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Shooter Acted in Lawful Self-Defense in Eastern Market Fatal Shootings

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy has determined that no charges will issue against a 40-year-old male shooter* in connection with the fatal shooting of Jalen Welch, 25, and Rayshawn Palmer, 40, both of Detroit.

On September 15, 2024, at approximately 4:30 p.m., Detroit police officers were dispatched to Eastern Market, located in the 2800 block of Russell Street for a reported shooting. Upon their arrival, officers located both victims suffering from gunshot wounds to the head. Medics arrived on the scene and pronounced Mr. Palmer deceased. Mr. Welch was transported to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased on September 16, 2024. The shooter remained at the scene and was taken into police custody. Both the shooter and Mr. Welch were lawful CPL holders.

It is alleged that there was a physical altercation involving several men near Shed 6 in Eastern Market shortly before the police arrived. The shooter was not involved in the physical fight but was nearby. Shortly after the physical altercation, a group of approximately five men were involved in a verbal argument.

The evidence shows that Mr. Welch walked into the middle of the verbal argument holding a pistol. Mr. Welch held the pistol in a threatening manner while approaching the shooter. The shooter then removed his concealed pistol from near his waist and shot Mr. Welch one time. Only one shot was fired. The bullet struck Mr. Welch in the front of his head and exited the back of his head. The bullet then struck the head of Mr. Palmer. This single gunshot resulted in the death of two individuals. Mr. Palmer was an innocent bystander who was not involved in the fight. Evidence indicates that Mr. Palmer was acting as a peacemaker and trying to discourage Welch and the other men from arguing.

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Under Michigan law, an individual is allowed to use force, including deadly force, when necessary to protect themselves and in defense of others. The person must honestly and reasonably believe that the use of deadly force was necessary to prevent imminent death or imminent great bodily harm to themselves or others.

In this case the shooter was not involved with the physical altercation, or any crime, when Mr. Welch pulled out his weapon and threatened him with deadly force. It is only then that the shooter drew his weapon and fired one-time striking Mr. Welch, and unfortunately striking Mr. Palmer. A thorough review of the facts and evidence shows that the shooter acted in lawful self-defense. The shooting was justified. There is insufficient evidence to charge the shooter with any crime.

“We have reviewed this case thoroughly and this is a case of lawful self-defense. It is absolutely tragic that during all the fun and merrymaking at a Lions tailgate that two lives were lost. The first was Mr. Welch who was the one who first pulled out a gun and was shot by the 40-year-old, a lawful CPL holder, who was defending himself. A single shot was fired.”

“And then, perhaps the most heartbreaking of all is the fact that a completely and totally innocent bystander, Mr. Palmer was shot and killed with the same bullet that passed through the head of Mr. Welch. It could have been any one of us. We looked at all the applicable law and there is no crime that can be charged and proven beyond a reasonable doubt,” said Prosecutor Kym Worthy.

*WCPO does not release the name of a person who has not been charged with a crime.

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