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1. [Official: Officers were justified in fatal shooting](#)

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Official: Officers were justified in fatal shooting

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Body

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Two police officers were justified in fatally shooting a distraught man who was holding a pistol to his head by the side of a busy interstate with cars going by, Vermont's top law enforcement officer said Friday.

Attorney General T.J. Donovan released the results of his office's investigation into the Feb. 11 death of 42-year-old **Benjamin Gregware**, of Sheldon. He was shot multiple times by a state police trooper and a Richmond officer after he refused orders to drop his weapon, a high-powered machine pistol that was later found to be loaded with the safety off.

"It was a dynamic situation," Donovan said during a Friday news conference in Burlington. "This was done on Interstate 89 in Richmond with people coming home from skiing. And we are lucky there was not more of a tragedy that day."

The number of police shootings in Vermont has gone up this decade, but officials aren't sure why.

"It certainly feels like we are doing more of these press conferences than we have in the past," Donovan said.

Following a number of police shootings, including a bank robbery suspect shot by multiple officers on the grounds of Montpelier High School while students were inside, Vermont police said they would update their use-of-force policies and practices. They are also considering additional non-lethal means of subduing suspects and ways to address what's described as a mental health crisis in the state.

The Richmond shooting was the third fatal shooting in five months involving state police trooper Christopher Brown, including the shooting at Montpelier High School in January.

Brown was placed on administrative duty shortly after Gregware's death. At the Friday news conference State Police Col. Matthew Birmingham said officials would assess Brown's current status.

State police spokesman Adam Silverman said that Brown would return to full duty on Monday and would be assigned to safety programs, which covers traffic services and recreation enforcement and education for activities such as boating and snowmobiling.

The Richmond officer is back at work.

Classification

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