



# INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

Report Concerning the Police-Involved  
Death in Baltimore on January 31, 2025

August 12, 2025

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## **Declination Report Concerning the Police-Involved Death of Garry Wright on January 31, 2025**

The Independent Investigations Division of the Maryland Office of the Attorney General (the “IID”) is charged with investigating “police-involved incidents that result in the death of individuals or injuries likely to result in death.”<sup>1</sup> If the Attorney General determines that the investigation provides sufficient grounds for prosecution, then the IID “shall have exclusive authority to prosecute the offense.”<sup>2</sup>

### **I. Introduction**

On January 31, 2025, at approximately 8:40 a.m., a man entered the Baltimore City - Eastside District Court (“the Courthouse”), and while standing near the door, pulled a handgun from his pocket and pointed it at his head. A courthouse bailiff responsible for security at the entrance then drew his service weapon and pointed it at the man. The man shot himself in the head, and the bailiff shot the man once in the leg. The man was then transported to a local hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

After completing its investigation and evaluating all available evidence, the Office of the Attorney General has determined that the subject officers did not commit a crime under Maryland law. Accordingly, the Attorney General has declined to prosecute the subject officer in this case.

The IID’s investigation focused exclusively on potential criminal culpability relating to the subject officer’s conduct. By statute, the IID only has jurisdiction to investigate the actions of police officers, not that of any other individual involved in the incident. Moreover, the IID’s analysis does not consider issues of civil liability or the department’s administrative review of the subject officer’s conduct. Compelled statements by a subject officer may be considered in civil or administrative proceedings but may not be considered in criminal investigations or prosecutions due to a subject officer’s Fifth Amendment rights. If any compelled statements exist in this case, the IID has not considered them in this investigation.

This report is composed of a factual narrative, followed by a legal analysis. Every fact in the narrative is supported by the evidence obtained in this investigation, including an autopsy report, 911 calls, dispatch records, departmental policy, video surveillance footage, and interviews with civilian and law enforcement witnesses.<sup>3</sup> The subject officer in this case chose not to make statements to the IID, which had no impact on the prosecutorial decision.

The legal analysis explains why the IID will not bring charges under the relevant Maryland statutes.

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Code, State Gov’t § 6-602 (c)(1).

<sup>2</sup> Md. Code, State Gov’t § 6-604 (a)(1).

<sup>3</sup> The Maryland State Police Forensic Sciences Division’s report regarding the ballistic evidence recovered from the scene is still pending. The findings of the firearms examination have no bearing on the criminal liability of Bailiff Brown.

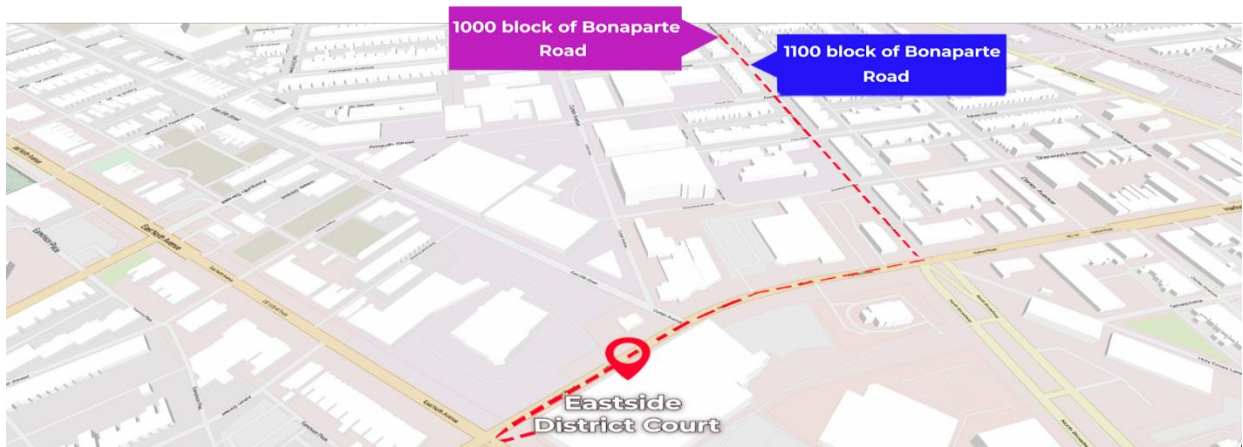
This investigation involved one decedent and one subject officer:

- A. The decedent, Garry Wright, Jr., was 35 years old at the time of the incident. He was a Black male who lived in Baltimore, Maryland.
- B. Special Police Officer Gary Brown has been a Bailiff at the Baltimore City Eastside District Courthouse since April 2023.<sup>4</sup> He previously served as an officer with the Baltimore Police Department for 20 years. He is a Black male, and at the time of the incident was 44 years old.

The IID reviewed all available departmental disciplinary records and criminal histories of these involved parties and where they existed, determined that none were relevant to this investigation.

## II. Factual Summary

On January 31, 2025, between approximately 8:30 a.m. and 8:40 a.m., several witnesses called the Baltimore Emergency Communications Center and reported that a man, later identified as Garry Wright, was walking down Bonaparte Avenue with a gun pointed at his head. One civilian (“Witness”) saw Mr. Wright holding the handgun to his head and followed him. Witness, believing Mr. Wright was suicidal, shouted “don’t do it” at him. As Mr. Wright yelled unintelligibly, he traveled from Bonaparte Avenue to Harford Road toward the Courthouse, located on the corner of Harford Road and East North Avenue.



**Image 1:** Map of the area showing the approximately .35-mile route Mr. Wright traveled from Bonaparte Avenue to the Eastside District Court.

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<sup>4</sup> Bailiff Brown is a Special Police Officer who was appointed a special police commission. Pursuant to Maryland Public Safety Code, Subtitle 3, the commission was issued for Bailiff Brown to serve as a District Court of Maryland Bailiff. Therefore, he is required to “protect and preserve peace and good order” on the District Court property and may “exercise the powers of a police officer on the property”. See MD Code, Public Safety § 3-307. While Bailiff Brown’s commission is not expressly included as part of the IID’s authority under MD Code, Public Safety §3-201, the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office referred this matter to the IID for investigation on March 3, 2025.

As Mr. Wright approached the entrance of the Courthouse, Witness continued to follow and tried to deter him from self-harm. At 8:40 a.m., Mr. Wright continued to yell unintelligibly, placed the handgun in his right pocket, and then entered the Courthouse. Witness followed Mr. Wright into the Courthouse and repeated, “Don’t do this.” Mr. Wright mumbled in response.



**Image 2 (left):** Still image from exterior Courthouse surveillance camera footage showing Mr. Wright (circled in red) after he crossed the Harford Road and began approaching the Courthouse. Witness (circled in yellow) follows.

**Image 3 (right):** Still image from the Courthouse’s exterior surveillance camera footage showing Mr. Wright on the entrance steps to the courthouse.

Mr. Wright entered the Courthouse with Witness following seconds later. Shortly thereafter, Witness retreated from the building and warned civilians outside not to enter. Mr. Wright then pulled the handgun out of his pocket and held it to his head. Four bailiffs working security near the entrance drew their service weapons and pointed them at Mr. Wright. Unarmed security guards and court personnel took cover. Mr. Wright continued holding the handgun to his head and mumbled as the bailiffs and security guards repositioned themselves behind the security screening checkpoint. The bailiffs commanded Mr. Wright to drop the gun, but he did not comply. Special Police Officer Gary Brown (“Bailiff Brown”) ran down the hallway toward the entrance, stopped at the edge of the hallway, and drew his service weapon. Mr. Wright sat on the floor against an entryway wall, with the handgun still to his head.



**Image 5:** Still image from interior courthouse surveillance camera footage showing Mr. Wright (circled in red) and Witness (circled in yellow) inside the Courthouse positioned just before the security checkpoint.



**Image 6:** Still image from interior Courthouse surveillance camera footage showing Mr. Wright (circled in red) seated holding a handgun to his head and two bailiffs, including Bailiff Brown, with their service weapons drawn (circled in blue).

At 8:41:47 a.m., Mr. Wright shot himself in the head. Bailiff Brown immediately fired two shots; one struck Mr. Wright in the right leg and the other struck a window. A witness bailiff instructed everyone to put their weapons down, approached Mr. Wright, kicked away his handgun, and then checked for a pulse. Another bailiff requested emergency medical services, and a doctor (who was present in the Courthouse) assisted while waiting for the arrival of the medics. Approximately four minutes later, medics from the Baltimore City Fire Department arrived and transported Mr. Wright to an area hospital, where he died the next day.

### III. Supplemental Information

#### A. Autopsy

On February 3, 2025, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (“OCME”) performed an autopsy on Mr. Wright. The medical examiner concluded that a contact gunshot wound to the head caused Mr. Wright’s death and determined that the manner of his death was “Suicide.”<sup>5</sup>

The autopsy report noted that there was evidence of contact range discharge to the head wound that included deposited soot and lacerations. In addition to the fatal wound to the head that Mr. Wright sustained, there was one additional gunshot wound to the right leg that the medical examiner determined was non-contributory toward Mr. Wright’s death. There was no evidence of a close-range fire on Mr. Wright’s leg wound.

Toxicology testing revealed that narcotics were present in Mr. Wright’s system at the time of the incident.

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<sup>5</sup> Manner of death is a classification used to define whether a death is from intentional causes, unintentional causes, natural causes, or undetermined causes. The OCME uses five categories of manner of death: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined. “Suicide” applies when death results from an injury or poisoning as a result of an intentional, self-inflicted act. This term is not considered a legal determination; rather, they are largely used to assist in the collection of public health statistics. *A Guide for Manner of Death Classification*, First Edition, National Association of Medical Examiners, February 2002.

## B. Department Policy

The District Court of Maryland maintains a security manual that governs Bailiffs' responsibilities. Bailiffs are permitted to use deadly force, defined as "that degree of force likely to result in death or serious physical injury," to protect themselves or another person from imminent death or serious bodily injury. Whether deadly force is "proper, reasonable, and necessary in a given situation" depends on the nature of the offense, the behavior of the subject, actions by third parties who are present, physical odds against the bailiff, and the feasibility or availability of alternative actions. Bailiffs must complete a firearm qualification to start work.

The District Court Administrative Regulations prohibit individuals, even those with a valid handgun permit, from carrying firearms on District Court property, unless explicitly permitted by the District Court in connection with their official business. Bailiffs are responsible for enforcing this provision: law enforcement officers not on official duty must surrender their firearms to the bailiff upon entry into the courthouse.

## IV. Legal Analysis

After a criminal investigation, prosecutors must determine whether to bring criminal charges against a person to hold them accountable pursuant to Maryland law. When making that determination, prosecutors have a legal and ethical duty to only charge a person with a crime when they can meet the State's burden of proof; that is, when the available evidence can prove each element of that crime beyond a reasonable doubt. Prosecutors must also determine whether the accused person could raise an affirmative defense. In those cases, prosecutors not only need to prove the crime, but also must determine whether the evidence could disprove the defense beyond a reasonable doubt. Ultimately, the decision to bring any charges rests on whether the available evidence is sufficient for prosecutors to meet those standards.

Based on the evidence, two relevant offenses were considered in this case. In this case, the IID examined whether the subject officer had criminal culpability both for Mr. Wright's death and for the shooting that resulted in Mr. Wright's non-fatal injury. The two offenses analyzed are a violation of Maryland's Use of Force Statute, which makes it a crime for officers to intentionally use excessive force,<sup>6</sup> and Assault in the First Degree ("First-Degree Assault"), respectively.

The evidence in this case shows that the subject officer did not violate any of the aforementioned statutes. Accordingly, the IID will not pursue criminal charges against the subject officer. This report explains in further detail why, based on the evidence, a prosecutor could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officer committed a crime.

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<sup>6</sup> See Md. Code, Public Safety §3-524(d)(1).

## A. Maryland Use of Force Statute

Proving a violation of the Use of Force Statute requires a prosecutor to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that a subject officer:

- (1) used force that was not necessary and proportional to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury to themselves or another person, or to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement objective;/
- (2) intended to use force that was excessive, *i.e.*, not necessary and proportional under the circumstances; and
- (3) the use of excessive force resulted in serious bodily injury or death;<sup>7</sup>

First, prosecutors would need to establish that the subject officer used force that was not necessary and proportional under the circumstances. Second, prosecutors would need to prove that the subject officer intended to use force that was excessive. Finally, prosecutors would need to establish that the excessive force used by the subject officer resulted in Mr. Wright's serious bodily injury or death.

Determining whether an officer's use of force is "necessary and proportional" to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury to someone or accomplish a legitimate law enforcement objective is a fact-specific inquiry. Generally speaking, a use of force is considered "necessary and proportional" when an officer had no reasonable alternative available to the officer under the circumstances, the kind and degree of force was appropriate in light of the officer's legitimate law enforcement objective, and it was not likely to result in harm that was out of proportion or too severe in relation to the officer's law enforcement objective, given the context in which it was used.<sup>8</sup> When a factfinder—either a judge or a jury—conducts this analysis, they must consider the totality of the circumstances, including, but not limited to, the nature of the call for service, what occurred in the moments before force was used, what the subject officers knew at the time force was used, and the time and distances involved.<sup>9</sup>

Based on the totality of the circumstances, there is no evidence that the subject officer intended to use force that exceeded that which was necessary and proportional to prevent Mr. Wright from being a danger to themselves or others. First, with respect to whether the use of force was necessary, Mr. Wright's behavior posed a threat to the safety of the civilians and the courthouse personnel on scene. Mr. Wright entered the courthouse and, within moments, drew a handgun from his pocket. While Mr. Wright was pointing the handgun at his own head, his behavior while in the courthouse was erratic, and he did not comply with commands to drop the handgun. Mr. Wright then sat on the ground and fired his weapon.

Second, with respect to whether the kind and degree of force used by the subject officer was proportional to the imminent threat of harm presented by Mr. Wright, video evidence shows

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<sup>7</sup> MPJI-Cr 4:36.

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the "necessary and proportional" standard, see [this opinion](#) written by the Office of the Attorney General. 107 Op. Atty. Gen. Md. 33

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

that the force used by the subject officer was appropriate. As mentioned above, Mr. Wright refused to discard his handgun throughout the encounter and subsequently fired his weapon.

Based on the evidence, a prosecutor could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officer's use of force was not necessary and proportional to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury to everyone in the vicinity of the security checkpoint. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge the subject officer with a violation of the Use of Force Statute.

#### B. First-Degree Assault

Proving a violation of the First-Degree Assault requires a prosecutor to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officer intentionally or recklessly caused physical harm without legal justification and:

- (1) Used a firearm to commit assault; or
- (2) Intended to cause serious physical injury in the commission of the assault<sup>10</sup>

More specifically, we must consider whether the officer committed an assault by firing at and shooting Mr. Wright.

Law enforcement justification is an affirmative defense, which requires the prosecutor to prove that the subject officer's actions were not justified.<sup>11</sup> An officer will not be criminally liable for assault, which includes the use of deadly force, if an officer only uses "force reasonably necessary to discharge his official duties."<sup>12</sup> In assessing the force, the totality of the circumstances must be considered, and the reasonableness must be judged "from the perspective of a reasonable police officer ... as they appeared to the officer at the time he acted".<sup>13</sup> Further, the affirmative defenses of self-defense and defense of others both require a prosecutor to prove that the subject officer did not reasonably believe that another person or themselves were "in immediate or imminent danger of bodily harm," and that the force was not reasonably necessary in light of the threat.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Wright entered the Courthouse and, within a few moments, brandished a handgun and ignored commands to drop the handgun. Mr. Wright posed an active threat of imminent danger to the lives of people within the Courthouse. The subject officer's use of deadly force was reasonably necessary because of the imminent threat of harm. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge the subject officers with First-Degree Assault or any related offenses.

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<sup>10</sup> MPJI 4:01.1A. (see also MPJI 4:01).

<sup>11</sup> See *Riley v. State*, 227 Md. App. 249, 259 (2016)

<sup>12</sup> *Wilson v. State*, 87 Md. App. 512, 519 (1991)

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> MPJI Cr 5:01; MPJI Cr 5:07.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This report has presented factual findings, legal analysis, and conclusions relevant to the January 31, 2025, police-involved death of Garry Wright in Baltimore, Maryland. The Office of the Attorney General has declined to pursue charges in this case because, based on the evidence obtained in its investigation, the subject officer did not commit a crime.