



INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

Report Concerning the Police-Involved Death
in Baltimore on July 5, 2026

September 24, 2026

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Declination Report Concerning the Officer-Involved Death of Maurice Daniels on July 5, 2026

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 the death of an individual.”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. Investigation Summary

The IID investigated a police-involved fatal shooting in Baltimore City, Maryland that involved six Baltimore City Police Department (“BPD”) officers and a man later identified as Maurice Daniels.³ The IID’s investigation focused exclusively on potential criminal culpability relating to the subject officers’ conduct. During the investigation, the IID obtained evidence, including police radio transmissions, dispatch records, police and EMS reports, police body-worn camera footage, surveillance camera footage, photographs, department policies, and interviews with civilian and law enforcement witnesses.⁴ Based on that evidence, the IID has made the following factual findings.

On July 4, 2026, at approximately 7:43 a.m., police officers from the Baltimore County Police Department (“BCoPD”) were dispatched to 501 N. Rolling Road, Catonsville, Maryland, for a report of an armed carjacking. The complainant told officers that while he was sitting in the parking lot of the Catonsville Community Center in his black Dodge Caravan minivan, a male opened his driver side door and asked for a cigarette. The individual then displayed a knife and forcibly removed the complainant from the vehicle and drove away.

On July 5, 2026, at approximately 1:23 a.m., the Baltimore Police Helicopter (“Foxtrot”) received a license plate reader hit for the same black minivan reported stolen during the armed carjacking in Baltimore County. The minivan was located at the intersection of Riggs and Fulton Avenue in Baltimore City. Foxtrot alerted patrol officers with BPD. A patrol officer was nearby and attempted to block the minivan with his patrol vehicle. The driver of the minivan maneuvered around the patrol vehicle and drove away. Foxtrot instructed patrol units responding to the area to “fall back” and that he would call out the minivan’s direction of travel. Multiple BPD units pursued the minivan, which was disregarding traffic signals as it traveled through the city. Among the officers pursuing the minivan were BPD Officers Charles Blackman, Al-Shakier Drake, Antonio Groomes, Darrius Hicklin, David Weldon, and Sergeant Kevin Rivera.⁵ Officers pursued the minivan for over 15 minutes until it came to a stop in the 3300 block of Clifton Avenue.

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

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

³ Mr. Daniels was a Black male from Millersville, Maryland who was 42 years old at the time of the incident.

⁴ Compelled statements by subject officers may not be relied upon in criminal prosecutions due to the subject officers’ Fifth Amendment rights. If any compelled statements exist in this case, they have not been considered in the IID’s investigation. Further, the subject officers did not make a statement to the IID in this case, which had no impact on the prosecutorial decision.

⁵ Ofc. Blackman has been employed by BPD since October 2019. He is a Black male who was 40 years old at the time of the incident. Ofc. Drake has been employed by BPD since October 2025. He is a Black male who was 23 years old

When the minivan stopped, an individual, who would later be identified as Maurice Daniels, opened the driver's side door as one of the witness officers approached with his gun drawn. Mr. Daniels immediately closed the door as several other officers arrived at the scene and surrounded the vehicle. Multiple officers, including the six subject officers, approached the minivan and ordered Mr. Daniels to get out of the car. A witness officer got within arm's reach of the vehicle; he holstered his service weapon and started to use a window breaking tool to break the driver's side window. Officer Groomes ordered Mr. Daniels to get out of the car as he approached the driver's side door of the minivan with his service weapon drawn. Officer Groomes then reached out with his left hand towards the driver's side door. Before Officer Groomes grasped the car door handle, he started to back away from the minivan while still pointing his service weapon at Mr. Daniels. Officer Groomes yelled out, "hands, hands, hands, hands, hands!" Mr. Daniels put both of his hands up while still in the minivan. As Officer Groomes was yelling "hands", Mr. Daniels started to lower his right hand. Officer Groomes then yelled, "gun, gun, gun," while pointing towards Mr. Daniels with his left hand. As Officer Groomes yelled gun, the witness officer that had approached the driver's side window shattered the driver's side window glass with the window breaking tool and the six subject officers each fired multiple rounds at Mr. Daniels.



Image 1: Still image from Foxtrof showing the six subject officers in blue circles.

After approximately five seconds, an officer yelled "cease fire, cease fire, cease fire." Officer Groomes approached the minivan and opened the driver's side door. A witness officer

at the time of the incident. Ofc. Groomes has been employed by BPD since December 2020. He is a Black male who was 35 years old at the time. Ofc. Hicklin has been employed by BPD since September 2022. He is a Black male who was 34 years old at the time. Sgt. Rivera has been employed by BPD since April 2018. He is an Hispanic male who was 36 at the time. Ofc. Weldon has been employed by BPD since June of 2021. He is a White male who was 28 at the time of the incident.

recovered a black BB pistol from Mr. Daniels' right hand. Officers pulled Mr. Daniels from the vehicle and began CPR until EMS reached the scene and took over care. Mr. Daniels was transported to the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center where he was pronounced deceased at 2:32 a.m. The pursuit and shooting were captured on officer body-worn cameras and aerial surveillance from Foxtrot.



Image 2: Still image from Officer Groomes' body-worn camera with the BB pistol in white circle.

On July 6, the complainant in the armed carjacking signed a consent form to allow BPD to search his minivan. Officers recovered a hand-written note from the front passenger floorboard that, among other things, said, "I hope in my death yall can find peace."⁶

II. Supplemental Information

A. Autopsy

On July 6, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner ("OCME") performed an autopsy of Mr. Daniels. The medical examiner determined that multiple gunshot wounds were the cause of death for Mr. Daniels. The medical examiner concluded that Mr. Daniels' manner of death was "Homicide."⁷

⁶ The IID did not confirm whether the note was written by Mr. Daniels. The potential authenticity or authorship of the note had no impact on the prosecutorial decision in this case.

⁷ Manner of death is a classification used to define whether a death is from intentional causes, unintentional causes, natural causes, or undetermined causes. The Maryland OCME uses five categories of manner of death: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined. These terms are not considered a legal determination; rather, they are largely used to assist in collecting public health statistics. *A Guide for Manner of Death Classification*, First Edition, National Association of Medical Examiners, February 2002.

B. Firearms Recovery and Ballistics Information



Image 3: Still image from a witness officer body-worn camera showing the BB pistol recovery.

Four department-issued Glock 45 9mm Luger pistols were recovered from Officers Blackman, Drake, Groomes, and Weldon. Two department-issued Glock 22 .40 caliber S&W pistols were recovered from Officer Hicklin and Sergeant Rivera. A Marksman Prod. Repeater .177 caliber BB pistol was recovered from Mr. Daniels (see Image 3). All firearms were submitted to the Baltimore Police Department Firearms Analysis Unit. All six department-issued firearms were determined to be operable. The BB pistol could not be test fired because it was damaged.

III. Legal Analysis

After a criminal investigation, the IID must determine whether to bring criminal charges against a person to hold them accountable pursuant to Maryland law. When making that determination, we have a legal and ethical duty to charge a person with a crime only when we 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. We must also determine whether the accused person could raise an affirmative defense. In those cases, the IID not only needs 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 us 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.⁸ The second and third offenses are homicide-related charges based on the intentional killing of another person.⁹

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, we cannot prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Officers Blackman, Drake, Groomes, Hicklin, Weldon, or Sergeant Rivera committed a crime.

A. Maryland Use of Force Statute

⁸ See Md. Code, Public Safety § 3-524(i) (1 & 2).

⁹ MPJI-Cr 4:17; MPJI-Cr 4:17.3.

Proving a violation of the Use of Force Statute requires the IID 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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, the time and distances involved, and whether the officer unnecessarily escalated the situation or created the moment that required the use of force.¹²

Based on the totality of the circumstances presented here, there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officers used force beyond what was necessary and proportional to address the threat that Mr. Daniels posed. Officers attempted to stop the minivan after receiving information that it was reported stolen during an armed carjacking. When a patrol vehicle approached the minivan, Mr. Daniels drove away and refused to stop. He disregarded traffic signals and led officers on a pursuit through the city that lasted over fifteen minutes. When Mr. Daniels stopped the vehicle, he was ordered to get out of the minivan. He did not comply and instead shut the door. Officers ordered Mr. Daniels to show his hands and he initially complied but then began to lower his right hand towards what appeared to be a firearm. This presented a clear threat of imminent death or serious bodily injury to the officers. Officer Groomes alerted the other officers by yelling "gun." In response, the six subject officers discharged their service weapons, striking Mr. Daniels.

In sum, given the available evidence, the IID could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officers violated the Use of Force Statute. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge them with a violation of the Use of Force Statute.

¹⁰ MPJI-Cr 4:36.

¹¹ 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 (2022).

¹² *Id.*; see also *Barnes v. Felix*, 605 U.S. 73, 80 (2025) ("[T]he 'totality of the circumstances' inquiry into a use of force has no time limit... earlier facts and circumstances may bear on how a reasonable officer would have understood and responded to later ones.").

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.¹³
- 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.¹⁴
- Voluntary Manslaughter: an intentional killing that is not murder because the defendant acted in partial self-defense.¹⁵
- Involuntary Manslaughter: when the defendant acted with gross negligence and that conduct caused the death of another.¹⁶

Here, evidence of legal justification for the defense of others precludes a prosecution of any homicide offense against the subject officers.¹⁷ Complete 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 another person was 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.¹⁸ Complete defense of others is an affirmative defense, which means that the IID must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that one of the elements of the 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 to effectuate a seizure,¹⁹ and the reasonableness of that decision must be viewed from “the perspective of a reasonable police officer similarly situated.”²⁰ 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.²¹

Given the evidence presented here, the IID could not disprove the elements of perfect defense of others. Mr. Daniels had led officers on a fifteen-minute pursuit while driving a vehicle stolen in an armed carjacking. When confronted by the police, Mr. Daniels did not comply with orders to get out of the minivan. Further, when ordered by the police to show his hands, Mr. Daniels reached for what appeared to be a firearm. Officer Groomes warned officers that Mr. Daniels

¹³ MPJI-Cr 4:17.

¹⁴ MPJI-Cr 4:17.2.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ MPJI-Cr 4:17.8. Involuntary manslaughter only applies to grossly negligent or reckless acts that result in death, as opposed to the intentional act of killing another, as a result, the offense of involuntary manslaughter is inapplicable in this case.

¹⁷ See *Porter v. State*, 455 Md. 220, 234-36 (2017); MPJI-Cr 4:17.2; MPJI-Cr 4:17.3.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Estate of Blair by Blair v. Austin*, 469 Md. 1, 23-24 (2020) (quoting *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1, 11 (1985)).

²⁰ *State v. Albrecht*, 336 Md. 475, 501 (1994); *State v. Pagotto*, 361 Md. 528, 555 (2000).

²¹ *Id.*

appeared to be reaching for a firearm, which presented a threat of imminent death or serious bodily harm to other officers, most notably the witness officer closest to the minivan who had just holstered his weapon. Officer Groomes yelled out “gun”, alerting the other subject officers of the danger Mr. Daniels presented. Given the totality of the circumstances, including the time of night, the reported armed carjacking, and the nature of the pursuit, the IID could not disprove a defense of others claim made by any of the subject officers.

Against this backdrop, the subject officers’ actions do not constitute a homicide offense. We cannot overcome the elements of complete defense of others. Accordingly, the Office of the Attorney General will not charge any of the subject officers with a homicide offense.

IV. Conclusion

This report has presented factual findings, legal analysis, and conclusions relevant to the July 12, 2026, police-involved death of Maurice Daniels 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, there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject officers violated a criminal statute.