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Press Release

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District Attorney Finds No Fault In Officer Shooting

The Fairbanks District Attorney's Office has determined that the shooting by Police Officer Lockwood of Lucky R. Adams on August 15th, 2007 was justified. The office conducted a thorough review of the shooting including the police reports, witness statements, physical evidence, and autopsy results. The results of the inquiry show that Officer Lockwood's use of deadly force against Mr. Adams was justified under Alaska law and the policies of the Fairbanks Police Department.

The Fairbanks Police Department's policy and procedure regarding the use of deadly force has been modeled after the IACP (International Association of Chiefs of Police) standard, which is the predominate standard used across the nation. That policy states that an officer can resort to deadly force only when lower forms of control are ineffective and when the officer, or a third party, is facing an imminent risk of death or serious physical injury if the force is not delivered immediately. Alaska law likewise allows the use of deadly force under the same circumstance.

The review shows that Officer Lockwood strictly followed Alaska law and policies and procedures of FPD. Officer Lockwood discharged his weapon only after Mr. Adams refused multiple, clear commands from the officer to stop advancing on the officer and only after Adams pointed a handgun directly at the officer. When Mr. Adams initially failed to heed the officer's multiple commands to stop advancing on the officer's position, the officer correctly resorted to non-deadly force by discharging his Taser at Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams fell to the ground after being tased, and Officer Lockwood again gave him multiple, clear, verbal commands to remain on the ground. Mr. Adams swept the Taser wires away from his body and proceeded to walk behind a parked truck. Officer Lockwood then observed Mr. Adams to walk in the direction of his police cruiser and when Adams emerged from behind that parked truck he pointed a Beretta 9mm pistol directly at the officer. It was only then that Officer Lockwood discharged his weapon at Mr. Adams. The passenger in Mr. Adams' vehicle told police investigators that Adams "gave the officer no choice but to shoot" and that he would have done the same thing had he been in the officer's position.

Although Adams' weapon was eventually found to be unloaded, there would have been no way for Officer Lockwood to have determined that fact in the split second he had to react. An unloaded pistol is defined as a "deadly weapon" under Alaska law because citizens should not have to speculate at their peril as to the possibility that the weapon being pointed at them may in fact be unloaded. That same weapon is no less dangerous when being pointed at a police officer.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Adams behavior placed Officer Lockwood in a position which required the application of deadly force, and our sincere condolences certainly go out to Mr. Adams' family. However, the review of this incident clearly demonstrate that Officer Lockwood was well within his rights to apply deadly force in this situation, and that he did so within the parameters set forth by the Fairbanks Police Department's policy and procedures manual. Further, his voice recorder demonstrates that within 4 seconds after discharging his weapon, Officer Lockwood was radioing his dispatcher with instructions to send medical assistance immediately. There are simply no facts which would predicate criminal charges being filed against Officer Lockwood.

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