

Chester County District Attorney's Office

DEBORAH RYAN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



201 W. Market St., Suite 4450
Post Office Box 2746
West Chester, PA 19380-0991
Phone: 610-344-6801
Fax: 610-344-5905

NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact Michelle Bjork, Director of Communications, at mbjork@chesco.org or 610-344-6820.

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WEST CALN POLICE OFFICER ARRESTED FOR SHOOTING INTO MOVING CAR

The Chester County District Attorney's Office announces the arrest of Sgt. Anthony Sparano of the West Caln Police Department for recklessly endangering another person, simple assault, and propulsion of missiles into an occupied vehicle. The 53-year-old police officer from Coatesville fired his service weapon into a moving vehicle in connection to a motor vehicle stop for a traffic violation in November 2021. The driver, the vehicle's sole occupant, sustained no injuries from the shooting.

DA Deb Ryan said, "No one is above the law. Every day, we hold our law enforcement officers to the highest standards and expect them always to honor the value of human life above all else. They have a duty to attempt to de-escalate potentially volatile situations and never to engage in the use of excessive force. The use of deadly force, in this case, was not justified in any way. Our laws mandate that the use of deadly force is only permitted in the following instances:

- When the officer reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person; or
- When the officer reasonably believes it is necessary to prevent resistance or escape **and** the person to be arrested committed or attempted a forcible felony or is attempting to escape and possesses a deadly weapon, or the person will endanger human life or inflict serious bodily injury unless arrested without delay.

Shooting into a moving vehicle, as Sgt. Sparano did here, is strictly prohibited unless the officer reasonably believes that death or serious bodily injury may occur. Even then, such an inherently dangerous step should only be taken after all other efforts have been exhausted. Fortunately, the victim, in this case, was not injured. We will continue to hold those who violate the law accountable for their actions, regardless of their profession."

The allegations in the complaint are the following¹:

In the early hours of Nov. 10, 2021, West Caln Police Sgt. Anthony Sparano was patrolling West Caln Township in full uniform and a marked police car when he observed a car make a left turn against a red stoplight on Rt. 340 at Compass Road. Sgt. Sparano turned on his lights and sirens and initiated a traffic stop in the 100-block of Octorara Trail Road.

Sgt. Sparano's body-worn camera was activated and recording as he approached the driver's side of the car and asked the driver for her driver's license and registration. The driver, who was also recording the incident with her camera, refused to comply with the officer's directive.

The encounter escalated as the driver continued not to comply. When Sgt. Sparano opened the driver's door to remove her from the car, she began to drive away. Sgt. Sparano immediately fired one round from his service weapon at the car, striking the rear driver's-side window causing the glass to shatter inside the car.

Sgt. Sparano pursued the victim in his patrol car, and she stopped minutes later in the 700-block of Octorara Trail Road. The victim was subsequently taken to Brandywine Hospital, where she was treated for minor injuries sustained during her arrest and soon after released.

Based on the totality of the circumstances, including a review of the body-worn camera and the mobile video recorder, it is clear that there was no imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to Sgt. Sparano or anyone else.

The preliminary hearing is scheduled for Dec. 30, 2021. Sgt. Sparano was released on his own recognizance.

Chester County Detectives are investigating. ADA Kate Lewis is the assigned prosecutor.

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Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney

¹ A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.