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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Announces the Indictment of Two Police Officers for Misconduct Related to a Fatal Crash Investigation in Anne Arundel County

BALTIMORE, MD (December 9, 2024) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the filing of criminal charges in the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County against two Anne Arundel County Police Department (AACOPD) officers for misrepresenting material facts related to a fatal police-involved pursuit. The defendants are Eddie Vasquez, 29, and Kieran Schnell, 27.

After reviewing the evidence, a grand jury of Anne Arundel County residents indicted Officer Eddie Vasquez on one count of Misconduct in Office and Corporal Kieran Schnell on two counts of Misconduct in Office. Officer Vasquez has been employed by the Anne Arundel County Police Department since September 2020. Corporal Schnell has been employed by the department since November 2019. The charges are pending before the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County.

On or about December 7, 2023, Officer Vasquez and Corporal Schnell engaged, for several miles, in a high-speed pursuit of a white Infiniti sedan on Fort Smallwood Road in the area of Curtis Bay, Maryland. Both the marked cruisers and the Infiniti traveled in excess of 100 mph during the course of the pursuit, which included travelling over a two-lane drawbridge with a speed limit of 35 miles per hour. At approximately 12:06 a.m., the pursuit ended when the Infiniti crashed at the intersection of Fort Smallwood Road and Bar Harbor Road. This crash resulted in the death of Damione Gardner, 22, the front-seat passenger of the Infiniti. The driver of the Infiniti was transported to an area hospital and was released after treatment. At no time during the pursuit did the officers activate their lights or sirens, notify dispatch communications of the pursuit, or obtain authorization for the pursuit.

The Anne Arundel County Police Department began the crash investigation, but once information surfaced in their investigation that Anne Arundel County Police Department officers had been involved in the pursuit, the department notified the Independent Investigations Division (IID) of the Office of the Attorney General. The IID, working with Maryland State Police, then took over the investigation. Their investigation revealed that immediately following the crash, both officers made factual misrepresentations and material omissions about their actions and circumstances related to the crash and concealed the pursuit.

“As your Attorney General, I must uphold the solemn responsibility of the law to hold all Marylanders accountable for their actions, regardless of their career. That accountability helps fulfill my greatest priority: keeping Maryland residents safe,” **said Attorney General Brown.** “When police officers are untruthful during an investigation, they not only break the law, but they also undermine the principles of honesty and integrity that are the foundation of all law enforcement’s efforts to protect the public.”

Under Maryland law, the IID is charged with investigating police-involved incidents that result in the death of individuals or injuries likely to result in death, as well as any other crime related to police misconduct that is discovered during an investigation. For incidents that occur after October 1, 2023, if the Attorney General determines that the investigation provides sufficient grounds for prosecution, then the IID has exclusive authority to prosecute the offense.

A criminal indictment is merely an accusation of wrongdoing, and not proof of a defendant’s guilt. Each defendant is presumed innocent until they are proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

For a copy of the indictments in this case, please click here:

https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/News%20Documents/120924_Redacted%20Indictment_EVasquez.pdf

https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/News%20Documents/120924%20Redacted_Indictment_KSchnell.pdf

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<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2024/120924.pdf>