

Prosecutor: Force justified in '18 shooting - - Press of Atlantic City, The (NJ) - July 18, 2019 - page 3A

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BRIDGETON - Millville police were justified in the use of force in the January 2018 fatal shooting of a city man, the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office said Monday.

Police shot **Edward Gandy Jr.**, 47, of Dock Street, on Jan. 22, 2018, at High and McNeal streets. Three officers were involved in the shooting, one of whom fired his gun. Prosecutor Jennifer Webb-McRae did not release the names of the three officers involved.

The actions and the statement of the officer who shot Gandy demonstrate he was in fear for his life and believed discharging his weapon was necessary for the protection of himself and the other officer who was first on the scene, Webb-McRae said.

"The Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office determined that it is not necessary to present this matter to the grand jury because there were no material facts in dispute regarding the lawfulness of the use of force," Webb-McRae said in a statement.

At 10:51 a.m., two officers responded to High and McNeal streets for a report that Gandy was in the area and was armed with a gun.

At the time the dispatch was received, police, including the officer who fired his gun, were familiar with Gandy from a recent standoff in which Gandy was armed with a knife and acting erratically.

Gandy had reportedly been involved in other incidents that prompted police response for an emotionally disturbed person, Webb-McRae said.

Additional records show Gandy was admitted to the crisis unit at Inspira Health Center Bridgeton on Nov. 15, 25 and 28, 2017, after an incident at the Millville Walgreens.

In the Jan. 22 incident, Gandy contacted 911 and said several times he had a handgun, that the gun was loaded and that he was "feeling homicidal," Webb-McRae said.

As the two officers approached High and McNeal streets from south on High Street, they observed Gandy on the northwest corner. A third officer pulled up to the scene behind them and observed Gandy on the northwest corner.

Almost immediately upon the two officers exiting their vehicle, Gandy started advancing toward them, walking quickly with his hands behind his back.

As Gandy reached the area near the front of the patrol vehicle, he quickly extended both hands from behind his back to what is commonly known as a two-handed shooting position, while holding

what appeared to all three officers to be a handgun.

The object all three officers were referring to and believed was a gun was later determined to be Gandy's cellphone.

Gandy's actions forced all three officers to duck behind the patrol vehicle for cover, temporarily losing sight of Gandy, Webb-McRae said.

Gandy continued to advance toward the officers, at which time one of the first two officers on the scene fired his rifle three times, Webb-McRae said.

An autopsy performed Jan. 23, 2018, determined Gandy's cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.

The Prosecutor's Office investigation consisted of witness interviews, record documentation, surveillance review, police motor vehicle recording review, and the collection and analysis of forensic evidence, Webb-McRae said.

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