

# 2 officers cleared in fatal shooting

Sawyer, Liz . Star Tribune ; Minneapolis, Minn. [Minneapolis, Minn]04 Jan 2019: B.1.

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## FULL TEXT

Two Minneapolis police officers who fatally shot a suicidal north Minneapolis man carrying a large kitchen knife during a mental health call in November will not face criminal charges, Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman announced Thursday.

Officers Ryan Keyes and Neal Walsh fired eight times at Travis Jordan, 36, after he emerged from his house in the 3700 block of Morgan Avenue N. armed with a 13½-inch Chefmate knife and refused orders to drop the weapon, authorities said. Body camera footage showed them pleading with him to drop the knife before he lunged at them and they shot him.

"I express my heartfelt condolences to Mr. Jordan's family and to his girlfriend over his tragic death," Freeman said in a prepared statement. "However, in reviewing all of the evidence gathered by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, including video from the officers' body cameras, it was clear, at that moment, Mr. Jordan presented a real danger to the officers. Under Minnesota law, they were justified in using deadly force."

Jordan's girlfriend called 911 just before 2 p.m. on Nov. 9 to report that he was threatening to commit suicide. She had spoken to him 15 minutes earlier when he said he wanted to die, according to an eight-page report from the BCA.

Keyes and Walsh were sent to the home, where they knocked on the front door but got no response. Keyes approached the back of the house and saw Jordan in the kitchen. Keyes shone his flashlight through the window and was greeted with an obscene gesture, the report says.

Body camera footage shows the officers trying to speak with Jordan, who responded with expletives. Keyes noted to a dispatcher that his speech was slurred.

Keyes then spotted him through the front porch window, armed with a knife.

"Put the knife down, dude, drop the knife, dude," both repeatedly commanded, as Jordan responded with expletives. Jordan then opened the front door.

"Do not come outside. Drop the knife," Walsh said.

"Come on, let's do this!" Jordan said.

"Drop the knife, dude, I do not want to do this," Walsh said. "Put it down, come on."

"Do this!" Jordan responded. "[Expletive] do it!"

"No. I do not want to do this," Walsh said. "Put the knife down and we'll come out and talk."

Jordan then walked toward them, repeatedly screaming, "Let's do this!" The officers took a few steps back before they fired.

Jordan was immediately handcuffed before they rendered aid. "I'm sorry," Jordan said to them, moaning.

Paramedics took him to North Memorial Health Hospital in Robbinsdale, where he died.

"Officers Walsh and Keyes' use of deadly force was objectively reasonable in the face of the danger of death or great bodily harm and no criminal charges could or should be made," Freeman concluded.

Investigators later searched the home and found a notebook in his room with a message written to the homeowner. "Paul, I'm so sorry this happened at your house," it said.

In the days following the shooting, Jordan's family members questioned why the officers didn't use a Taser instead of bullets to subdue someone who appeared to only be a threat to himself.

In the mind of Jordan's cousin, Malia Nzara, his death exposed the criminal justice system's shortcomings in dealing with those battling mental illness.

"Travis was a loving and caring person who was in crisis. This is what a person in crisis looks like," Nzara said. "He needed help; that's why we called 911. They shot him and now he's dead. It's obvious systemic change needs to happen in regards to police training."

According to court records and family members, Jordan had a history of mental health issues and had been committed to a treatment facility after he began drinking heavily and started having problems at work.

The shooting renewed calls from some City Council members for better police responses to mental health crises, namely an expansion of the department's mental health co-responder program, which pairs officers with counselors on calls involving individuals in the midst of a crisis.

Jordan, who went by "TJ," was a native of Maui, Hawaii. Family members plan to hold a private ceremony there next month to spread his ashes.

Mayor Jacob Frey extended his condolences to the Jordan family Thursday before reminding the community that his life "meant far more than the final moments captured on the tape released today."

"It is clear that we as a society are consistently falling short for those with mental health illnesses," Frey added.

Police Chief Medaria Arradondo said that the "devastating" outcome was not one anyone had hoped for.

"These two officers who took an oath to serve their community would never have wanted this outcome to be a part of their duties on that day," said Arradondo, who vowed to ensure that his officers continue receiving crisis intervention and de-escalation training.

Both officers, who have been with the department just over one year, remain on standard administrative leave, said police spokesman John Elder.

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## DETAILS

<b>Subject:</b>	Fatalities; Criminal investigations; Deadly force; Mental health care; Camcorders; Mental disorders
<b>Location:</b>	Hawaii Minnesota
<b>People:</b>	Arradondo, Medaria
<b>Publication title:</b>	Star Tribune; Minneapolis, Minn.
<b>First page:</b>	B.1
<b>Publication year:</b>	2019
<b>Publication date:</b>	Jan 4, 2019
<b>Section:</b>	NEWS
<b>Publisher:</b>	Star Tribune Media Company LLC
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Minneapolis, Minn.
<b>Country of publication:</b>	United States, Minneapolis, Minn.

<b>Publication subject:</b>	General Interest Periodicals--United States
<b>ISSN:</b>	08952825
<b>Source type:</b>	Newspapers
<b>Language of publication:</b>	English
<b>Document type:</b>	News
<b>ProQuest document ID:</b>	2163268249
<b>Document URL:</b>	<a href="https://search.proquest.com/docview/2163268249?accountid=14026">https://search.proquest.com/docview/2163268249?accountid=14026</a>
<b>Copyright:</b>	Copyright Star Tribune Media Company LLC Jan 4, 2019
<b>Last updated:</b>	2019-01-04
<b>Database:</b>	Global Newsstream

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