



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Michael T. Dougherty, District Attorney

July 8, 2024

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Jeff Satur, Chief of Police  
Zach Ardis, Public Safety Chief  
Longmont Police Department  
Public Safety Department  
Longmont, Colorado

**Re: Investigation and legal analysis of the use of force against Lorenzo Richardson on May 8, 2024, involving Master Police Officer Kristopher Ford of the Longmont Police Department, at 1303 Coffman Street, Longmont, County of Boulder, Colorado.**

Dear Chief Satur and Chief Ardis:

The investigation and legal analysis of the non-fatal shooting of Lorenzo Richardson on May 8, 2024, involving Longmont Police Department Master Police Officer Kristopher Ford (hereinafter "Officer Ford") is complete.

The Boulder County Investigation Team, also known as the Boulder Critical Incident Team ("BCIT"), investigated this case. The multi-agency team is designated to investigate use-of-force incidents in which any law enforcement officer within the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District uses deadly, or potentially deadly, physical force against a person while acting under the color of official law enforcement duties. This definition and team protocol are broader than that required by state law, which is limited to incidents involving the discharge of a firearm by a peace officer that results in injury or death.

I want to acknowledge the Longmont Police Department ("LPD") for notifying the BCIT following the incident. By doing so, LPD enabled the BCIT to respond and investigate the use of

force by LPD officers. Consistent with Boulder County protocol, LPD did not participate in this use-of-force investigation involving Officer Ford. LPD Detectives remained involved in the investigation only to the extent potential felony menacing, assault, violation of protection order, and domestic violence charges were warranted for Mr. Richardson's actions prior to law enforcement's use of force. Consistent with protocol and statute, LPD remains legally responsible for enforcing any criminal violations which took place prior to the officers using force against an individual.

This BCIT investigation was conducted for the purpose of determining whether criminal charges are warranted against Officer Ford for the use of force against Lorenzo Richardson (DOB:08/08/1994) on May 8, 2024, within the City of Longmont. The investigation and review of this incident does not evaluate nor review the appropriateness of police tactics or whether policies and procedures were followed. The Longmont Police Department will be responsible for conducting the review of police tactics and the tactical response by your officers.

My decision, based on criminal law standards, does not limit administrative action by LPD or any civil action where less stringent laws, rules, and levels of proof would apply. The authority and role of the District Attorney is to determine solely whether Officer Ford committed a criminal offense that can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

### **BACKGROUND**

The BCIT completed an investigation into this incident and generated detailed reports and documentation. The file is voluminous and includes recorded witness interviews, police communications, reports, photographs, and video recordings related to the incident.

A review of the reports and documentation filed with my office has been completed and I, along with members of my staff, have been fully briefed regarding this incident by Team Commanders in charge of the investigation. I conclude that, under the applicable Colorado law, no criminal charges can or should be filed against Officer Ford. He did not commit any crime that could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

My findings, analysis, and conclusions of law with respect to Officer Ford's use of force in this incident are as follows:

### **SUMMARY OF DECISION**

Under Section 20-1-114(1), C.R.S., "The district attorney shall, if no criminal charges are filed following the completion of an investigation pursuant to section 16-2.5-301, C.R.S., release a report and publicly disclose the report explaining the district attorney's findings, including the basis for the decision not to charge the officer with any criminal conduct. The district attorney shall post the written report on its website or, if it does not have a website, make it publicly available upon request."

The discharge of a firearm in this case did result in significant injury to Lorenzo Richardson and therefore this report is mandated by C.R.S. §20-1-114(1) and C.R.S. §16-2.5-301. Additionally, as District Attorney, I believe this report is essential to inform the public of the nature and reasons for my decision. The release of this report furthers the interests of transparency and explains the circumstances under which the law enforcement officer(s) fired their weapons and are not criminally liable. Also, as you are aware, our office conducts a Community Town Hall after every officer-involved shooting to fully address any questions from community members.

This report is not, however, to be construed as commentary on the criminal charges pending against Lorenzo Richardson, who has been charged with five (5) counts of felony menacing, three (3) counts of assault on a first responder, one (1) count of assault, one (1) count of violation or protection order and one (1) count of obstructing a peace officer related to this incident. Those charges are merely accusations. Lorenzo Richardson (hereinafter “Richardson”) remains presumptively innocent of all the charges against him unless and until a jury finds him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Applying the applicable statutes to the facts presented through this investigation, Officer Ford is not subject to criminal prosecution for his actions because he reasonably concluded that it was necessary to use physical force to defend Reva Charles, Richardson’s girlfriend, and stop the threat that Richardson presented. Additionally, based on the facts and circumstances, Officer Ford’s use of force was reasonable and appropriate in response to the threat that Richardson posed.

In all cases, including those involving law enforcement officers, the District Attorney’s criminal filing standard requires that there be a reasonable likelihood of conviction to bring criminal charges against an individual. As in other cases prosecuted by this office, this legal and ethical requirement guides our analysis.

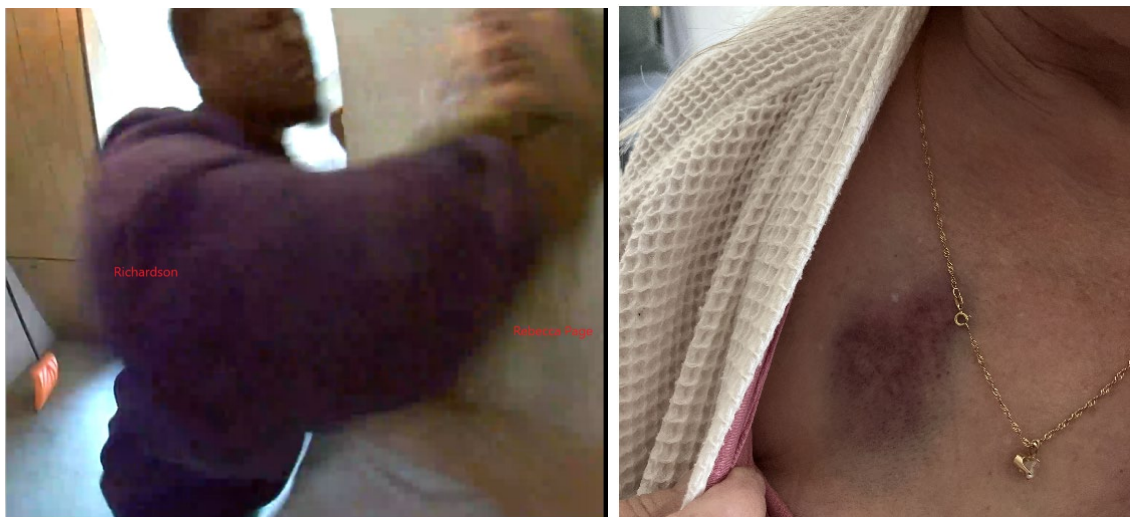
### **DETAILED STATEMENT OF FACTS**

The building located at 1303 Coffman Street, City of Longmont, is a multi-unit residential apartment building located on the corner of Mountain View and Coffman Street in the City of Longmont, Boulder County (the “Apartments”). The building contains four units: two on the first level, and two on the second level. Rebecca Page resides in Unit #2, located to the left in the image below. Reva Charles resides in Unit #1 along with her boyfriend, Richardson, located on the right in the image below (the “Apartment”).



*1303 Coffman Street, City of Longmont*

At 1:37 p.m. on May 8, 2024, Rebecca Page called 911 to report Richardson assaulted her outside of her apartment at 1303 Coffman Street. Ms. Page reported to the 911 dispatcher that just before the assault, she heard yelling and screaming coming from Unit #1, where Reva Charles resides along with Richardson. She stated she exited her apartment and knocked on Ms. Charles' door to make sure that everyone was okay. Richardson responded angrily and aggressively to Ms. Page and a verbal altercation ensued. Ms. Page challenged Richardson, which further angered him. Ms. Page reported that Richardson then opened his door, grabbed her, shoved her back into her apartment, and screamed "bitch" in her face. Ms. Page reported to dispatch that Richardson was back in the Apartment with Ms. Charles and "beating her ass right now." Richardson's assault on Ms. Page was captured on a Ring Camera.



*May 8, 2024: Ring camera footage of Richardson assaulting Rebecca Page and Ms. Page's injury from the assault*

Ms. Page reported to the dispatcher that there is a history of domestic violence between Richardson and Ms. Charles and that he "does this to her all the time." She relayed to the dispatcher that "he believes he is God" and that everybody needs to "get on their knees and ask him for redemption." Ms. Page also reported that Richardson had previously announced he would be violent with law enforcement. Specifically, she warned the dispatcher to "be prepared. He will kill the police if they come." Ms. Page asked the dispatcher if she could meet the police away from the

Apartments because she was “afraid there will be gunfire.” She then agreed to meet officers at the Walgreens located at 1041 Main Street, which is an approximate nine-minute walk from the Apartments. The dispatch-radio audio recording and associated computer-aided dispatch (CAD) report reflects Ms. Page’s report and warnings were aired at approximately 1:45 p.m., which Officer Kristopher Ford and the other responding officers heard over the radio.

At 1:46 p.m., Officer Ford initially aired he would respond to Walgreens to meet with the victim. Officer Jason McNulty and Officer Thomas Moyer are dispatched to the Apartments. Officer Ford also aired that Richardson is “Code 0 with multiple SWAT calls,” meaning officers should use caution with Richardson, and that SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) has responded to calls with Richardson in the past. In other words, the radio warning issued by Officer Ford aligns with the report made by Ms. Page that Richardson would be violent with law enforcement, and indicates that Officer Ford knew of Richardson’s violent tendencies and history.

At approximately 1:50 p.m., Officer Jason McNulty and Officer Kailynn Wolfe responded to the Walgreens and contacted Ms. Page and her caretaker. Ms. Page reported the details of the assault leading up to the law enforcement response and also relayed that Ms. Charles was very likely still in the Apartment. Officer Ford arrived at the Apartments at approximately 1:51 p.m.

At 1:52 p.m., Officers Cody Tweedy, Jesse Pollock, Jesse Schultz, Thomas Moyer (in plain clothes) and Sergeant Jason Pitts, responded to the location of the Apartments and staged on the north side of Mountain View Avenue in front of 612 Mountain View Avenue, just east of Coffman Street. Tactically, officers determined that Officer Tweedy would be armed with a Patriot Ordinance P-15 Rifle (lethal), and Officer Pollock would be armed with 40 mm less than lethal launcher containing sponge-tipped projectiles. The goal of the less-than-lethal launcher is to reduce the potential risk of escalation of an incident to the use of lethal force.



*40 mm less than lethal launcher*



*Sponge tip projectile from Officer Pollock’s  
40 mm less than lethal launcher*

At 1:55 p.m. Officer Ford aired over radio traffic for units at the Apartment to hold the perimeter until more information was known and whether there was probable cause for any crime.

At approximately 1:57, Officer Wolfe confirmed there is probable cause for Assault in the Third Degree on Richardson for his assault of Ms. Page.

At this point, radio traffic audio reflects that Officer Ford believed Ms. Charles was in contact with Officers at the Walgreens and that there was probable cause on Richardson for Assault in the Third Degree as an act of domestic violence. The Dispatcher however immediately corrected and notified Officer Ford at approximately 1:58 p.m. that the reporting party was the neighbor, not Richardson's girlfriend, and that the information known was that Ms. Charles is likely still in the Apartment.

At approximately 2:10 p.m. Officer Tweedy, Officer Pollock, Sgt. Pitts, Officer Schultz, and Officer Moyer (in plain clothes) observed a man matching the description of the party who had assaulted Ms. Page cross Mountain View Avenue to the south sidewalk and continue walking east, away from 1303 Coffman Street.



*Location of Officers Tweedy, Schultz, Moyer and Sgt. Pitts in relation to Lorenzo Richardson on Mountain View Avenue at approximately 2:10 p.m.*

Sergeant Pitts recognized this individual as Richardson, and officers then crossed Mountain View Avenue and attempted to contact him, ordering him to stop. Richardson refused. As Officer Tweedy approached Richardson, Richardson drew a large knife with his right hand. Officer Tweedy was approximately five feet away from Richardson when he drew the knife.



*Lorenzo Richardson reaching for knife five feet from Officer Tweedy*



*Lorenzo Richardson drawing large, sheathed knife as officers attempt to stop and speak to him.*

The knife was initially sheathed, but the sheath fell off the blade when Richardson brandished it, revealing an approximate seven-inch blade knuckle-handled knife. The knuckled handle allows the grip to fit around the fingers with holes through which the fingers slip. This type of knife allows the user to make a fist around the weapon and strike with the blade protruding from the knuckles.

Officers issued multiple commands to Richardson to drop the weapon; Richardson can be seen on body-worn camera (“BWC”) disregarding multiple orders to stop and drop the knife, and

instead began running from officers. Richardson then slows and walked across Mountain View Avenue to the north side of the street, knife still held visibly, vertically, and raised high. Officers continued to order him to drop the knife. Sergeant Pitts can be heard on BWC ordering that less lethal force be used to stop Richardson. As Richardson continued across the roadway, he can be heard on Officer Schultz's BWC saying, "Don't come near me, then! I got nothing!" as he continued to disregard commands to stop and drop the knife.



*Richardson refuses commands to stop and drop the knife which is circled in red.*

Due to Richardson's continued refusal to disarm, Officer Pollock discharged the first 40 mm less lethal round at Richardson. It was ineffective and failed to change Richardson's behavior. Officer Pollock then discharged a second and a third 40mm less lethal round upon Richardson. Both rounds also failed to change Richardson's behavior. Richardson then began sprinting west toward the Apartments. Officer Pollock issued a fourth and final 40 mm less-lethal round upon Richardson, but it was also ineffective.

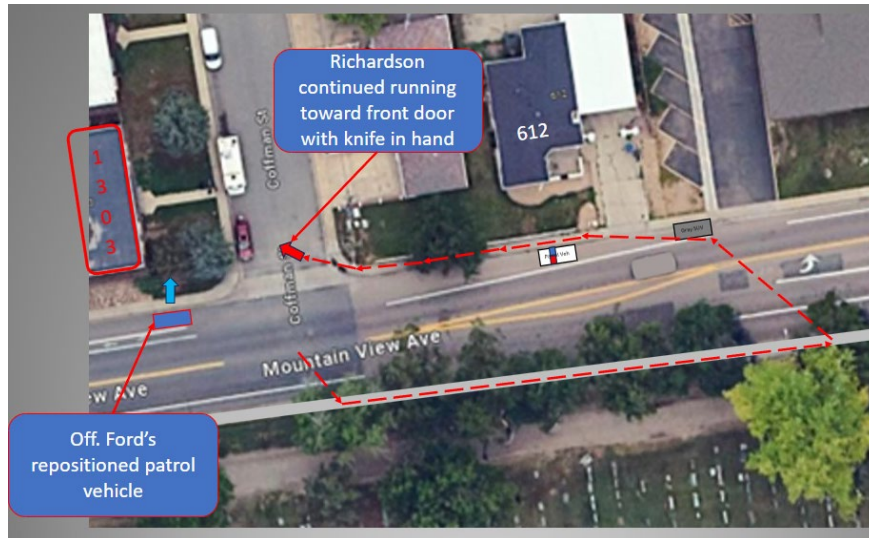


*Richardson sprinting away from officers, toward the Apartment after three 40 mm less-lethal rounds are ineffectively discharged.*

Officer Tweedy, Officer Schultz, and Officer Pollock, and Sgt. Pitts pursued Richardson. Officer Schultz can be heard on his BWC screaming, "He's got a knife! He's got a knife" as officers run after Richardson. Officers continued to yell at Richardson to "Drop it!" as he ran, knife still in hand, toward the Apartments.



By this time, Officer Ford has already approached the scene from the west and parked his marked vehicle on the northwest corner of Mountain View and Coffman, just south of the Apartment, where he knew Ms. Charles was most likely still inside.



*Dashed-red line: Richardson's path of movement.*

At 2:10:31 p.m. Officer Tweedy aired over the radio that he had “one running down the street with a knife, westbound toward the apartments.” Officer Ford, retrieved his rifle and then spotted Richardson running westbound on Mountain View Avenue and across Colman Street toward the Apartments, knife in hand. Officer Ford, dressed in police uniform with clear LPD insignia, issued loud and clear orders to Richardson to, “Freeze! Drop it! Drop it!” Richardson appeared to acknowledge Officer Ford by looking directly at him but continued running toward the door of the Apartments, knife in hand, disregarding commands.



*Richardson sprinting toward the Apartment knife still in hand.*

Officer Ford continued to loudly issue commands to Richardson to stop. Richardson reached the apartment doors and attempted to enter. Officer Ford then discharged three shots just as Richardson reached the doors to the Apartments at 2:10:59 p.m., where Ms. Charles was later confirmed to still be inside. The time between Officer Pollock's last non-lethal discharge Officer Ford firing three rounds was approximately ten seconds.

Richardson fell to the ground, injured, but maintained control of the knife and continued refusing commands to drop the knife so that officers could provide medical aid. Officer Ford continued to issue loud commands for Richardson to “Drop it! Drop it!” and “Get your hands off now! Hands up” in a loud and clear voice. Richardson nevertheless continued to grip the knife.

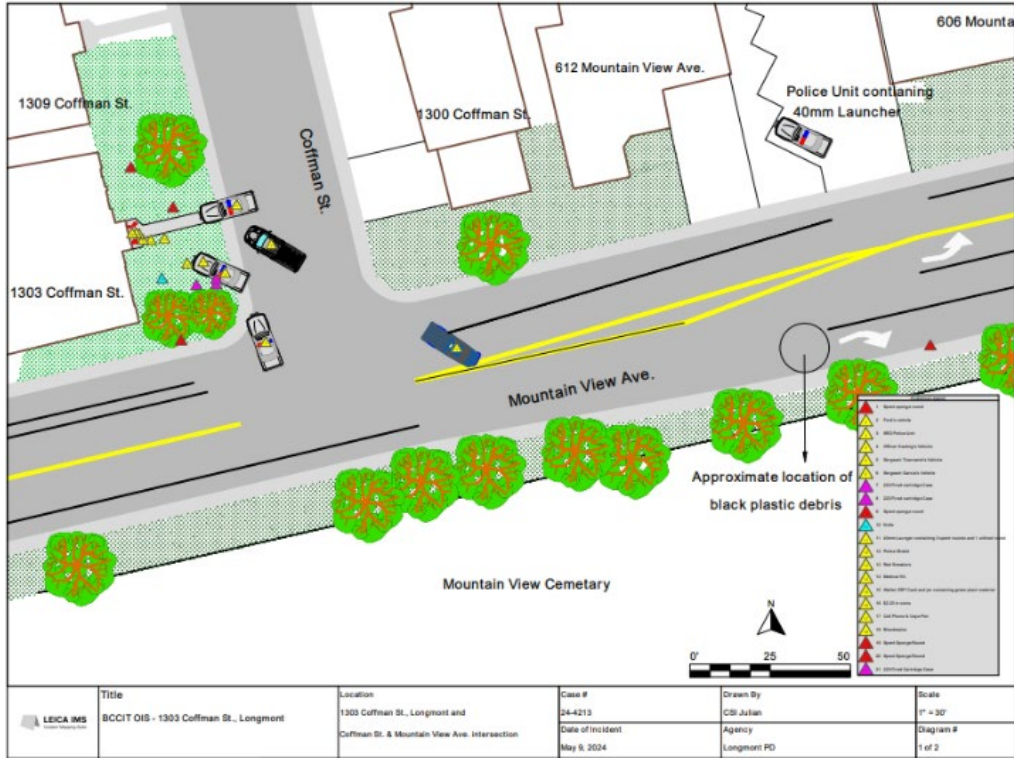
Another officer can be heard telling Richardson, “I need you to get your hands away from the knife right now.” Several officers surrounded Richardson, but from a slight distance due to safety concerns resulting from his refusal to drop the knife. Commands were repeatedly given to Richardson to drop the knife, but he failed to comply. Medical aid was immediately dispatched and staged nearby, but law enforcement and emergency medical technicians could not safely approach and render aid to Richardson due to his refusal to drop the knife.

Officers made continued attempts to gain compliance through verbal commands and de-escalation techniques for nearly fourteen minutes as Richardson refused to drop the knife. As a result, Officer Hasting deployed three less lethal rounds on Richardson at approximately 2:18 p.m., 2:20 p.m., and 2:22 p.m. Richardson finally dropped the knife after this third less lethal round was fired. Officers approached Richardson at approximately 2:23 p.m. using a ballistic shield to create a barrier and immobilize him. Then, medical aid was immediately rendered by officers on scene. While receiving medical aid, Richardson was verbally aggressive with officers, yelling “Fuck you” and spat on the officers rendering medical aid. Emergency medical technicians (AMR/Fire) arrived to render aid at approximately 2:25 p.m., continued rendering aid, and transported Richardson to the hospital.

After Officer Ford discharged his weapon, a responding sergeant asked him where Richardson’s girlfriend (Ms. Charles) is, and he replied, “She’s inside, that’s my fear.”

### **Scene Preservation**

Members of the BCIT assisted Longmont Police Officers and Crime Scene Investigators with processing, documenting, and completing a canvas of the area where this incident occurred. After the scene was secured, members of the BCIT and the Longmont Police Department took steps to preserve and document the scene. Photographs and video were taken before evidence was collected. Members of the team generated maps and diagrams showing where Richardson, officers, and relevant pieces of evidence were located before, during, and after the shooting. The BCIT conducted a thorough search of the scene and collected several pieces of evidence from the scene. Longmont CSIs along with the Boulder Police Department and the University of Colorado Police Department completed the scene documentation and provided the images below.



An initial view of the scene revealed a “Defender Xtreme” knife with a black brass-knuckle handle and an approximately 7.6 inch blade located in the front yard of the Apartment, southeast of the front entrance. There were also bloodstains in front of the entrance, a medical supply kit and trauma sheers, and personal items belonging to Richardson including a cell phone and a wallet.



*Richardson’s knife*

*Fragments of Richardson’s knife sheath, located on Mountain View Avenue*

A total of three Hornady 223 REM casings and three spent sponge rounds were recovered from the scene outside the Apartments, which coincides with the video of the incident, the officers' interviews, and the round count from Officer Ford's duty weapon, as further discussed below. Additionally, a fourth spent sponge round and fragments of the knife shield were located on Mountain View Avenue, which is consistent with the BWC footage and officer interviews.

Richardson sustained injuries to his stomach wall, intestines, pelvic area, colon, and bowels. There were seven bullet defects on Richardson's body, three of which were confirmed by the attending physician to be consistent with three rifle rounds creating trajectory paths from left to right. The other defect wounds are believed to have been caused by the non-lethal rounds fired at Richardson throughout the course of the incident, which is consistent with the BWC footage and officer interviews.

### **Firearm Accountability**

BCIT members conducted the round count and uniform check for Officer Ford. Officer Ford was dressed in his patrol uniform with a visible badge and insignia. Officer Ford's firearm was functional and within factor specification. Officer Ford was carrying a Rock River LaR-15 Rifle. The round count was consistent with BWC footage, the evidence found on scene, and officer interviews.

### **Interview with Master Police Officer Kristopher Ford**

BCIT Investigators interviewed Master Police Officer Ford ("Officer Ford") on May 10, 2024. Under the law, Officer Ford was not required to provide statements to the BCIT. However, despite not being required to do so, Officer Ford provided a voluntary statement to investigators after being advised of his rights.

Officer Ford has been with the Longmont Police Department ("LPD") for nineteen years. Before his tenure with LPD, Officer Ford was a trooper with the Colorado State Patrol for four years. Officer Ford began his law enforcement career as a military policeman for the Army (seven years) before transitioning to civilian law enforcement. In all, Officer Ford has nearly thirty years of law enforcement experience.

The details of Officer Ford's interview are primarily included in the detailed summary of facts above. In addition to those details, Officer Ford stated that when he heard dispatch air the disturbance at the Apartments, he "immediately recognized" the address due to Richardson's prior involvement with law enforcement. Specifically, Officer Ford recalled his first encounter with Richardson years prior when Richardson was charged with stalking<sup>1</sup>. Officer Ford relayed he was also with the SWAT team that was called in to execute Richardson's arrest on a separate charge. Ford stated he knew Richardson had, subsequently to those events, been arrested several times for

---

<sup>1</sup> Confirmed: Boulder County case number 2022CR20.

violating protection orders and other offenses<sup>2</sup>. Officer Ford recounted another prior incident when Richardson resisted arrest and four officers, including Officer Ford, had to use low levels of force and physical restraint to get him into custody. Officer Ford additionally recounted that in Richardson's pending Robbery case (Boulder County case number (23CR1097)), he was able to verbally convince Richardson to surrender.

Despite his numerous prior contacts with Richardson, Officer Ford stated there was "no bad blood" between them and he had worked hard on prior occasions to build rapport with Richardson. Officer Ford related that on one occasion, he had allowed Richardson to smoke a cigarette before bringing him to jail. On other prior occasions, he had successfully used verbal de-escalation with Richardson, but the success of that tactic often depended on Richardson's mindset on any given day.

Given Officer Ford's knowledge and experience with Richardson, he knew that Richardson could behave unpredictably. Accordingly, when the call aired to Richardson's address, he started to listen intently. Officer Ford heard on the radio that Richardson was challenging officers to "bring everything because he was going to hurt or kill them" and that officers would be "down on their knees begging for forgiveness before him." Ms. Page had told the dispatcher about these threats when she called 911, and then the dispatcher aired that out over the radio. As a result, Officer Ford stated, "Everything just screamed this was not a good situation."

Officer Ford confirmed that there was initial confusion about where Ms. Charles was located, but that he learned she could still be inside the Apartment before his contact with Richardson. Based on this information, Officer Ford indicated that the "seriousness or the threat level went up," and Officer Ford suggested gathering a contact team to determine whether there was an active exigent circumstance in the Apartment, especially in light of his knowledge of Richardson's consistent erratic and unpredictable history.

Officer Ford stated, "for lack of a better description, next thing I know I saw somebody running towards Main Street and it came over the radio he's running and he's got a knife." Officer Ford saw a group of officers giving chase. He was initially in an unmarked police vehicle parked on the west side of the Apartments, but upon hearing the warning and seeing officers chasing this individual, later determined to be Richardson, he jumped in his patrol vehicle, and activated his emergency lights. Officer Ford thought he could use the vehicle to either keep up with Richardson or provide a vehicle barrier for traffic if Richardson made it to Main Street.

When Richardson ran toward the Apartment, Ford parked, grabbed his rifle, and hopped out of his patrol vehicle as he observed the knife in Richardson's hand. Officer Ford stated,

---

<sup>2</sup> Confirmed: Boulder County case numbers 22CR137 (charged Violation of Bail Bond Conditions and Violation of Criminal Protection Order; 23CR1097 (charged Robbery, Burglary of a Dwelling, Violation of a Criminal Protection Order).

“I didn’t want to stand in front of him or try to run to get in front of him because it would minimize my reaction time...but... the best way I can describe it is, it was getting to a drop dead time. [Richardson] had raised my threat, or my fear was he’s got a huge knife. I don’t know what’s happened down there [on Mountain View Avenue], all the cops are running back ...after him...and all I thought was I can’t let him get into the apartment or we’re going to have a hostage...best case scenario, hostage situation, worst case scenario, an act of killing.”

Officer Ford recalled he checked that he had a clear shot and fired three rounds, holding there because Richardson had fallen and was in his assessment no longer a threat that needed “additional engagement.” Officer Ford stated that he checked his firing backdrop, which consisted of cars parking on Coffman Street, and, did not recall seeing anything or anybody in the backdrop. He stated that he aimed and fired lower than he normally would on a training target, keeping rounds low, perhaps subconsciously due to not having a solid backdrop. The location of the rifle bullet defects on Richardson corroborates that Officer Ford aimed low, below the belt line.

### **Other Officer Interviews**

#### **Officer Jesse Pollock**

Master Police Officer Jesse Pollock (“Officer Pollock”) has been an officer with LPD for nineteen years and is a field training officer. The details of Officer Pollock’s interview are primarily included in the detailed summary of facts above. In addition to those details, Officer Pollock reported that he self-dispatched to the call due to the high-risk nature of the call and because the two initial responding officers were still in field training. Upon arrival, he confirmed with Sergeant Pitts that Richardson was known to be violent.

Officer Pollock recalled feeling fear when Richardson reached in his pocket – thinking he might draw a firearm. When he realized it was a knife, Officer Pollock took the lead with less lethal efforts to disengage Richardson. Officer Pollock recalls thinking that if Richardson chose to charge at officers with the knife, he did not believe they could stop him before he injured officers. At that point in time, officers “had no obstacles, no cover” between Richardson and themselves. Officer Pollock’s thought process was:

“[Richardson] is a suspect in an assault already, he is known to be violent, he has now produced a knife, he is ignoring all our commands – repeated loud commands from several officers. I didn’t feel like we could let him leave at that time, but I also had the concern of what happens if he charges us.”

Given the dichotomy of these concerns, Officer Pollock chose to deploy his less lethal “and hopefully change his behavior, change his mindset.” Officer Pollock confirmed he emptied his less lethal (four rounds), but none changed Richardson’s behavior in any way.

While chasing Richardson back toward the Apartment, Officer Pollock believed he heard four to five shots and he stated, “my heart kind of sank when that happens.” He did not know who shot or from where the shots came at that time.

Officer Pollock recounts that even after Richardson was injured and, on the ground, he managed to pick up the knife and “barrel” roll toward officers. Officer Pollock recalled there was fear for officer safety, and so a command was issued to Officer Hasting to deploy another 40 mm less lethal round. Officer Pollock stated: “it was shocking to me, just [his] determination...in 19 years. Seeing someone take four rounds, still resist, get shot, and still refuse to drop the knife and get help...he was definitely determined.”

#### Officer Jesse Schultz

Officer Jesse Schultz was newly hired to LPD and was still in field training on May 8, 2024. The details of Officer Schultz’s interview are primarily included in the detailed summary of facts above. In addition to those details, Officer Schultz stated he recalls that the less lethal rounds discharged by Officer Pollock did not affect Richardson. He noted that Richardson “was fast” and did not think he could “cut the distance” between them while pursuing him to the Apartment. He observed Richardson actively grab the front door to attempt to make entry to the Apartment, which caused Officer Schultz concern as they did not know if there were other individuals inside.

Officer Schultz recounted Richardson’s refusal to drop the knife, even after he was shot, and recalled that at one point in time, he rolled onto his back, pulled down his pants, exposed his himself, then pulled his pants back up.

Officer Schultz stated it was a “scary situation” and he feared Richardson would charge at officers with the knife and that he was capable of injuring officers. He also stated his thoughts during his chase of Richardson, and as he saw Officer Ford, was there would be a hostage situation if Richardson got into the Apartment.

#### Officer Cody Tweedy

Officer Cody Tweedy was an Officer with LPD for approximately two years at the time of the incident. The details of Officer Tweedy’s interview are primarily included in the detailed summary of facts above. In addition to those details, Officer Tweedy stated that after Richardson drew the knife and persistently refused officer commands, he wanted to take a shot with his rifle, but saw vehicles in his backdrop and so decided against shooting at that point in time. After the four-40 mm less lethal rounds fired on Richardson proved ineffective, Officer Tweedy again thought to take a shot with his rifle as Richardson was sprinting back to the Apartment where officers then believed a victim was still situated. Officer Tweedy stated, “Less lethal did not stop him and they were dealing with someone who was going to be much more harmful to the community and victim and officers.”

Officer Tweedy stated he vacillated between safe-to-fire and not-safe-to-fire, making multiple adjustments between the backdrop, other officers, and the environment to determine whether he could safely fire at Richardson. Officer Tweedy stated that once he realized the threat level posed by Richardson was high, he went to take a shot, but Officer Pollock crossed in front of him, so he moved his rifle to the safety position.

As Richardson sprinted toward the Apartment and Officer Ford, he stated he feared Officer Ford may have also been at imminent risk of injury or death, so he went to take a shot but was unsuccessful due to forgetting his firearm's safety was still on.

### Sergeant Jason Pitts

Sergeant Jason Pitts has been employed with LPD for twenty years. He is a team leader and sniper on the SWAT team. The details of his interview are primarily included in the detailed summary of facts above. In addition to those details, Sgt. Pitts confirmed he had prior contacts with Richardson, the most recent being a SWAT call out to Richardson to execute an arrest warrant.

Sgt. Pitts recalls that once officers attempted to contact Richardson, he immediately became aggressive. When Richardson withdrew his knife, it was important for officers to try to keep him from getting to Main Street, a heavily trafficked street. However, they also did not want to get too close to him so as not to force a confrontation. Sgt. Pitts affirmed Officer Pollock's non-lethal 40 mm rounds did not change Richardson's aggressive behavior. Sgt. Pitts stated that he did not want Richardson to get back into the Apartment because: (1) law enforcement had confronted him; (2) he was angry and armed; (3) and officers had not confirmed whether the victim was still inside.

According to Sgt. Pitts, his "line in the sand" was if and when Richardson met the Apartment doors. As Richardson approached the Apartment doors, Sgt. Pitts was getting ready to air to Ford not to let him into the Apartments when Ford shot.

After Richardson was shot, Sgt. Pitts confirmed Richardson remained uncooperative and at one point stabbed the knife in the ground and attempted to get back up on his feet.

### Officer Rachel Hasting

Officer Rachel Hasting has been employed with LPD for just over two and a half years. Previously she was an officer with Boulder Police Department for two and a half years. She is a SWAT negotiator, a field training officer, a background investigator, and a fitness team coordinator. The details of her interview are primarily included in the detailed summary of facts above. In addition to those details, Officer Hasting stated she arrived at the Apartment after the shooting. She noted the knife Richardson held in his hand was a big knife, "bigger than [she was] used to seeing." She feared the situation would be "really bad" if he got up and ran toward officers or inside the building.



Her attempts to get Richardson to drop the knife and de-escalate him were unsuccessful. After multiple attempts to get Richardson to drop the knife, she deployed a first non-lethal round (fifth overall). She continued attempts to de-escalate him and to convince him to drop the knife, but was unsuccessful. Officer Hasting then deployed the second (sixth overall) non-lethal round, but Richardson continued to grip the knife. Richardson did not drop the knife until Officer Hasting deployed the third (seventh overall) and final less-lethal round.

### **Witness Interviews**

#### **Reva Charles**

Ms. Charles was interviewed at the Longmont Police Department on May 8, 2024. She and Richardson have been dating for approximately four years and resided together at the Apartment. Ms. Charles reported that Richardson was agitated that morning, but that is not unusual. She stated Richardson spends approximately 10 hours out of every 24 hours in “rage mode.” Ms. Charles reported that Richardson is schizophrenic, and while he is prescribed medication for his schizophrenia, he does not take it regularly. Richardson constantly threatens to kill her, the police, and himself, and he had threatened to kill her on May 8, 2024.

On May 8, Ms. Charles stated that Richardson accused her of infidelity because she went outside of the house to speak to a friend. Richardson began yelling loudly at her, so she left the Apartment to see another neighbor. The interaction with Ms. Page occurred while she was away. When she returned, Richardson told her, “Ms. Rebecca called the police on me,” and repeatedly stated, “I’m not going back to jail.” He was already armed with his knife at this point.

Ms. Charles stated that Richardson left the Apartment and the next thing she heard was law enforcement yelling, “Drop the knife!” and then gunshots. She stated she continued to hear officers order Richardson to drop the knife. Immediately after shots were fired, she heard (from the inside of her Apartment) Richardson yell for her to bring him Kool-Aid and attempt to call his mother via Siri.

Ms. Charles stated that Richardson “knows right from wrong” and “he did something to make them shoot him. It’s not like they shot him for no reason.”

### **Lorenzo Richardson’s Criminal History**

Lorenzo Richardson is a multi-state offender with arrests dating back to 2015. In Boulder County, Richardson has been arrested approximately five (5) times since 2021, including on violent offenses. Richardson has been ordered to receive competency (to stand trial) evaluations and competency restoration treatment in the community. The District Attorney’s Office has repeatedly and consistently objected to the Court granting personal recognizance bonds for Richardson and have filed motions to revoke his bonds, citing new law violations and his repeated failure to comply with restoration services in the community. On May 8, 2024, Richardson was on personal recognizance bonds over the District Attorney’s Office’s objection in three (3) of his five

(5) pending cases. As detailed in Officer Ford's voluntary interview, he was aware of and/or involved in a number of Richardson's arrests at the time of this incident. That is relevant as to its impact on Ford's knowledge and assessment of possible risk.

### **LEGAL AUTHORITY**

Criminal liability is established in Colorado only if it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that someone has committed all the elements of an offense defined by Colorado statute, and further proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the offense was committed without any statutorily recognized justification or excuse. While knowingly or intentionally shooting at another human being is generally prohibited by statute as an attempted assault or attempted homicide in Colorado, the Criminal Code specifies certain circumstances in which the use of physical force by a peace officer is justified.

C.R.S. §18-1-707 defines the circumstances under which a peace officer can justifiably use physical force in Colorado. In pertinent part, the statute reads as follows:

- (1) Peace officers, in carrying out their duties, shall apply nonviolent means, when possible, before resorting to the use of physical force. A peace officer may use physical force only if nonviolent means would be ineffective in effecting an arrest, preventing an escape, or preventing an imminent threat of injury to the peace officer or another person.
- (2) When physical force is used, a peace officer shall:
  - (a) Not use deadly physical force to apprehend a person who is suspected of only a minor or nonviolent offense;
  - (b) Use only a degree of force consistent with the minimization of injuries to others;
  - (c) Ensure that assistance and medical aid are rendered to any injured or affected persons as soon as practicable; and
  - (d) Ensure that any identified relatives or next of kin of persons who have sustained serious bodily injury or death are notified as soon as practicable.
- (3) A peace officer is justified in using deadly physical force<sup>3</sup> to make an arrest only when all other means of apprehension are unreasonable given the circumstances and:

---

<sup>3</sup> C.R.S. 18-1-901(1)(d) defines deadly physical force as "force, the intended, natural, and probable consequence of which is to produce death, and which does, in fact, produce death." Here, Lorenzo Richardson survived the incident. Thus, the force used in this case does not meet the definition for deadly force.

- (a) The arrest is for a felony involving conduct including the use or threatened use of deadly physical force;
- (b) The suspect poses an immediate threat to the peace officer or another person;
- (c) The force employed does not create a substantial risk of injury to other persons.

...

(4.5) Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, a peace officer is justified in using deadly force if the peace officer has an objectively reasonable belief that a lesser degree of force is inadequate and the peace officer has objectively reasonable grounds to believe, and does believe, that he or another person is in imminent danger of being killed or of receiving serious bodily injury.

C.R.S. § 18-1-707

Independent of the analysis under C.R.S. §18-1-707, an officer can also be justified in using force pursuant to C.R.S. §18-1-704(1), which provides in relevant part:

[A] person is justified in using physical force upon another person in order to defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of unlawful physical force by that other person, and he may use a degree of force which he reasonably believes to be necessary for that purpose.

*See* C.R.S. §18-1-704(1)

Additionally, it is fundamental that the laws of self-defense and the defense of others, which are emphatically laws of necessity, involve the question of one's right to act upon appearances, even though such appearances may prove to have been deceptive; also the question of whether the danger is actual or only apparent, and as well the fact that danger is not necessary, in order to justify one in acting in self-defense or the defense of others. Apparent necessity, if well-grounded and of such a character as to appeal to a reasonable person, under like conditions and circumstances, as being sufficient to require action, justifies the application of the doctrine of self-defense to the same extent as actual or real necessity. *See Young v. People*, 107 P. 274 (Colo. 1910).

### **LEGAL ANALYSIS**

The determination of whether the officer's conduct was criminal is primarily a question of legal justification. The question of legal justification is whether a reasonable officer, confronted with the same facts and circumstances, could have concluded that it was necessary to use physical force to defend himself or another and stop the threat that Lorenzo Richardson presented, and if so, whether that use of force was reasonable and appropriate in response to the threat. In this case, the answer to those questions is yes as applied to Officer Ford.

At the time Officer Ford discharged his service weapon he was justified in using physical force by C.R.S. § 18-1-704(1). The subsection provides that an officer may use physical force to defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of unlawful physical force by that other person, and he uses a degree of force he reasonably believes to be necessary for that purpose.

Under Colorado case law, the facts must be viewed as they appeared to the officers at the time; future developments are irrelevant to the legal analysis. The investigation revealed that at the time Officer Ford discharged his service weapon, his actions were objectively reasonable to prevent the imminent use of unlawful physical force upon Ms. Charles, law enforcement officers, and any other individuals who may have been inside the Apartments.

At the time Officer Ford discharged his service weapon, a lesser degree of force had been attempted and wholly ineffective, he observed Richardson brandishing a large knife and sprinting toward the Apartments where he believed Ms. Charles and potentially others were inside. He observed several officers giving chase and yelling that Richardson had a knife. Officer Ford, knowing the danger that Richardson can pose and has posed to Ms. Charles and the community in the past, had to make a split-second decision to protect Ms. Charles, himself, and other officers, and to prevent a possible hostage situation. The knife Richardson brandished was described as a large “Rambo-style” knife and Officer Ford expressed in body-worn camera footage a fear that if he hesitated, Richardson may have injured Ms. Charles, or a hostage situation would have developed. Such a reaction is reasonable, justified, and appropriate under the totality of the circumstances.

Additionally, Sgt. Pitts stated that the doors to the Apartment were his “line in the sand” and in his view, officers could not allow Richardson to enter the Apartments under any circumstances due to the risk of danger he posed to Ms. Charles and the community. Officer Ford’s (and Sgt. Pitts’) asserted fears were corroborated and supported by (1) the ineffectiveness of the non-lethal efforts to deescalate Richardson prior to shots being fired, and (2) Richardson’s continued refusal to drop the knife after he was shot to receive immediate medical aid, necessitating three more non-lethal rounds to compel compliance.

When Richardson finally dropped the knife, Officers immediately rendered medical aid. Officers retrieved a medical kit and applied a tourniquet to Richardson, despite Richardson’s continued aggression toward the officers rendering medical aid.

## **CONCLUSION**

We find in our review of this incident that no conduct by Officer Ford rises to the level of a criminal offense that can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. It is the conclusion of my office that, based on the applicable law and the facts and circumstances of this case, law enforcement’s actions during this incident were legally justified as set forth in C.R.S. § 18-1-707 and C.R.S. § 18-1-704. Officer Ford was legally justified in his use of reasonable and appropriate physical force in response to Richardson’s use of imminent threat of force upon Ms. Charles, other residents of

the Apartments, and law enforcement officers. As a result, my office will not be filing criminal charges against Officer Ford. Here, while my role is to determine whether criminal charges are appropriate under the law, I wish to recognize these officers' immediate action to protect human life while placing themselves at risk during this incredibly difficult situation.

These cases are important to the officers and civilians involved, as well as to our community. At the time of the incident, Lorenzo Richardson stated his intention to injure and kill officers. I am thankful that he survived and that no one else was further wounded or killed.

I appreciate the cooperation provided by the Longmont Police Department and the extremely thorough investigation conducted by the BCIT.

In the interest of transparency, I will be releasing this letter to the public. These materials will also be posted on the District Attorney's Office website. Pursuant to our policy, the Longmont Police Department will become the custodian of records related to this case. Any future records inquiries will be directed to the Longmont Police Department. Please contact me if you require further information.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Dougherty  
District Attorney  
20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District