A K9 unit was at the scene during the chase and shooting, and the K9 dragged the man by his jacket until his hands were visible. Officers then handcuffed Parrish and checked for a pulse. Parrish was pronounced dead at the scene.

The report said that Sevenski was wearing a body camera, but he was not able to turn it on until after the shooting took place. Embley was not wearing a body camera at the time of the shooting. The report says that Pullam and Gustin were wearing body cameras and recording at the time of the shooting.

Included in the report is an autopsy summary from the Utah State Medical Examiner's Office, who recovered a bullet in Parrish's right chest wall as well as bullet fragments from his left thigh. The report does not say how many times Parrish was shot or which bullet caused his death.

The medical examiner also found tattoos "on most of the body, legs, hands, arms, chest and torso, neck and head." Two such tattoos included a "White Pride" tattoo on his neck and a swastika tattoo on his right lower torso.

Over a week after the shooting, police received a call from one of Parrish's family members who said that Parrish had been in Arizona for the past 8-10 years and was originally from Oregon. She also said that Parrish did not want to go back to jail and she thought he was living with a friend in Ogden.

The woman's husband, Parrish's brother, questioned why the police killed his brother "because he had a rock?"

Ogden Police Chief Randy Watt said Thursday that both Embley and Sevenski returned to work on Dec. 20 and Jan. 1, respectively.

Allred's decision comes weeks after the rulings on two other Ogden police shootings were made public, as well as a decision made in Davis County regarding a police shooting in Clinton.

The county attorney's office ruled in early February the two other 2018 shootings that took place Nov. 30 and Dec. 4 were justified, resulting in the deaths of 37-year-old Richard Galvan and 18-year-old Ogden resident Anthony Borden-Cortez, respectively.

The Davis County Attorney's Office determined in December they would decline to prosecute Sgt. David Skinner of the Syracuse Police Department, who was the only officer listed who fired shots at 64-year-old Allen Scott Culpepper, a Clinton resident.