



INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

Report Concerning the Police-Involved Death in
Baltimore on June 17, 2025

December 16, 2025

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The Declination Report Concerning the Police-Involved Death of Bilal Abdullah, Jr. on June 17, 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.”¹ If the Attorney General determines that the investigation provides sufficient grounds for prosecution, then the IID “shall have exclusive authority to prosecute the offense.”²

I. Introduction

On June 17, 2025, at approximately 6:40 p.m., Baltimore City Police Department (BPD) officers received a tip about a man carrying a concealed handgun in a bag in the area of Pennsylvania Avenue and Laurens Street. Officers arrived in the area at approximately 7:15 p.m. and encountered an adult man carrying a crossbody bag who matched the description from the tip, later identified as Bilal Abdullah, Jr. Officers approached Mr. Abdullah and Mr. Abdullah fled. An officer engaged in a foot chase and caught up to and grabbed Mr. Abdullah. Mr. Abdullah reached into his bag and a handgun in the bag discharged. Mr. Abdullah pulled the gun from the bag and fired the handgun at the officers, who returned fire striking Mr. Abdullah. Officers secured Mr. Abdullah’s handgun, but a crowd gathered around him and delayed officers from rendering aid. BPD officers secured the scene after several minutes, then administered medical assistance until emergency medical services (“EMS”) arrived. Medics transported Mr. Abdullah to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead. One officer sustained a gunshot wound to his lower body.

After completing its investigation and evaluating all the 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 any of the subject officers in this case.

The IID’s investigation focused exclusively on potential criminal culpability relating to the subject officers’ conduct. By statute, the IID only has jurisdiction to investigate the actions of police officers, not those of any other individuals 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 officers’ conduct. Compelled statements by subject officers may be considered in civil or administrative proceedings but may not be considered in criminal investigations or prosecutions due to the subject officers’ 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 forensic and autopsy reports, police radio transmissions, dispatch records, police and EMS reports, police body-worn camera footage, surveillance video, photographs, department policy, and interviews with

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

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

civilian and law enforcement witnesses. The subject officers 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.

This investigation involved one decedent and three subject officers:

- A. The decedent, Bilal Yusuf-Muhammad Abdullah Jr. was 36 years old at the time of the incident. He was a Black male who lived in Baltimore, Maryland.
- B. Officer Omar Rodriguez has been employed by BPD since September of 2018. He is a Hispanic male who was 34 years old at the time of the incident.
- C. Officer Devon Yancy has been employed by BPD since March of 2017. He is a Black male who was 37 years old at the time of the incident.
- D. Officer Ashley Negron has been employed by BPD since February of 2018. She is a Hispanic female who was 33 years old at the time of the incident.

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 the legal analysis.

II. Factual Summary

On June 17, 2025, at approximately 6:40 p.m., a private citizen sent a text message to an off-duty BPD Sergeant that a man on the 1800 block of Pennsylvania Avenue in Baltimore was carrying a gun in his bag. The text was accompanied by a photo of a Black male wearing a white t-shirt, a black, white, and orange baseball cap, denim shorts, and a crossbody bag. A few minutes later, the off-duty Sergeant forwarded the text and photo to a BPD detective assigned to the Baltimore Community Intelligence Center ("BCIC").



Image 1: A screenshot from an off-duty BPD Sergeant's cell phone showing a photograph of Bilal Abdullah, Jr.



Image 2: A still photograph from a BCIC surveillance camera showing Mr. Abdullah (circled in green) sitting near an MTA stop on the 1700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, which was forwarded to Detective Yancy.

Shortly afterward, the BCIC detective located the same Black male on live CCTV footage near an MTA stop on the 1700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue. The BCIC detective then contacted Group Violence Unit (“GVU”) Detective Devin Yancy and forwarded the information and both photos. At the time, Detective Yancy was a passenger in an unmarked police cruiser on a crime suppression detail roughly fifteen minutes away from the area, along with Detective Omar Rodriguez and a witness officer who was driving the cruiser. All three officers wore plain clothes and BPD-issued tactical vests marked “POLICE.” Once Detective Yancy received the texts, the three officers responded to Pennsylvania Avenue to attempt to locate the individual in the photos, later identified by investigators as Bilal Abdullah, Jr.

At approximately 7:15 p.m., the unmarked cruiser approached the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Laurens Street, and the officers saw Mr. Abdullah, who was wearing the clothing in the photos. Mr. Abdullah briefly walked up to the cruiser and greeted the officers, then began walking away. At that point, all three officers activated their body-worn cameras. Detective Rodriguez exited the cruiser then followed Mr. Abdullah, who was walking across Laurens Street toward the Upton Metro Stop. Around the same time, Mr. Abdullah walked past BPD Officer Ashley Negrón as she sat in a marked patrol car.

At roughly 7:16 p.m., Mr. Abdullah reached the sidewalk and began running away from Detective Rodriguez, who immediately chased after him. As he ran, Mr. Abdullah moved his bag around to the front of his torso and reached into it. In the meantime, Officer Negrón and Detective Yancy both exited their cruisers and ran toward Mr. Abdullah to assist Detective Rodriguez. Within a few seconds, as Detective Rodriguez caught up to Mr. Abdullah and grabbed his shirt, Mr. Abdullah’s handgun discharged once, and he fell to the ground. Detective Rodriguez retreated from Mr. Abdullah, who was trying to stand up with his handgun pointed towards Detective Rodriguez.



Image 3: A still photo from Detective Rodriguez’s body-worn camera, showing Mr. Abdullah beginning to stand up and holding a handgun (circled in green).

Nearly simultaneously, Detective Yancy and Officer Negron ran toward Mr. Abdullah with their handguns drawn. A moment later, Mr. Abdullah turned, aimed, and fired his handgun at Detective Yancy, striking and wounding him in the right foot. Officer Negron and Detective Yancy returned fire, striking Mr. Abdullah and causing him to fall to the ground and drop his handgun. From the ground, Mr. Abdullah retrieved his handgun and aimed it at Officer Negron. While seeking cover, Detective Rodriguez ran around the Upton Metro Station and fired multiple shots at Mr. Abdullah from behind.



Images 4, 5, & 6: Still photographs from a surveillance camera showing from left to right (1) Mr. Abdullah aiming and firing his handgun at Detective Yancy, (2) Mr. Abdullah retrieving his dropped handgun after Officer Negron and Detective Yancy returned fire, and (3) Mr. Abdullah aiming his handgun at Officer Negron. Mr. Abdullah's handgun is circled in green, and the officers are circled in red in each photo.

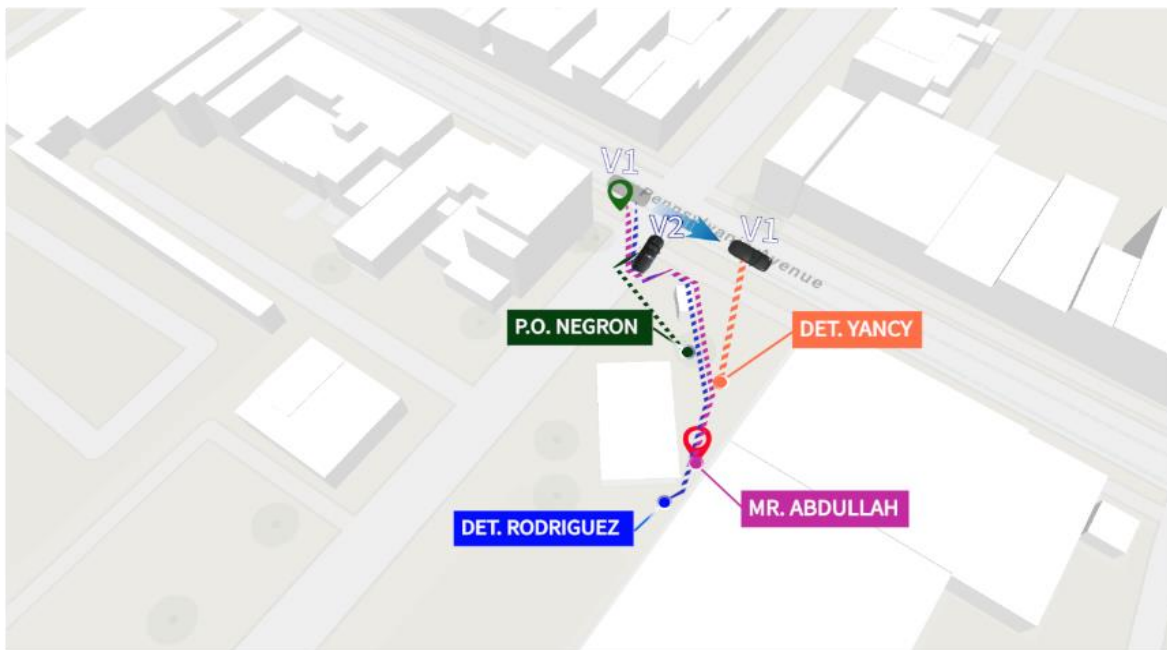


Image 7: A diagram showing the approximate locations of Mr. Abdullah and the subject officers at the time of the shooting.

When the shooting stopped, Officer Negron and Detective Rodriguez advanced toward Mr. Abdullah. Officer Negron secured Mr. Abdullah's handgun. However, within moments, a crowd of uninvolved civilian bystanders converged on the area and began yelling and shoving Detective Rodriguez away from Mr. Abdullah. The bystanders surrounded Mr. Abdullah and actively prevented BPD officers from immediately providing medical aid. After approximately four minutes, BPD officers cleared the scene and provided aid until medics took over. Mr. Abdullah was transported to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Detective Yancy was taken to a local hospital for treatment of his gunshot wound.

III. Supplemental Information

A. Autopsy

On June 18, 2025, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (the "OCME") performed an autopsy of Mr. Abdullah. Mr. Abdullah sustained seven gunshot wounds to his torso and lower body. The Medical Examiner concluded that multiple gunshot wounds caused Mr. Abdullah's death and determined that the manner of his death was "homicide."³

B. Firearms Recovery and Ballistics Information

BPD Crime Scene Unit technicians responded to the scene, and while processing the scene, recovered each of the subject officer's department issued handguns, two Glock 22, a .40 caliber semi-automatic handguns, a Glock 45, and a 9mm semi-automatic handgun.⁴ Technicians also recovered the handgun possessed by Mr. Abdullah, a Colt Government Model Mk IV Series 70, .38 super auto semi-automatic handgun, as well as a magazine, four .380 cartridge cases, and one 9mm cartridge case.

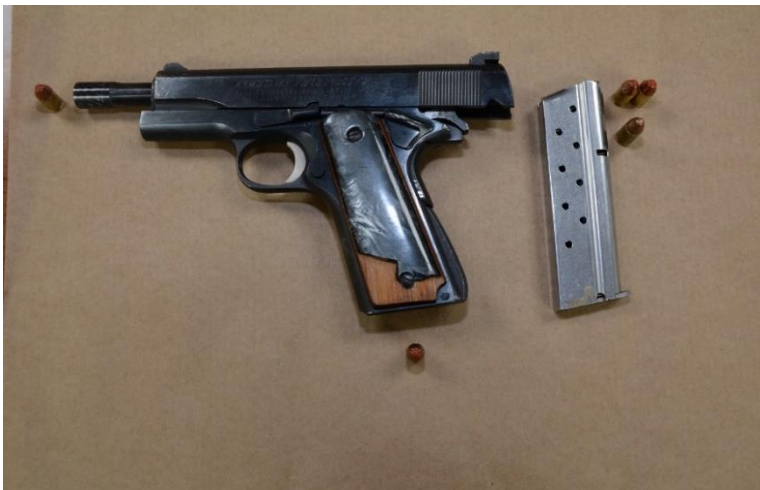


Image 8: A photograph of the handgun and ammunition recovered from Mr. Abdullah after the shooting.

³ 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. "Homicide" applies when death results from a volitional act committed by another person to cause fear, harm, or death. 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.

⁴ The IID and BPD have entered a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), recognizing that on January 12, 2017, BPD entered a federal consent decree, which imposed certain obligations to investigate officer-involved fatalities. Given the IID's statutory obligations pursuant to Maryland law, and for BPD to meet its obligations under the federal consent decree, the MOU states that both agencies' investigators will investigate all officer-involved deaths while cooperating and communicating with one another. The MOU further states that if the IID determines that BPD cannot maintain the level of impartiality required to conduct a thorough investigation, the IID may take over sole investigative responsibility for the case. In the present case, the IID and BPD have collaborated throughout the investigation.

The BPD Forensic Laboratory Section conducted a firearms analysis, including the weapons, cartridge cases and bullets recovered from the scene. Each of the subject officers' department issued handguns and the Colt Government Model Mk IV Series 70 handgun were submitted for analysis, and forensic testing confirmed that they were operable.

Based on the evidence recovered at the scene by crime scene technicians, Mr. Abdullah fired at least three rounds from his handgun, Detective Rodriguez fired at least eight rounds from his department issued handgun, Detective Yancey fired at least twelve rounds from his department issued handgun, and Officer Negron fired at least fifteen rounds from her department issued handgun.

C. Department Policy

BPD provides officers with written policies and procedures, as well as practical training in the use of force. The BPD policies and training materials encompass the written policies and procedures for its sworn officers, which include several written policies relevant to this investigation.

BPD use of force policy includes the use of deadly force (Policy 1115) and the use of firearms (Policy 409). These two policies state that an officer "shall use only the force Reasonable, Necessary, and Proportional to respond to the threat or resistance to effectively and safely resolve an incident and will immediately reduce the level of force as the threat or resistance diminishes."

The policies define those terms as follows:

- Reasonable: "A member uses Reasonable Force when the member uses no more force than required to perform a lawful purpose."
- Necessary: "Force is necessary only when no reasonably effective alternative exists."
- Proportional: "Proportionality measures whether the force used by the member is rationally related to the level of resistance or aggression confronting the member."

The use of force policy specifies that "[t]he use of Deadly Force/Lethal Force shall always be the last resort," and shall occur only when officers "reasonably believe such action is immediately necessary to protect a member or another person from an Imminent Threat of death or Serious Physical Injury." Before using deadly force, officers "shall consider environmental considerations such as field of fire, backdrop."

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 charge a person with a crime only 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 they also need to 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, three relevant offenses were considered in this case. First is the violation of Maryland's Use of Force Statute, which makes it a crime for officers to intentionally use excessive force.⁵ The second and third offenses are homicide related charges based on the intentional killing of a person.

There is insufficient evidence to prove that the subject officers violated the aforementioned statutes. Accordingly, the IID will not pursue criminal charges against them. This report explains in further detail why, based on the evidence, a prosecutor could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that any officer committed a crime.

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;⁶

In this case, it is undisputed that the subject officers caused Mr. Abdullah's death, so only the first two elements are at issue. 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 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.⁷ 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.⁸

Based on the totality of the circumstances, there is no evidence that the subject officers intended to use force that exceeded that which was necessary and proportional to prevent Mr.

⁵ See Md. Code, Public Safety §3-524(d)(1).

⁶ MPJI-Cr 4:36 (3d ed. 2024).

⁷ 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.

⁸ *Id.*

Abdullah from being a danger to themselves or others. First, with respect to whether the use of force was necessary, Mr. Abdullah's behavior posed a threat to the safety of each of the subject officers, as well as civilian bystanders in the area at the time of the incident. Mr. Abdullah fired the first shot, pointed his handgun at Detective Rodriguez, fired at and struck Detective Yancy, and aimed his handgun at Officer Negron. Each of those acts created an imminent threat of death or injury to each of the subject officers. In short, Mr. Abdullah aiming and firing his handgun left the subject officers with no reasonable alternative to protect themselves other than deadly force.

Second, with respect to whether the kind and degree of force used by the subject officers was proportional to the imminent threat of harm presented by Mr. Abdullah, video evidence shows that the force used by the subject officers was appropriate. As mentioned above, Mr. Abdullah fired the first shot, shot one of the subject officers, and attempted to shoot a second officer.

Based on the evidence, a prosecutor could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officers' use of force was not necessary and proportional to prevent an imminent threat of physical injury or death to themselves or each other. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge the subject officers with a violation of the Use of Force Statute.

B. Homicide Offenses

When a person is killed, there are four homicide charges that a prosecutor may consider in the State of Maryland:

- First Degree Murder: the willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing of another.⁹
- Second Degree Murder: when the defendant intended to kill or inflict such serious injury that death would be the likely result and there was no justification or mitigating circumstances.¹⁰
- Voluntary Manslaughter: an intentional killing that is not murder because the defendant acted in partial self-defense.¹¹
- Involuntary Manslaughter: when the defendant acted with gross negligence and that conduct caused the death of another.¹²

First Degree Murder was not considered in this case because there is no evidence to support that the shooting of Mr. Abdullah was premeditated. Premeditation requires a prosecutor to prove that "the design to kill must have preceded the killing by an appreciable length of time, that is, time enough to be deliberate."¹³ While this inquiry requires a fact-specific evaluation, a factfinder should consider the totality of the circumstances, including whether an individual is defending themselves against deadly force.¹⁴ As the shooting of Mr. Abdullah was intentional, but not premeditated, Second-Degree Murder and Voluntary Manslaughter are the homicide offenses that remain for consideration.

⁹ MPJI-Cr. 4:17 (3d ed. 2024).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ MPJI-Cr 4:17.2 (3d ed. 2024).

¹² MPJI-Cr. 4:17.9 (3d ed. 2024).

¹³ *Tichnell v. State*, 287 Md. 695, 717 (1980).

¹⁴ See *Purnell v. State*, 250 Md. App 703, 714-715 (2021).

If the evidence indicates that there is legal justification or certain mitigating circumstances involved, such as self-defense, then a prosecutor could not prove the remaining homicide offenses against the subject officers. If a defendant has the requisite *mens rea* to uphold a claim of complete self-defense or defense of others – specifically, a subjective belief that their or another’s life was in imminent danger that was objectively reasonable under the circumstances, then the claims are valid regardless of any unintended consequences.¹⁵ A police officer’s use of deadly force is legally justified if it is in complete self-defense, defense of others, or in furtherance of law enforcement related duties.¹⁶

Complete self-defense and defense of others, also known as perfect self-defense or defense of others, exists when the accused: (1) was not the initial aggressor (or did not raise the level of force to deadly force); (2) had the subjective belief that they or another person were in immediate or imminent danger of serious harm or death; (3) that belief was objectively reasonable; (4) used force that was not more than what was reasonably necessary in light of the threat or actual force; and (5) used force for the purpose of aiding the person that they were defending.¹⁷ Complete self-defense and defense of others are affirmative defenses, which means that a prosecutor must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that one of the elements of either defense is not applicable.

When an officer has sufficient probable cause to believe that a person poses a “threat of serious physical harm,” then the officer may use deadly force,¹⁸ and the reasonableness of that decision must be viewed from “the perspective of a reasonable police officer similarly situated.”¹⁹ In practice, this means that a factfinder must consider that police officers often work under rapidly changing circumstances and that what constitutes a reasonable use of force may change from moment to moment.²⁰

The evidence shows that Mr. Abdullah was the aggressor because he fired the initial shot, then aimed and fired at the subject officers. Those facts provide a basis for the subject officers to believe that their own lives, each other’s lives, and the lives of the civilians in the immediate vicinity were in danger, and that such a belief was reasonable. Since each of the subject officers faced a threat of death or injury from Mr. Abdullah, their use of deadly force against Mr. Abdullah was reasonably necessary.

Based on the investigation, the subject officers’ actions do not constitute the crime of Second-Degree Murder because the evidence would not allow a prosecutor to overcome any of the elements of complete self-defense. Moreover, because complete self-defense also applies to Voluntary Manslaughter,²¹ a prosecutor would be unable to prove any homicide offense in this matter. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge the subject officers with a homicide offense.

¹⁵ See *Malaska v. State*, 216 Md. App. 492, 517-522 (2014).

¹⁶ *Id.*; MPJI-Cr 4:17.3 (3d ed. 2024).

¹⁷ *Porter v. State*, 455 Md. 220, 234-36 (2017); MPJI-Cr 4:17.2, *supra*.

¹⁸ *Estate of Blair v. Austin*, 469 Md. 1, 24 (2020) (quoting *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1, 11 (1985)).

¹⁹ *State v. Albrecht*, 336 Md. 475, 501 (1994); *State v. Pagotto*, 361 Md. 528, 555-556 (2000) (quoting *Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 397 (1989)).

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *State v. Faulkner*, 301 Md. 482, 485 (1984).

VI. Conclusion

This report has presented factual findings, legal analysis, and conclusions relevant to the June 17, 2025, police-involved death of Bilal Abdullah Jr. 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 officers did not commit a crime.