

Report: Details released in deputy shooting of - Chanhassen Villager (MN) - October 11, 2018

October 11, 2018 | Chanhassen Villager (MN) | Alex Chhith

CHANHASSEN — The Carver County Attorney's Office has declined to press charges against two Carver County Sheriff deputies who killed a 16-year-old Chanhassen boy on July 13.

Archer Amorosi died in the yard of his home after he was shot by Cpl. Jake Hodge and Deputy Travis Larson, according to the Attorney's Office 33-page report on the case. Amorosi would have been in his junior year at Minnetonka High School.

The Carver County Attorney's Office reviewed reports, transcribed statements, autopsy, toxicological findings, squad videos, audio statements and a single body camera video involved in the incident, used by South Lake Minnetonka Police Officer Sgt. James Williams. Carver County Sheriff's Office deputies do not use body cameras.

"Because the use of deadly force under the facts of this case is justified under Minnesota law, the CCAO is declining to charge either officer with a crime," stated an Attorney's Office press release.

GARAGE

Carver County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to the scene at about 10 a.m., after receiving a report from Archer's mother that he was being destructive. She told deputies that they would need multiple officers.

"When asked by the 911 dispatcher if she thought her son would hurt the officers, Ms. Amorosi replied, 'Yes, I do. He wants them, he wants to have (inaudible) like a showdown with police,'" according to the report.

Archer had locked the garage door, leaving his mother no way of escape. The garage door guide track had been bent and a large riding mower was parked in front of the service door. While trapped, she told Deputy Eric Wolf that Archer had an Airsoft gun.

"However, Deputy Wolf was 'not 100 percent sure' if Archer was holding an Airsoft gun," the report stated.

Deputy Larson attempted to open the garage from the front of the home.

"Finding the release cord inoperable, Deputy Larson then went to the rear of the home and attempted to kick in the service door. In taking this action, Deputy Larson saw Archer pointing a gun at him, but now through a rear window that also overlooked the garage service door," the report stated. "Because glare from this window prevented Deputy Larson from clearly seeing Archer's actions, Deputy Larson broke out this rear window with his baton."

He then saw him standing near the kitchen counter and shot his pepper spray to incapacitate and temporarily blind him, according to the report. Then he shot his Taser, but missed. He put in a new cartridge and meanwhile, Archer ran out of the home.

Cpl. Hodge then took a full-size ax from his squad car and forced open the garage service door.

SHOTS

Archer ran out of the house with a gun and 14-inch-long hatchet, according to the report.

"Archer was continually pointing the gun at deputies at the scene. Deputies gave repeated, loud commands to Archer to drop the gun," it stated.

"In an attempt to defuse the situation, Deputy Larson yelled out to Archer that 'I know your gun is a fake!' and to put it on the ground and that he, Deputy Larson, did not want to shoot Archer," the report stated. "Archer yelled back 'You don't want to (expletive) see if this gun's real or not, you don't want to find out. You know, shoot me, shoot me, I'm gonna kill you!'"

While outside, Archer ran past Cpl. Baker, who shot him with his Taser near the end of the driveway. Archer fell to the ground, but before officers could approach, he "leapt back up."

He ran to one side of the yard and then turned back and ran toward the home. He ran at a full sprint toward Deputy Hodge and said 'I'm gonna kill you,' according to Larson's testimony in the report. In that moment, both Hodge and Larson fired multiple times at Archer.

Another deputy reported Archer had the hatchet over his head like he was about to strike.

The BCA recovered 10 shell cases from the yard, "However, because it cannot be ascertained to an absolute certainty that all shell casings were recovered, it remains possible that more than 10 shots were fired," according to a footnote in the report.

Hodge heard over the radio the gun was Airsoft, but could not see an orange tip. Williams said he "understood it might have been an Airsoft gun, but nobody was certain." The gun looked real to Williams, the report stated.

A BB gun was recovered near Archer's body, according to the report. After he was shot, Sgt. Williams applied handcuffs.

Archer's last text message was sent to his father at 10:13 a.m. during the incident.

"I love you," it said.

PREVIOUS DAY

Amorosi's mother told the BCA that Archer never threatened her and thought the deputies were going to take Archer for a medical exam.

"I was worried that he wanted the police to hurt him," she said, according to the report.

Deputies responded to the home the day before the shooting. Archer's father, Don Amorosi, called deputies, citing that Archer had a mental health break down, according to the report. He said the crisis center told them the deputies would escort him to the hospital.

Archer had not been taking his medications and had locked the family out of the home, according to the report. Cpl. Baker de-escalated the situation and Don told them he did not want to force Archer to go in for an evaluation, the report stated.

ANALYSIS

The Carver County Attorney's Office hired Ron Schwint, an independent use-of-force expert for an opinion into the case. He worked as a law enforcement officer with the Sioux Falls Police Department for 21 years before retiring as a field supervisor.

Schwint said the actions of the deputies were "objectively reasonable and used a great deal of restraint in their application of force against Archer," according to the report.

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