



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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February 9, 2018 Officer-involved Shooting Ruled Justified

The 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the Colorado Springs Police Department's Officer-involved shooting that occurred in Colorado Springs, CO on February 9, 2018. Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 16-2.5-301 Peace Officer-involved shooting investigations – protocol, all officer-involved shootings that result in injury or death shall be reviewed by a multi-agency team, a Deadly Force Investigation Team.

Following a careful review of the facts and evidence, the 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office has concluded that Colorado Springs Police Officer Vijay Seenath was justified when he fired his weapon on February 9, 2018, striking Dennis Callin Caldarelli. Colorado Revised Statute 20-1-114 states that a 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. This is an abbreviated report because of the open and pending case against Dennis Caldarelli.

At 4:11 pm on February 9, 2018, Colorado Springs Police Department's Communications Center received a 911 call from a woman regarding an argument she was having with Dennis Caldarelli, in which he had reportedly become violent and threatening. Colorado Springs Police Officers Hamblin and Strauss responded to the dwelling in the 2400 block of North Cascade Avenue where they were confronted by Mr. Caldarelli, who came outside to speak to them briefly before returning to the home. While speaking with the officers, Mr. Caldarelli verbally threatened them and indicated he had firearms in his residence. Because of the potentially volatile situation, the officers retreated, took cover and radioed for back-up. Efforts to convince the suspect to surrender were unsuccessful. Mr. Caldarelli eventually exited the house and started running toward officers carrying an object that looked like a firearm, which he pointed toward the officers. The object was later determined to be a hammer. Officer Seenath fired at the suspect, hitting him once. Mr. Caldarelli has recovered and is being held in the El Paso County Jail. His next court appearance is scheduled for May 31, 2018. As with all defendants, Dennis Caldarelli is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Colorado Revised Statutes §18-1-707 provides that an officer is justified in using deadly force if he or she reasonably believes that it is necessary to defend himself or a third person from what he reasonably believes to be the imminent use of deadly physical force.

The District Attorney's Office reviews all incidents involving a discharged weapon by an officer. The facts and evidence from this investigation show that Colorado Springs Police Officer Vijay Seenath acted reasonably. Thus, based on the law and the facts, the investigation has determined that his actions were justified under the law of the State of Colorado. No criminal charges will be pursued.