

State of Connecticut
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Report Concerning
Use of Deadly Force by the Stratford Police Department on February 5, 2021

Robert J. Devlin, Jr.
Inspector General

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Acknowledgements

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Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Connecticut State Police Eastern District Major Crime Squad;
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services;
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner;
Stratford Police Department; and
Hartford Judicial District State's Attorney Sharmese L. Walcott.

INTRODUCTION

On February 5, 2021, at approximately 7:30 p.m., at the intersection of Main Street and Main Street Putney, Stratford, Connecticut, Stratford Police Department officers blocked in a Dodge Charger driven by Christopher W. Hagans. The Charger had stopped behind a civilian vehicle at a red traffic signal. Stratford officers approached the Charger intending to take Hagans into custody on a felony arrest warrant. Hagans, who was in possession of a loaded handgun, refused to comply with officers' repeated demands that he show his hands. When officers realized that Hagans had a gun, they fired shots into the Charger as it went down a snow-covered embankment. The car became stuck on a guardrail and was disabled in the snow.

Hagans fled the vehicle on foot. He headed toward a civilian vehicle while pointing the gun at Stratford officers. Stratford officers fired additional shots at Hagans, fatally wounding him. At some point during the encounter, Hagans fired his gun one time.

Hartford Judicial District State's Attorney Sharmese L. Walcott submitted a preliminary status report regarding this incident. On November 3, 2021, pursuant to General Statutes §51-277a(a)(1), the Office of Inspector General assumed responsibility for the investigation.¹ The details of this investigation are set forth in this report.²

The investigation establishes that, at the time that the Stratford officers fired their weapons, Hagans was resisting their efforts to arrest him on a felony warrant, displaying a loaded gun, and (at some point) discharging that weapon. Hagans' conduct presented an imminent and grave threat of serious physical injury or death to the officers and the civilian driver of the nearby vehicle. Accordingly, I conclude that, under the circumstances presented, the Stratford officers justifiably used deadly force.

¹ As relevant here, §51-277a(a)(1) provides: "Whenever a peace officer, in the course of such officer's duties uses ... deadly force ... upon another person, the Division of Criminal Justice shall cause an investigation to be made and the Inspector General shall have the responsibility of determining whether the use of force was justified under section 53a-22."

² The timeline for the investigation is as follows:

February 5, 2021: Date of incident

February 5, 2021: Chief State's Attorney Richard J. Colangelo, Jr. assigns Hartford Judicial District State's Attorney Sharmese L. Walcott to lead the investigation. State's Attorney Walcott requests the Connecticut State Police Eastern District Major Crime Squad to conduct the investigation.

February 9, 2021: State's Attorney Walcott submits a Preliminary Status Report regarding the incident.

October 8, 2021: Robert J. Devlin, Jr. takes the oath of office as Inspector General.

November 3, 2021: Office of Inspector General assumes responsibility for the investigation.

On August 4, 2022, the Eastern District Major Crime Squad submits its final report to the Office of Inspector General.

INVESTIGATION

Summary of Events / Statements

On February 5, 2021, a woman (Witness #1) walked into the Naugatuck Police Department to report that she had been the victim of crimes committed by Christopher Hagans.³ Witness #1, who had been in a relationship with Hagans since February 2020, provided a statement wherein she described events that occurred on August 1, 2020, and January 6, 2021. On January 6, 2021, Witness #1 stated that Hagans unlawfully entered her home and threatened Witness #1, her neighbor, and Witness #1's nineteen year-old son with a gun. Naugatuck police officers contacted the neighbor and son who corroborated Witness #1's statement. Thereafter, the police applied for a warrant to arrest Hagans on charges of strangulation and disorderly conduct for the August 1, 2020, incident and home invasion and three counts of threatening for the January 6, 2021, incident. The court approved the warrant on February 5, 2021, setting bail at \$500,000.00 cash or surety.

Sometime prior to 7:30 p.m. on February 5, 2021, the Naugatuck Police Department contacted the Stratford Police Department (Stratford PD) and requested that Stratford send officers to 80 Okenuck Trail, Stratford to contact and possibly take Hagans into custody on the warrant. The Stratford PD had information indicating that Hagans was possibly a Blood gang member, had multiple arrests including an arrest for robbery, was a PCP user, and had a history of resisting arrest. They considered him "armed and dangerous." The Stratford PD was also aware that the Naugatuck warrant was for a felony and concerned an incident in which a handgun was allegedly used. They also knew that Hagans drove a Dodge Charger, color grey.

In formulating a plan to serve the warrant, the Stratford PD sent officers to 80 Okenuck Trail to see if Hagans' vehicle was there. Using an unmarked Stratford PD vehicle, Officer John Facto⁴ and Detective Glynn McGlynn⁵ drove to the vicinity of 80 Okenuck Trail. As they approached the address, they saw Hagans backing his Charger out of the driveway and into the street. Facto and McGlynn followed the Charger. At the intersection of Chapel Street and Main Street Putney, the Charger turned left onto Main Street Putney. The Stratford PD dispatcher directed other officers to respond to that location. Facto and McGlynn reported that, at the intersection of Main Street Putney and Main Street, the Charger had stopped for a red traffic signal. Captain Gerald Pinto ordered that if the marked patrol units were able to respond to the

³ On February 5, 2021, Christopher Hagans was a 36-year-old male. Although described as white in some police reports, he was African American.

⁴ On February 5, 2021, John Facto was a 33-year-old white male. He had been a Stratford PD officer for 8 years and had no disciplinary history.

⁵ On February 5, 2021, Glynn McGlynn was a 60-year-old white male. He had been a Stratford PD officer for 15 years and had no disciplinary history.

intersection before the light changed to green, officers should attempt a motor vehicle stop at that location in order to avoid a potential pursuit.

A white Honda SUV being driven by Witness #2 was the first vehicle stopped at the red light. Hagans' Charger stopped behind the Honda. Facto, operating the unmarked Stratford PD vehicle, pulled behind Hagans. While the light was still red, Officer Stephen Santoro⁶ arrived in his marked Stratford PD K-9 vehicle. Santoro positioned his police vehicle diagonally in front of the Charger blocking it. Lieutenant Robert Rosenbaum⁷ positioned his marked police vehicle so as to block the Charger on the side. Officer Lawrence Overby⁸ stopped his marked Stratford PD vehicle behind Rosenbaum. Also on scene was Officer John Cannata⁹. The officers then attempted to take Hagans into custody on the Naugatuck arrest warrant.

Officers Who Discharged Their Firearms

Officer Stephen Santoro

Officer Santoro provided a statement to Eastern District Major Crime Squad (EDMCS) detectives regarding his involvement in the officer-involved shooting. As relevant to the events at Main Street Putney and Main Street the statement provides:

"I pulled my patrol vehicle briefly into the clear, oncoming traffic lane, around the following unit and Dodge Charger, and immediately positioned it at an angle in between the rear of the white SUV and the front of the grey Charger. I activated my red and blue flashing emergency lights and exited my vehicle quickly. I unholstered my department issued service weapon (Glock 17, 9mm) and maneuvered around the rear of my patrol vehicle, and moved toward the driver's window of the suspect vehicle at a perpendicular angle. The driver's window was approximately two-thirds open. I illuminated my weapon light and gave loud verbal commands for the operator to show his hands. I was the first officer to approach the vehicle. My K-9 partner remained in my vehicle.

"On my approach, I observed the male operator who matched the description of booking/DOC photos of Christopher Hagans that I recently reviewed at Headquarters minutes earlier. I observed the male turn his head to his left and he looked at me as I approached him. At this

⁶ On February 5, 2021, Stephen Santoro was a 31 year old white male. He had been a Stratford PD officer for 8 years and had no disciplinary history regarding use of force or dishonesty.

⁷ On February 5, 2021, Robert Rosenbaum was a 47 year old white male. He had been a Stratford PD officer for 15 years and had no disciplinary history.

⁸ On February 5, 2021, Lawrence Overby was a 50 year old black male. He had been a Stratford PD officer for 15 years and had no disciplinary history regarding use of force or dishonesty.

⁹ On February 5, 2021, John Cannata was a 36 year old white male. He had been a Stratford PD officer for 4 years and had no disciplinary history.

time, I observed the male's right hand moving downward to the space between the center console and driver's seat. In his right hand, I could clearly see that he was holding a dark colored semi-automatic pistol. The pistol's top was rectangular and did not bear any cylindrical qualities commonly seen in revolvers. I was within ten feet of the suspect vehicle when I made this observation. I loudly verbalized, "gun, gun, gun," to alert other officers that the operator was in possession of a firearm. I repositioned my body from being directly exposed to the open driver's window to behind the B-pillar. The vertical roof support between the front and rear doors on a four-door vehicle is commonly referred to as the B-pillar. I repositioned myself to limit risk and minimize the potential line of fire from the suspect. From this position, I could only see the back of the male's shoulders which were hunched forward and leaning toward the center console where I last saw the firearm in his hand. I could no longer see either of his hands or the firearm. The male operator appeared to be the only occupant of the vehicle.

"I continued loud, verbal commands directing that the operator put his hands up and to show his hands, changing my verbiage in case he did not fully understand instructions. I said on a number of different times and many different ways that I needed to see his hands. The operator still had his body turned toward the center console of the vehicle and did not comply with said commands and gave me no verbal feedback. I, again loudly alerted other officers on scene that the operator was in possession of a firearm. I continued giving verbal commands for the operator to show his hands but he still did not comply. His shoulders were still turned toward the center console and his hands were still not visible. Knowing that he was armed and believing him to be the suspect that we had been notified was "armed and dangerous," I advised other officers on scene to check their cross-fire to prevent a friendly fire situation.

"I was highly concerned for the safety of myself, other officers on scene, and the general public in the surrounding high-traffic area. My concerns of officer/public safety were based on the knowledge that the male was in possession of a firearm, which he displayed to a readily identifiable police officer in full police uniform who was on scene with multiple police vehicles with activated red and blue flashing lights. This male was disregarding all officer directions and commands to show his hands and prove himself no longer a threat. I believed the operator's intentions were hostile and dangerous. Based on the male's positioning in the vehicle, possession of a firearm last known to be in his right hand, noncompliance with clear commands, and officers in close proximity to his vehicle, the male was merely one quick turn of the body from inflicting deadly force on any of the officers near the vehicle and surrounding innocent bystanders. There are several residential homes near the immediate area of the vehicle and if the male fired a round toward police, the lives of residents of these homes were also in danger. Given his being armed and disregarding all clear directives to disprove himself a threat by showing his hands, I concluded that deadly force was the only appropriate tactic remaining to prevent death or serious injury of myself, fellow officers, and the public. All attempts made by officers to de-escalate the encounter were futile.

“I had my service weapon aimed at the operator’s center mass through the rear passenger window. As I was depressing the trigger, I heard another firearm discharge just before my firearm discharged. Nearly simultaneously, the vehicle accelerated forward, striking my patrol vehicle in the passenger side. After the suspect vehicle struck my patrol vehicle, it collided with a large snowbank to its right. After the collision with the snowbank, the vehicle was stuck and inoperable. The operator quickly exited the vehicle, made no apparent effort to surrender, his hands were not raised or visible, and ran in the direction of the white SUV and where other officers were positioned. I continued to believe the male was a lethal threat to the public and officers. I was highly concerned he would attempt to use the firearm against my fellow officers who were nearby. I was aware that other officers on scene had entered Main Street Putney from the north entrance and were currently positioned near the driver’s side of my patrol vehicle. The male was also capable of using this firearm to “car-jack” any of the surrounding motorists that slowed for traffic. My grave concern that deadly force was necessary to stop this male’s threat had not been diminished at all. I again fired at the male, aiming at center mass, as he was outside of his vehicle. As I fired, I heard the discharge of other firearms.

“The male quickly dropped to the ground after these shots were fired. I loudly advised other officers on scene to stand-by as the gunfire had ceased and the threat was down. I continued to announce to other officers to stand-by as I made my way around my patrol vehicle and approached the male who was lying on the ground on his left side facing Main Street traffic. The male’s back was facing all officers and his hands could still not be seen at this time. I noticed other officers still held lethal coverage on the suspect and I holstered my weapon to move in for handcuffing.

“As I approached the male on the ground, I noticed a dark-colored, semi-automatic pistol in his left hand. I called out “gun,” removing it from the suspect’s left hand and passing it back to another officer to secure it. I noticed the male appeared to have a somewhat circular hole in the right side of his head as I went to handcuff his right wrist. The male was not moving and did not struggle when I placed the handcuff on his right wrist. The hole appeared to be result of a gunshot wound and there was blood actively flowing from it. I immediately checked for radial pulse on the male’s left wrist with my pointer and middle fingers. I checked multiple times and could not feel an active pulse. I told officer on scene that I could not feel a pulse and removed my handcuffs from his right wrist. I assumed the male was deceased as a result of a fatal gunshot wound to the head.”

Detective Glynn McGlynn

Detective McGlynn accompanied Officer Facto in the unmarked police vehicle. In his statement, he describes his actions at the scene of the motor vehicle stop. His statement provides:

"I exited the vehicle and ran to the passenger side of the grey Dodge Charger in a cover position, I was covering Officer Santoro for his safety per my training. Ofc. Santoro was the contact officer at the passenger (sic) side of the grey Dodge Charger directing the driver multiple times to put his hands up and then Ofc. Santoro called out "He has a gun." Ofc. Santoro then yelled several times for the driver to stop reaching. Ofc. Santoro moved from standing in front of the driver's side window and stepped back to his right by the left side rear window. I saw Ofc. Overby and lights shining in my direction over the top of the car. I had my gun in my right hand and flashlight in my left hand.

"I illuminated and looked inside the vehicle thru the right rear passenger window. The vehicle was occupied once, just the driver. The driver wearing a dark hoodie was hunched forward left hand on the wheel and right arm rigid with hand shoved between the seat and console. The driver was looking to his left where Ofc. Santoro was located. The driver was rocking back and forth and pumping his right arm up and down, hand still concealed between seat and console. Ofc. Santoro repeatedly yelled instructions to the driver without compliance. The driver did not give up his hands. His right arm was pumping up and down between the seat and console. The driver still seated in the driver's seat, then quickly twisted/jerked his torso to the left toward the location of Ofc. Santoro. I interpreted the suspect's sudden, non-compliant actions as an immediate threat to the safety of Ofc. Santoro and other officers/individuals at or near the scene. I believed the suspect was going to shoot Ofc. Santoro.

"Out of concern for my fellow officers, after being advised that the driver had a gun and consistent with my training and experience, I shot my weapon toward the driver in a downward direction immediately following his sudden twist/jerk toward his left. I recall the vehicle accelerated forward, I heard shots fired. I heard a crash of cars colliding. The grey Dodge Charger turned right in front of me attempting to go over the embankment onto Main Street. I walked in the direction of the vehicle. The right rear tire was spinning in the snow. I shot at the right rear tire to disable the vehicle and prevent a high speed chase given the proximity to the Merritt Parkway. The vehicle was stuck and did not move. I heard additional shots while this was happening.

"The male suspect got out of the vehicle at some point, moving towards my left where other officers were located. I did not see the suspect exit the vehicle. I believe additional shots took place. Mr. Hagans ultimately fell down. I heard someone yell "crossfire" at one point. I walked toward the suspect. The suspect was lying on the ground back toward officers on his left side with his right arm concealed by the front of his body. I held cover and called out "cuff him." I was still concerned that the suspect was going to roll onto his back and shoot at officers. Officer Santoro and Facto then retrieved a handgun which appeared to have been underneath the suspect. The handgun was secured by an officer. The suspect was unresponsive and bleeding from his head. Ofc. Santoro and Facto administered life saving measures.

"I canvassed the scene and saw a white vehicle across the street. I ran across Main Street and approached the white SUV. I spoke with the female driver. She was not injured. The front passenger side window was spider webbed. I went to that side of the vehicle and observed what appeared to be a bullet hole. I requested Ofc. Forrestier to park his vehicle behind the white SUV to protect it from North bound traffic of Main Street and to secure the witness and the vehicle.

"Subsequently Captain Pinto arrived on scene as did Stratford Fire and EMS. After the suspect was transported, a second ambulance arrived and Lt. Rosenbaum, Officers Overby and Santoro and I were transported to Bridgeport Hospital for evaluation.

"During the incident, I did not speak with the suspect nor did I hear him say anything. The weather was clear cold and there was snow on the ground. My field of view over the suspect's vehicle was partially limited by the lights shining in my direction. My view of the suspect himself was not affected. I also could clearly see Ofc. Santoro to my left on the other side of the car and Ofc. Overby diagonally across from me by a police cruiser.

"When I approached the suspect's vehicle and looked into the passenger compartment I kept my head down below the roof of the car to avoid the lights shining in my direction. After the initial shot(s), there were no lights shining at me. My field of view was clear, as I had turned more to the right after the suspect's vehicle moved toward the embankment. When I discharged my weapon for the second and third time, I recall standing by the suspect's disabled vehicle. I did not have cover or concealment when I again discharged my firearm. I do not know the distance between myself and the suspect when I shot my weapon at him. I do not know exactly how many times I discharged my weapon. My best recollection is at least three times. I do not recall speaking with any other officers when engaging the suspect."

Lieutenant Robert Rosenbaum

Lieutenant Rosenbaum responded to the scene and stopped near the driver's side of the Charger in order to block it in. He described his actions at the scene as follows:

"Officer Santoro and Officer Facto were on the road next to Hagans' vehicle. As I exited my patrol car, I drew my firearm. Upon arrival and exiting my car, my field of view was from a North perspective and was centered on the offender's vehicle. I was on foot approximately within 10 yards of Hagans' vehicle. Officers were in positions around Hagans' motor vehicle and there was an occupied civilian SUV stopped North in close proximity of Hagans' vehicle. Officer Santoro was trying to break the driver's side windows out in Hagans' car with his handgun. I heard other officers yelling verbal commands ... show me your hands, stop reaching and then I heard Officer Santoro yell he's got a gun. I also heard other officers yell to Hagans to show his hands. I reported over the air that the subject had a gun and was not complying with

commands to clear his hands. I heard the officers yell watch your crossfire and then I heard shots being fired. I did not know from where or from whom the shots were fired. At this time, I did not fire my weapon.

“Hagans’ vehicle drove forward and smashed into the passenger side of the K-9 car that was in front of his vehicle. Then his vehicle went to the right down the embankment toward Main Street and Hagans exited his vehicle. At this time, I was on foot and closing the distance between myself and Hagans who had just exited his car. As he got out, he appeared to have both hands held closely together and his slightly hunched forward position opened up as he began to run away from his vehicle. I do not recall hearing any shots being fired at this moment. As I moved in toward him, he began running toward an occupied civilian white SUV. I did not hear other shots fired at this point in time. As he was running, I observed what appeared to be a firearm in Hagans’ left hand. He was running toward the civilian SUV that was in front of Officer Santoro’s car at the stop light. He did not comply with officers’ commands. He had used his motor vehicle to ram a police K-9 vehicle, and he was armed and running towards an occupied civilian vehicle. I was now approximately within less than 3 yards of the running offender, positioned between the driver’s side of Officer Santoro’s vehicle and the rear of the civilian SUV.

“I was concerned Hagans was going to carjack the SUV and take hostage or harm its occupant or occupants so he could get away, and, I was concerned for myself and the other officers’ safety and lives as well. I did not hear Hagans say anything as he ran. I heard multiple shots being fired and in concern for myself, the officers, and the civilians, I fired my department issued Glock 19 multiple times at the center mass of the subject. To the best of my recollection and belief, I fired the weapon approximately 3 times. Hagans stopped running and fell down near the right rear tire of the white SUV that was stopped at the traffic light. He appeared immobile and silent with an apparent gunshot wound to the head.”

Officer Lawrence Overby

Officer Overby described his actions at the scene as follows:

“I first made contact with Mr. Hagans’ vehicle between Main Street and Main St. Putney between 1915 and 1925 hrs. Two patrol vehicles were behind Mr. Hagans car and I and Lt. Rosenbaum were in front of Mr. Hagans’ vehicle facing on-coming traffic. On scene were Lieutenant Rosenbaum, Detective McGlynn, Ofc. Santoro, Ofc. Facto, and Ofc. Cannata. I observed Santoro and McGlynn standing outside of their vehicles. Santoro was on the driver’s side of his car and McGlynn was on the passenger side. At that point, I knew that Naugatuck was requesting our assistance in taking Mr. Hagans into custody. I also knew there was a high bond on the warrant but I cannot recall the exact amount. Mr. Hagans’ vehicle stopped and officers exited their vehicles and were approaching his. All officers were giving verbal

commands to Mr. Hagans including myself. I remember other officers yelling, “show me your hands!” and I was also yelling to Mr. Hagans to show me his hands. Mr. Hagans was not compliant with our verbal commands. I continued to yell, “show me your hands!” At that time, I observed Mr. Hagans reaching into the right interior compartment of his vehicle from the driver’s side and then he drove into Ofc. Santoro’s patrol car. His vehicle became immobile and he emerged from it out the driver’s door. He stood up and turned his upper body in our direction while running away. At that point, I had a clear and unobstructed view of Mr. Hagans and he was holding a black pistol in his left hand and was pointing it in our direction. I heard another officer yell “Gun! Gun!” I then also began yelling, “Drop the gun! Drop the gun!” and I heard other officers also yelling for him to drop the weapon. I assumed a position of cover behind a vehicle and was still able to maintain visual observation of Mr. Hagans. As Mr. Hagans continued to run, he pointed the black handgun in my direction. I emerged from cover and fired my department issued weapon, a Glock 17, 9 millimeter, at Mr. Hagans. I do not know how many rounds I discharged. At the time I fired my weapon, I was approximately five to fifteen feet from him. At the time of this encounter, the weather was clear, and the pavement was dry. I recall Mr. Hagans to be a Hispanic male approximately 5’11” with a thick build. The area where this encounter took place was mostly residential. Immediately after discharging my weapon, I observed Mr. Hagans fall to the ground and I do not recall seeing any apparent injuries to him. Officer Santoro approached Mr. Hagans and I and other officers acted as cover for Officer Santoro. Officer Santoro removed the firearm from Mr. Hagans and started to render first aid. I kicked the gun further away from Mr. Hagans, to the right of where Mr. Hagans was, to ensure it was out of reach. I re-holstered my weapon and remained on-scene awaiting further instructions from my supervisor.”

Non-Shooting Officers on Scene

Officer John Facto

Facto was operating an unmarked Stratford PD vehicle. He followed Hagans from 80 Okenuck Trail to the intersection of Main Street Putney and Main Street. At the red light, he stopped behind Hagans’ Charger. When other Stratford PD units arrived, Facto participated with them in the attempted arrest of Hagans. Facto’s police report states:

“I activated my vehicle’s front facing emergency flashing red and blue lights and initiated a traffic stop. Detective McGlynn and I then exited our vehicle with our respective firearms drawn, approached the Charger on foot, and began giving loud commands to the driver to show us his hands; however he chose not to comply with this instruction. It should be noted that as I approached the Charger on foot, I observed that his front driver’s side window was slightly rolled down. While continuing to give the driver verbal commands to show officers his hands, I heard another officer who was standing in close proximity to the Charger announce loudly that the driver of the vehicle has a gun. After the verbal announcement was made that the driver

was in possession of a firearm, I observed the operator of the Charger accelerate forward, striking the police cruiser that was parked in front of his vehicle. The operator of the Charger then turned to his right and attempted to flee from officers by traveling down a small embankment from Main Street Putney onto Main Street. As the Charger was attempting to flee from the scene, I heard gunshots going off.

“Shortly after the Charger attempted to flee from officers, I observed that it became stuck in the deep snow that was covering the embankment area that it was attempting to travel through. After becoming stuck on the embankment, the operator of the Charger exited the vehicle on foot and took several steps out of the vehicle northbound on Main Street Putney. I then moved from the passenger side of the cruiser that was struck by the Charger, around the back of the cruiser, ultimately stopping and repositioning myself on the driver’s side of the same cruiser. While moving to my new location on foot. I heard additional gunshots going off. As I stopped in my repositioned location, I observed the driver of the Charger, later confirmed as being Hagans, fall to the ground landing on his left side. It should be noted that, as I heard shots being fired, I called out over the police radio that shots had been fired so that dispatch and other units potentially in route to assist knew what was taking place. After observing Hagans fall to the ground, I again advised dispatch over the radio that shots were fired at the scene, that the suspect was down, and to send EMS units to the scene. After Hagans fell to the ground, I observed other officers at the scene approach him and soon discovered a black colored handgun lying on the ground directly next to Hagans. The handgun was removed and secured in a police vehicle by other officers at the scene.”

Facto wore a body-worn camera (BWC) during the attempted arrest of Hagans at Main Street Putney and Main Street¹⁰. To review the relevant portion of his BWC, click [here](#).

Officer John Cannata

Cannata’s police report describes his participation in the incident as follows:

“Once in the area, I observed Officer Santoro activate his emergency lights and pull his vehicle in front of the gray Dodge Charger. I then stopped my vehicle at the intersection of Meadowmere Rd and Main St Putney. I then exited my patrol vehicle and approached the gray Dodge Charger on foot with my firearm drawn. Officers at the vehicle were yelling verbal commands to the driver to show his hands, the driver was not being compliant with the commands. While at the rear of the passenger side of the vehicle, I heard an officer yell “gun”,

¹⁰ Facto’s BWC recording was the only BWC recording obtained by EDMCS detectives. Lt. Rosenbaum and Detective McGlynn did not wear BWCs. Officer Cannata’s BWC had a dead battery. Officer Santoro did not activate his BWC during the encounter with Hagans. Officer Overby also did not activate his BWC during the encounter with Hagans.

“he has a gun.” I then observed the driver of the vehicle attempt to flee and accelerate his vehicle forward into the patrol vehicle that was in front of his vehicle. The driver then attempted to drive over the embankment on Main St but his vehicle then got caught in the snow. I then heard gunshots. I began to move to the left towards Meadowmere Rd and as I was moving left behind Officer Santoro’s vehicle, I heard more gunshots. As Officer Santoro’s vehicle cleared from my view, I observed a party lying on the ground on his left side. I then approached the party laying on the ground as another officer was handcuffing him and observed a black firearm under him. I then put gloves on and picked up the firearm. I then made the firearm safe by ejecting the loaded magazine and the round that was chambered in the firearm. I then placed the firearm on the passenger seat of my patrol vehicle and stood by the firearm until instructed to do otherwise.

Civilians

EDMCS detectives interviewed a number of civilian witnesses during their investigation. Three are relevant to this report: Witness #2, Witness #3 and Lori Hagans.

Witness #2

On February 5, 2021, at approximately 7:15 p.m., Witness #2 left a friend’s house in Stratford intending to drive home. She was using the navigation system in her phone that she had plugged into her white Honda CR-V. She came to a red light and stopped. Hers was the first car at the light.

Witness #2’s statement continues:

“I was at the light and noticed flashing police lights around me. My windows were up at this time. While sitting at the traffic light, I rolled the window down when the cop came around the corner in front of me, but I still did not hear anything and was not certain what was going on. I then rolled my window up. I then started to record with my phone and the time stamp was at 7:36 PM. I only recorded it for 3 seconds because I heard shots. I then put the phone down in the center console area. It was at this time that I heard shots and then after a few moments my passenger side windows were smashed out. I believe that my car was hit one time but with the noise of the windows being broken it could have been more than one time. I then ducked down for a few seconds and then looked up and saw the light was red. I then looked up and drove through the red light to the other side of the road and put my flashers on. I was not injured but when the glass broke, I did get a few scratches on my right hand. After I drove across the road, I was shaking but still calm. Officers came to my car and asked if I was OK and I told them that I was fine. After I stopped my car, I called my parents and some friends but was not certain what was going on.

“My father soon came to the area and picked me up. I left my car on the side of road because the police told me that my car had to stay.”

Witness #3

On February 5, 2021, at about 7:30 p.m., Witness #3 was driving with her daughter on River Road in Stratford. She noticed police cars with their emergency lights on blocking the entrance to Main Street from River Road. Witness #3 decided to continue straight on River Road. At a red traffic signal, she decided to change lanes to continue straight. When the light turned green, Witness #3 had to wait for other vehicles to move so that she could safely change lanes. Her statement continues:

“While waiting, I then observed a dark colored four door sedan suddenly appear on Main Street traveling towards the Police vehicles and the intersection with River Road. I observed the dark colored car crash into the metal beam guide rail located at the intersection. I then heard loud bangs that I believed to be gunshots. I then observed a person, unsure if they were male or female, exit the dark colored vehicle through the driver side door. I then heard more bangs that I believe to be gunshots, and I saw the person fall to the ground. I am unsure about how many Police Officers were present, but I believe I saw at least one Police Officer handcuff the fallen person, and another Police Officer walking over to the person with his gun drawn for safety. I did not see anyone fire a gun, nor did I see more than one Police Officer with their gun drawn.”

About six weeks after the incident, on March 20, 2021, Witness #3 noticed a bullet hole in the front of the vehicle that she was driving the night of the police involved shooting. She described this discovery as follows:

“On Saturday, March 20, I was at Target with my husband and when we were coming out of Target we noticed a small hole in the front [my] Mazda CX5, which appeared to be a bullet hole. The hole was located in the chrome surrounding the driver side headlight assembly. It was the first time that either me or my husband had noticed the small hole, and I called the police to tell them about it. From the time of the shooting in February up until March 20, neither me or my husband can recall any other event which may have caused a hole like that to the CX5. My husband primarily drives the CX5, and he works from home, so he doesn't drive it often. When I drive the CX5, it is usually only at night to bring my daughter to swim practice in New Haven. When the vehicle is not being driven, it is normally parked facing forward in the garage, on the side farthest from the house. I believe that since the vehicle is driven so infrequently during the daylight hours and is otherwise parked in our garage, that is why it took so long for us to notice the hole.”





Lori Hagans

On February 11, 2021, Stratford Lieutenant Antonio Santos interviewed Lori Hagans, wife of Christopher Hagans. Among other things, Lori Hagans stated that Christopher Hagans had been recently released from jail and a halfway house and had just met with his parole officer. She further stated that Christopher Hagans had recently told her that “no matter what he would not go back to jail.”

An EDMCS detective interviewed Lori Hagans on February 24, 2021. She stated that she married Christopher Hagans in 2009. She was aware that he had spent time in jail and was on probation.

According to Lori Hagans, Christopher Hagans mostly drove the grey Charger. She never knew him to carry a gun or if he was affiliated with a street gang. She was unaware of Christopher Hagans having any drug abuse or mental health issues. She said that he was right-handed.

Lori Hagans told the detective that, on the night of the incident, Christopher Hagans had only been home for about an hour before he left in the Charger. She provided the detective

with a ring camera recording of Christopher Hagans leaving the house at 80 Okenuck Trail. He is holding a bag that appears similar to the bag found in the Charger after the incident. To review the ring camera video, click [here](#).

SCENE

The primary scene was at the Main Street Putney and Main Street intersection in Stratford. This intersection is approximately 300 feet southwest of exit 53 off Route 15 (Merritt Parkway). Exit 53 ends at Main Street (Route 110) and south of that intersection is River Road. Main Street is a paved roadway divided by solid double yellow lines. At the time of the incident, the roadways were clear. The sides of the roads and property around the scene, however, were snow-covered.

The weather at the time of the incident was clear skies and zero precipitation. The average temperature on February 5, 2021, was 36.15 degrees Fahrenheit. The next day, February 6, 2021, had similar weather with an approximate temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The February 6th temperatures were warm enough to cause snowmelt making the roadway wet with some standing water.





There were seven involved vehicles at the scene:

Vehicle #1 (Officer Overby): Ford Interceptor SUV bearing Connecticut registration 161 SF parked facing a southern direction in the southbound lane of Main Street.





Vehicle #2 (Lieutenant Rosenbaum): Ford Interceptor SUV bearing Connecticut registration 196 SF parked facing a western direction on Main Street Putney. This vehicle had a defect in the driver's side spotlight consistent with being struck by a projectile.





Vehicle #3 (Officer Santoro): Ford Interceptor SUV bearing Connecticut registration 186 SF facing an eastern direction on Main Street Putney. This vehicle had damage along the passenger side and additional damage that was consistent with being struck by a projectile.







Vehicle #4 (Officer Cannata): Ford Interceptor SUV bearing Connecticut registration 167 SF parked facing an eastern direction on Main Street Putney.



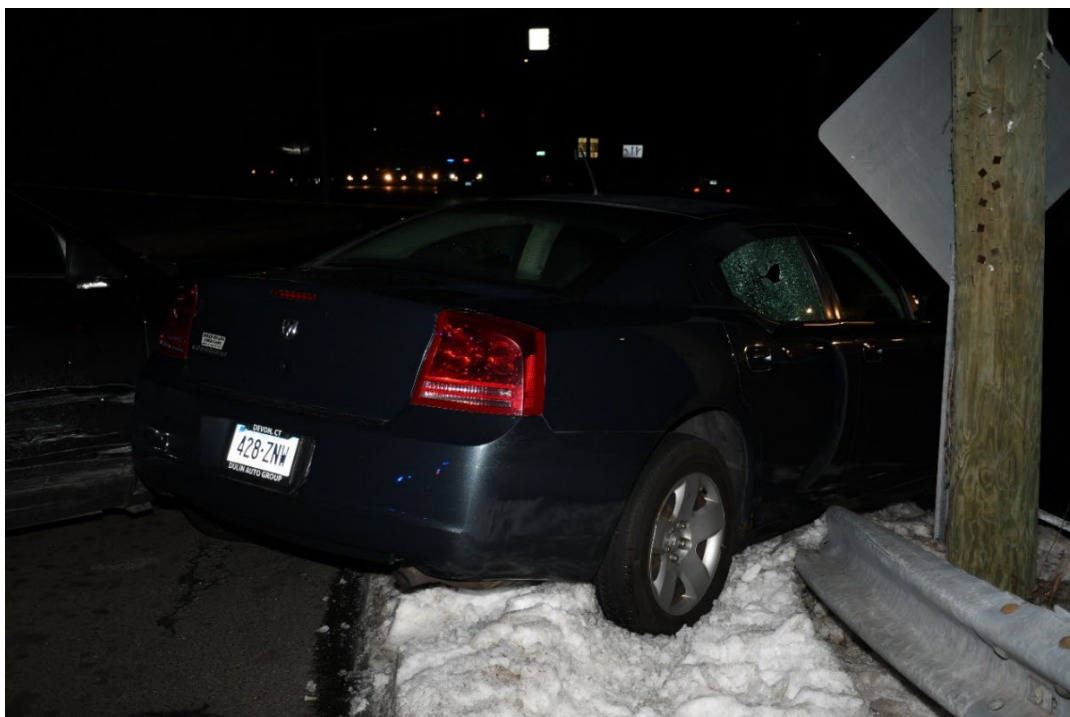


Vehicle #5: Chevrolet Impala bearing Connecticut registration 475YRE parked facing an eastern direction on Main Street Putney. This was the unmarked police vehicle driven by Officer Facto.





Vehicle #6 (Christopher Hagans): Dodge Charger bearing Connecticut registration 428-ZNW parked facing an eastern direction on the Main Street roadside. This vehicle has a flat rear passenger tire and damage to the driver's side front bumper and, door panels. There was also damage to the rear driver's side window, and rear passenger side window that was consistent with being struck by projectiles.



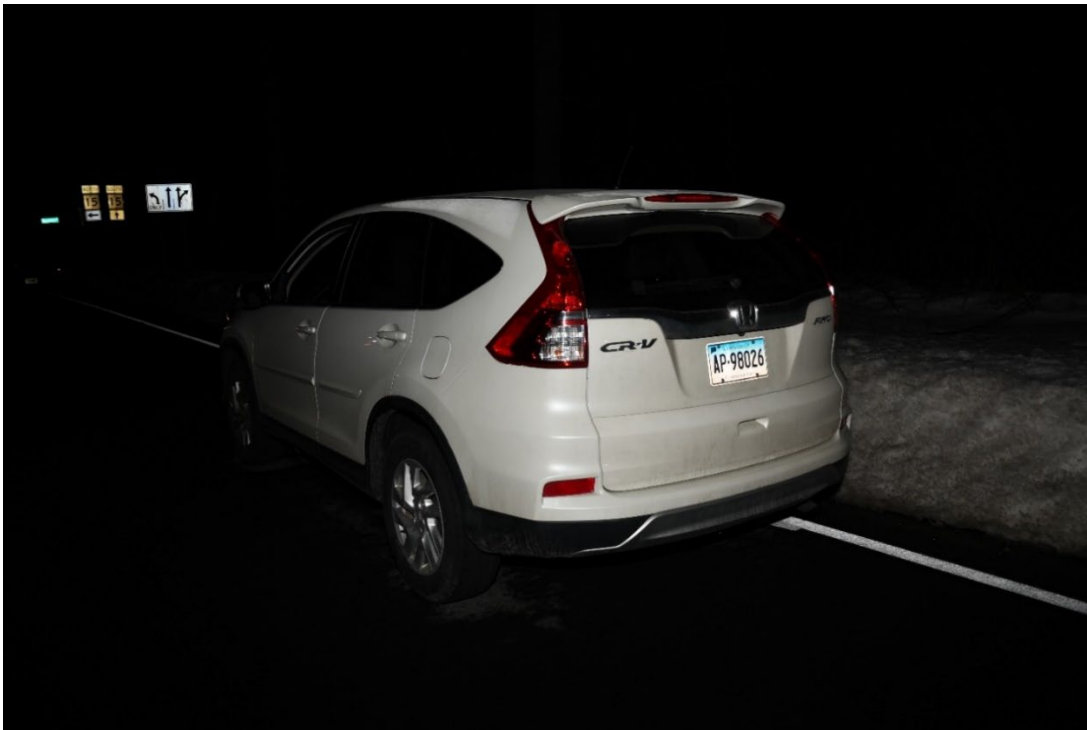








Vehicle #7 (Witness 2): Honda CR-V, color white, bearing Connecticut registration AP-98026 parked in a northern direction on Main Street. This vehicle had damage to its passenger side windows and passenger side window frame area. This damage was consistent with being struck by projectiles.









On the ground near the area where Hagans fell, were an area of blood-like substance, a single sneaker located on the south side of the road in the snow, a green/brown fleece blanket and a brown towel.









Near the blood-like stain on the wet roadway was a single brass shell casing. The laboratory determined that the Glock handgun taken from Hagans fired this casing.¹¹



¹¹ Unlike the other items of evidence, a placard does not mark this shell casing. Detective Steven Gardner seized it on February 6, 2021 at 1:32 p.m. It was the last item seized from the scene. By the time Detective Gardner discovered this item, the EDMCS van had left the scene. In the van, were the placards used to mark evidence. As a result, Detective Gardner did not have a placard to mark the shell casing.







The metal beam guardrail struck by the Dodge Charger sustained damage as did a street sign.





Inside a Stratford police vehicle (CT registration 167SF) was a black/grey colored semi-automatic handgun with a loose round and an ejected magazine located on the front passenger seat. This was the gun removed from Hagans. When recovered, the gun was loaded with eight rounds.





On the ground at various locations, were fourteen SPEER 9mm shell casings. They were marked with placards numbered one through fourteen. Stratford officers fired these.

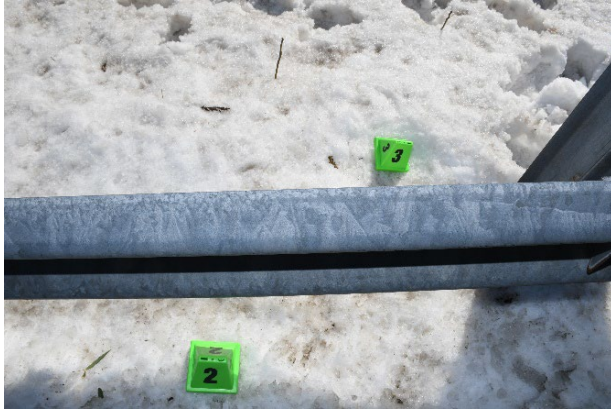
Placard #1



Placard #2



Placard #3



Placard #4



Placard #5



Placard #6



Placard #7



Placard #8



Placard #9



Placard #10



Placard #11



Placard #12



Placard #13



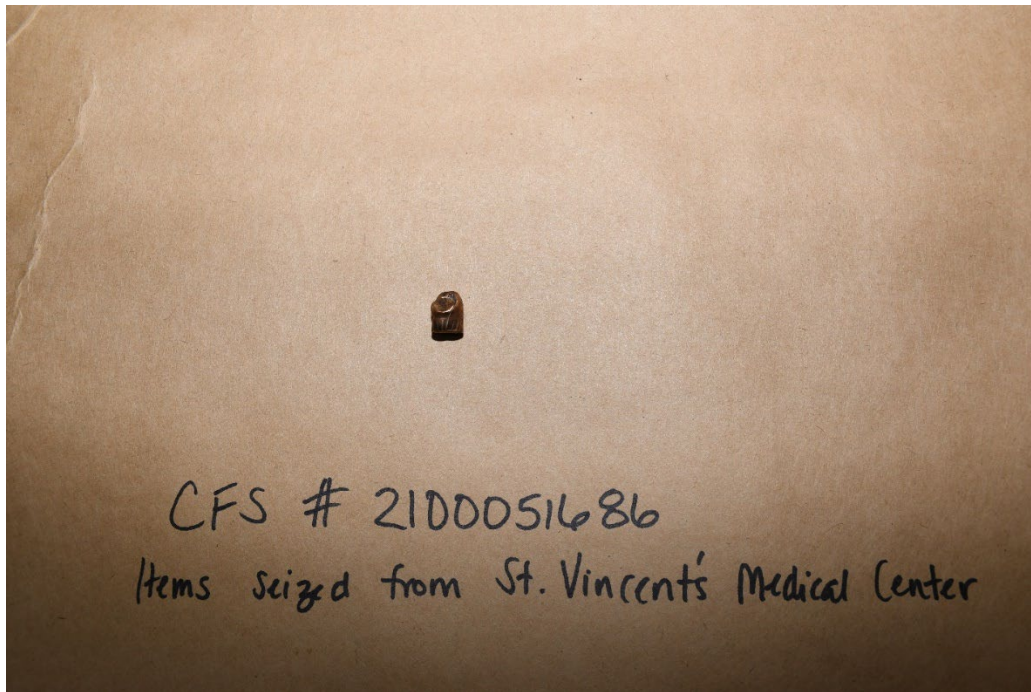
Placard #14



After processing and documenting the scene, EDMCS detectives seized all evidentiary items and logged them into evidence. In addition, detectives searched the Honda SUV and the Dodge Charger. From the Honda, detectives seized, inter alia, a copper projectile from the rear passenger seat area. From the Charger, detectives seized, inter alia, a clip-on “Houston”

holster, a drum magazine and forty-eight cartridges, a fired projectile from the left front door panel, and a fired projectile from the right rear tire.

EMS transported Hagans to St. Vincent's Hospital. He was pronounced dead by Jose Mejia, M.D. at 9:13 p.m. Hospital staff placed Hagans' clothing in a brown paper bag that they gave to the police. Found among Hagans' clothing was a fired projectile.



FORENSICS

EDMCS detectives submitted multiple items of evidence to the Division of Scientific Services for examination. The results of those examinations are summarized as follows:

Forensic Biology

The Forensic Biology unit examined the fired projectile recovered from Hagans' clothing. The laboratory detected human blood on the projectile¹².

DNA Analysis

Detectives swabbed various areas of the Glock handgun (BAKV816) recovered from Hagans. They also swabbed the drum magazine seized from the Dodge Charger. The analysis of the swab from the grip of the Glock indicated Hagans' DNA to be the source of the DNA detected. The analysis of the swab of the trigger of the Glock indicated a mixture of four individuals with at least one of them being male. Hagans' DNA could not be eliminated from that mixture. The analysis of the slide of the firearm indicated a mixture of three contributors with at least one being male. Hagans' DNA is included in the mixture.

The DNA analysis of the drum magazine yielded a mixture of two contributors with at least one of them being male. Hagans' DNA could not be eliminated from this mixture.

Latent Fingerprint Analysis

The laboratory found no latent fingerprint impressions of value on either the Glock handgun seized from Hagans or the drum magazine seized from the Dodge Charger.

Gunshot Residue (GSR) Analysis

Analysis of the GSR swab from Hagans' left hand resulted in the detection of a particle consistent with primer gunshot residue.

Firearms Unit

Detectives submitted (1) the Stratford officers' duty weapons and ammunition, (2) Hagans' firearm and ammunition, (3) the fired shell casings seized at the scene, (4) the projectiles and projectile fragments seized, and (5) the drum magazine and cartridges seized

¹² The laboratory determined that the DNA profile from the blood stain on the projectile matched Hagans' DNA.

from the Charger to the Firearms Unit for analysis. As relevant to this report, the results were as follows:

Recovered Shell Casings

The Firearms Unit determined that, based on an examination of class characteristics and individual characteristics, the shell casings recovered were fired from the submitted firearms as follows¹³:

Det. McGlynn (firearm UHR856): Casing #10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16
Projectile #84
Officer Santoro (firearm TXU857): Casing #15, 17, 18
Lt. Rosenbaum (firearm UHR845): Casing #19, 20, 21, 23
Officer Overby (firearm TXU829): Casing #22
Christopher Hagans (firearm BAKV816): Casing #24
Projectile #50

Due to damage and lack of detail, the other recovered fired projectiles and fragments could not be identified or eliminated as having been fired in any of the submitted firearms.

AUTOPSY

On February 6, 2021, Associate Medical Examiner Gregory A. Vincent, M.D. performed an autopsy on Christopher Hagans. The autopsy report lists the cause of death as "GUNSHOT WOUNDS OF THE HEAD, TORSO, AND LEFT UPPER AND LOWER EXTREMITIES." The report states the manner of death as "HOMICIDE (POLICE SHOOTING)."

Doctor Vincent's report describes five gunshot wounds:

A. Penetrating Gunshot Wound of the Head

This gunshot wound entered at the back right area of the head. There was no fouling or stippling of the skin surrounding the entrance wound. The wound track went through the head with an exit wound at the left back area of the head. There was no fouling or stippling of the skin surrounding the exit wound.

¹³ The numbers listed are the evidence numbers assigned by the Firearms Unit.

B. Penetrating Gunshot Wound of the Left Lower Extremity

This wound entered the back of the left arm and exited at the side of the arm. There was no fouling or stippling around the skin surrounding the entrance or exit wounds.

C. Penetrating Gunshot Wound of the Torso

The entrance for this wound was at the left lower back. The wound track proceeded through the torso and the projectile lodged in the skeleton musculature of the left chest. Doctor Vincent recovered the projectile and turned it over to EDMCS detectives.

D. Penetrating Gunshot Wound of the Left Lower Leg

This wound entered and exited at the front area of the left lower leg.

E. Graze Gunshot Wound of the Left Fifth Finger

This wound grazed the inner portion of the left lower finger.

The report also notes that the medical examiner obtained blood and tissue samples that were submitted for toxicological analysis. NMS Labs in Horsham, Pennsylvania, performed the analysis. NMS Labs reported that the blood sample submitted contained phencyclidine (PCP) and metabolites of marijuana.

DIGITAL EVIDENCE

In addition to Officer Facto's body-worn camera, the other relevant digital evidence is from the motor vehicle recordings (MVR) from two Stratford PD police vehicles.

Car C-1

This vehicle is operated by Officer Lawrence Overby and arrives at the intersection of Main Street Putney and Main Street at about the time that the shooting starts. The vehicle stops behind Lt. Rosenbaum's Stratford PD vehicle (196SF). To view the relevant portion of the MVR from Car C-1, click [here](#).

Car 7

This vehicle is operated by Officer John Cannata and follows Officer Santoro's vehicle to the scene. The vehicle stops near Meadowmere Street facing the wrong way on Main Street

Putney. The MVR shows Santoro approach the driver's side of the Charger and records the directions of the officers to Hagans to show his hands. It also records the sound of multiple gunshots. To view the relevant portion of the MVR from Car 7, click [here](#).

FINDINGS

The evidence developed during the investigation supports the following findings of fact:

1. On February 5, 2021, person made a complaint to the Naugatuck Police Department (Naugatuck PD) that Christopher Hagans committed strangulation, home invasion and made threats with a gun. After corroborating the complainant's statement, the Naugatuck PD sought and obtained a warrant for Hagans' arrest.
2. Sometime prior to 7:30 p.m. on February 5, 2021, the Naugatuck PD contacted the Stratford PD seeking their assistance in serving the arrest warrant. The Naugatuck PD indicated that 80 Okenuck Trail, Stratford was an address associated with Hagans and requested that the Stratford PD attempt to make contact with Hagans at that location. Naugatuck PD also told Stratford PD that Hagans was known to drive a Dodge Charger, color grey.
3. Lori Hagans, wife of Christopher Hagans, lived at 80 Okenuck Trail, Stratford. On February 5, 2021, Christopher Hagans had been at that location for about an hour and left.
4. Christopher Hagans recently told Lori Hagans that, "no matter what, he was not going to go back to jail."
5. Shortly before 7:30 p.m. on February 5, 2021, Officer John Facto and Detective Glynn McGlynn drove to the vicinity of 80 Okenuck Trail to see if Hagans or the Dodge Charger was at that location. They drove an unmarked Stratford PD vehicle. As they approached the house, they saw the back-up lights on the Charger illuminate and Hagans start to back out of the driveway. Hagans proceeded to drive away and Facto and McGlynn followed.
6. Stratford PD informed officers that, if Hagans' vehicle could be blocked at a red light, officers should attempt to stop the Charger and take Hagans into custody on the warrant.
7. Hagans' Charger ultimately came to a stop on Main Street Putney at a red traffic control signal at the intersection of Main Street Putney and Main Street, Stratford. A Honda CR-V, color white, was in front of Hagans at the red light. Facto and McGlynn, in the unmarked Stratford PD vehicle, stopped behind Hagans.

8. While the cars were stopped, Officer Santoro arrived in his marked Stratford PD vehicle. He activated the emergency red and blue lights and pulled diagonally across the front of the Charger blocking it.

9. Also arriving at the scene at this time in marked Stratford PD vehicles were Lieutenant Robert Rosenbaum, Officer Lawrence Overby, and Officer John Cannata. Their vehicles also displayed red and blue emergency lights.

10. The Stratford officers exited their police vehicles and approached the Charger. Officer Santoro approached the driver's side and Detective McGlynn the passenger side. Both officers repeatedly directed Hagans to show his hands. Hagans did not comply but started reaching with his right hand into the area between the driver's seat and the center console.

11. From his position near the driver's window of the Charger, Santoro saw that Hagans held a pistol in his hand. He yelled, "gun, gun, gun" to alert other officers that Hagans was armed.

12. Officers continued to command Hagans to show his hands, but he did not comply. At about the same time (1) Santoro fired his weapon at Hagans, (2) McGlynn fired his weapon at Hagans, and (3) Hagans drove the Charger forward colliding with Santoro's police vehicle in an effort to escape down the embankment onto Main Street. The Charger became hung up on the guardrail and immobile. McGlynn fired a shot into the right rear tire of the Charger.

13. Hagans exited the Charger and ran in the direction of the occupied white Honda SUV. He held the gun in his left hand. As he ran, he pointed the gun toward Overby. Santoro, McGlynn, Rosenbaum, and Overby fired multiple times at Hagans and he fell to the pavement just to the rear of the Honda.

14. Rosenbaum was convinced that Hagans' intent was to carjack the Honda in order to make his escape.

15. At some point, after he exited the Charger, Hagans fired his gun.

16. After Hagans fell to the pavement, Santoro approached him. Santoro recovered a handgun from Hagans' left hand. The gun was loaded with eight rounds in the magazine. It was secured in a police vehicle.

17. EMS transported Hagans to St. Vincent's Hospital. He was pronounced dead by Jose Mejia, M.D. at 9:13 p.m. A subsequent autopsy by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) determined the cause of death to be penetrating gunshot wounds of the head, torso, and left upper and lower extremities. The OCME classified the manner of death as "Homicide (Police Shooting)."

LEGAL STANDARD

The use of force by a police officer is governed by General Statutes §53a-22. The version of that statute in effect on February 5, 2021, in relevant part, provided:

“(b) ... a peace officer ... is justified in using physical force upon another person when and to the extent that he or she reasonably believes such to be necessary to: (1) Effect an arrest or prevent the escape from custody of a person whom he or she reasonably believes to have committed an offense unless he or she knows that the arrest or custody is unauthorized; or (2) defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of physical force while effecting or attempting to effect an arrest or while preventing or attempting to prevent an escape.

(c) A peace officer ... is justified in using *deadly force* upon another person for the purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section only when he or she reasonably believes such to be necessary to : (1) *Defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force ...*” (Emphasis added).

General Statutes §53a-22.

Accordingly, a police officer is justified in using deadly physical force upon another person when the officer reasonably believes such force to be necessary to defend the officer or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force. “Deadly physical force” means “physical force that can be reasonably expected to cause death or serious physical injury.” General Statutes §53a-3(5). “Serious physical injury” means “physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes serious disfigurement, serious impairment of health or serious loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ.” General Statutes §53a-3(4).

The reasonableness of a police officer’s belief under §53a-22 is evaluated pursuant to a subjective-objective formulation. *State v. Smith*, 73 Conn. App. 173, 185, 807 A.2d 500, cert. denied 262 Conn. 923, 812 A.2d 865 (2002). Under this test, the first question is whether, on the basis of all of the evidence, the police officer in fact honestly believed that deadly force was necessary to defend himself/herself or a third person. *Id.* If it is determined that the police officer honestly believed that deadly force was necessary, the second part of the test asks whether the police officer’s honest belief was reasonable from the perspective of a reasonable police officer in the officer’s circumstances. *Id.*, 198.

The United States Supreme Court has explained this test as follows: “The ‘reasonableness’ of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on scene rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight. . . .The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance of the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second decisions—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—

about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation.” *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 396–97, 109 S. Ct. 1865, 104 L. Ed. 2d 443 (1989).

ANALYSIS

Under Connecticut law as applicable here, a determination as to whether a police officer’s use of deadly force was objectively reasonable requires, in part, consideration of four questions:

1. Did the officer, as a matter of fact, actually – that is honestly and sincerely – believe that he/she or a third person was facing either the actual or imminent use of deadly force when the officer used deadly force?

2. Was that actual belief reasonable in the sense that a reasonable police officer in the officer’s circumstances at the time of the officer’s actions, viewing those circumstances from the officer’s point of view, would have shared that belief?

3. Did the officer, as a matter of fact, actually – that is honestly and sincerely – believe that the use of deadly force was necessary to defend himself/herself or a third person from such threat?

4. Was that actual belief reasonable, in the sense that a reasonable police officer in the officer’s circumstances at the time of the officer’s actions, viewing those circumstances from the officer’s point of view, would share the belief that deadly force was necessary?

The Stratford PD officers who responded to the scene at Main Street Putney knew that the court had issued an arrest warrant for Hagens for a serious felony charge that involved an alleged threat with a gun. When Officer Santoro and Detective McGlynn approached Hagens’ boxed-in car, he would not comply with their direction that he show his hands. When Santoro saw a gun in Hagens’ hand, he actually believed that that he (or another officer/civilian) was facing the imminent use of deadly force. McGlynn actually believed the same thing. They further actually believed that their use of deadly force was necessary to defend against this threat.

Hagens sought to escape arrest by driving his Charger into Santoro’s police vehicle and then over the guardrail on the east side of Main Street Putney. When the car became disabled, he fled on foot toward the Honda SUV. As he ran, he pointed his gun in the direction of Officer Overby.

Lieutenant Rosenbaum believed that Hagans intended to make his escape by carjacking the Honda. He and the other officers on scene believed that Hagans posed an imminent threat of use of deadly force against them and the civilian occupant of the Honda. They also believed that their use of deadly force was necessary to defend against this threat. These beliefs by Santoro, McGlynn, Rosenbaum, and Overby were not unfounded. To the contrary, they were reasonable because a reasonable police officer in the same situation would have shared those beliefs.

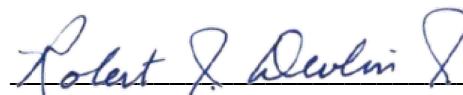
While the investigation established that Hagans did fire one round from his gun, it did not establish precisely when this occurred. The shell casing was located near Hagans and the damaged projectile was found among Hagans' clothing. These facts suggest that Hagans fired when he was near the spot where he fell. No officer, however, heard a shot from Hagans or saw a muzzle flash from his gun. Moreover, the police recovered the gun from Hagans' left hand yet he reportedly was right handed.

In sum, the officers' use of deadly force was prompted by Hagans' failure to show his hands, his possession of a gun as he desperately sought to avoid arrest, and his proximity to civilians who were at risk of being carjacked. I find such use of deadly force to be justified.

CONCLUSION

The investigation establishes that the Stratford police officers used deadly force to defend themselves and nearby civilians from the threat of imminent danger posed by Christopher Hagans who was armed and uncooperative with police. I therefore conclude that such use of force was justified under Connecticut law. The Office of Inspector General will take no further action in this matter.

Submitted this 3rd day of January, 2023.



ROBERT J. DEVLIN, JR.
INSPECTOR GENERAL

ADDENDUM

Recommendations

Body Worn Cameras (BWC)

A main purpose of police officers wearing body worn cameras is to capture and record incidents like the present case. Regrettably, although six officers responded to the scene at Main Street Putney, only Officer John Facto's BWC was available to the investigators – and Facto was on the periphery of the encounter with Hagans. Of the other five officers, two officers did not have their BWCs turned on during the incident, one officer's BWC had a dead battery, and two officers were not required by the Stratford PD at that time to wear a BWC.

The availability of additional BWC recordings would have been invaluable to this investigation. Such recordings, particularly the BWC recordings from Officer Santoro and Officer Overby, would likely have depicted Hagans while initially in the Charger holding a gun and later as he ran from that car toward the Honda still holding the gun.

One solution to the problem of officers not turning on their BWCs is to make the cameras activate automatically. Present technology can turn on a BWC when an officer activates the emergency lights on a police vehicle or un-holsters the officer's weapon. These technologies should be implemented where feasible.

Firing at Dodge Charger

Both the Stratford PD and POSTC use of force policies prohibit officers from firing at motor vehicles except in self-defense situations. At the time an officer shot at the Charger's rear tire, the car was not posing a threat to other officers or anyone else – and it was disabled. Given the proximity of civilians (see discussion below); the better course would have been not to shoot out the vehicle's tire.

Civilians

This incident presented a dynamic situation. As detailed in this report, it was Hagans' conduct that caused the officers to fire their weapons. That said, civilians were placed in harm's way. Bullets struck both the occupied Honda and occupied Mazda. The Honda's passenger side window shattered and a bullet fragment was recovered from inside the vehicle. A bullet struck the Mazda near the driver's side headlamp and penetrated the engine compartment. The occupants of both vehicles were placed in grave danger.

It is suggested that the Stratford PD examine this case to see if different police tactics could have mitigated the risk to civilians.