

Chester County District Attorney's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

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Trooper-Involved Shooting In Westtown Township

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and the Pennsylvania State Police announced a trooper-involved shooting in Westtown Township, PA, after a high-speed vehicle chase shortly after 2:00 p.m. on Dec. 23, 2020. Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) and the following police departments were involved in the pursuit: West Goshen Township, Westtown East Goshen Township, Tredyffrin Township, and Birmingham Township.

The incident began when the driver of a stolen U-Haul van fled from police, driving up to 100 m.p.h. on Route 202 in West Goshen Township. After several unsuccessful attempts to stop the vehicle, a PSP trooper discharged his weapon into the suspect's car one time. There were no injuries to any of the van's five occupants or anyone else at the scene.

Based on a preliminary investigation, the following facts have been established:

On Dec. 23, 2020, at 2:03 p.m., a police officer from West Goshen Township Police Department received information regarding a stolen U-Haul van and attempted to stop the vehicle. The driver fled northbound on Route 202, over to Route 252, then returned to the southbound lanes of Route 202, going up to 100 m.p.h while weaving in and out of traffic for several miles. The vehicle nearly struck a police vehicle during the chase.

Three separate attempts were made to disable the fleeing vehicle using spike strips. A PSP trooper attempted a Precision Immobilization Technique (PIT)

maneuver at Route 202 and W. Pleasant Grove Road, just south of West Chester which forced the U-Haul to drive off the road.

When multiple police vehicles appeared on the scene, the driver attempted to drive away. A trooper discharged one round from his duty weapon – a .45 caliber handgun. The fired round struck above the rear tire on the driver’s side and traveled through the van’s cargo area before exiting on the passenger side. Another trooper initiated a second PIT maneuver and finally was able to disable the fleeing vehicle.

Five occupants were found inside the van: the driver, a 10-year-old child, a female passenger, and two adult males. No one was injured. Four plastic baggies believed to contain heroin were recovered inside the van.

The vehicle’s driver, identified as Antoine Freeman, a 29-year-old male from Wilmington, DE, has been charged with aggravated assault, receiving stolen property, fleeing and eluding, recklessly endangering another person, and other related charges. 66-year old Earl White, also from Wilmington and a passenger in the van, was charged with possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

According to the Chester County District Attorney’s Office Protocol, the Chester County Detectives, the DAO’s investigative arm, will be the independent agency reviewing this officer-involved shooting. The Chester County Detectives will work with the PSP on this matter. The Chester County DA will make the final decision regarding whether the shooting was justified.

This information is preliminary, pending a full review of all available evidence. After the investigation, the District Attorney’s Office will provide written findings.

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Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney