



OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

John J. Choi

September 6, 2016

Thank you for expressing your concerns to our office over the Philando Castile case. Currently, we have not yet received the case file from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the agency handling the investigation into this incident. When the investigation is complete and they have turned it over to our office for prosecutorial review, the BCA will notify the public.

Unlike many of the elected officials in our community, as County Attorney, I have a unique role in that I am part of the legal process. That means I am very limited in what I can say about a case under active investigation because it could compromise the investigation. As someone who is concerned about this case, I know that's the last thing you want to have happen.

Much of what I am able to talk about at this point, I shared initially in a press conference on July 8, 2016. The recording of that press conference and the Q & A that followed is available on our website at www.ramseycountyattorney.org. I encourage you to watch the video in its entirety. A written copy of my remarks is available there, as well.

On July 29, 2016, I announced my decision to add an independent special prosecutor to my staff. Don Lewis brings a wealth of prosecutorial and legal experience to the team and will serve as an active member of my prosecution team as we proceed with this case. Please see our website to view a copy of this event.

I know many people in our community feel a sense of urgency about this situation and want it resolved as soon as possible, but putting an artificial timeline on the investigation will not do it justice. I have spoken to the Superintendent of the BCA, the agency handling the investigation, and he assured me they are making this investigation a top priority. I have asked for a prompt and thorough investigation. Both of these goals are equally important to ensuring the integrity of this case.

As I stated on July 8, I will make a determination at a later time about how best to proceed with a charging decision, either by taking it to the grand jury to allow our community to make a decision, or by handling it in our office. I need some additional time to think through my thoughts on this process question. I am taking this thoughtful approach because it will enable me to make a fully informed decision. There are benefits to both approaches, which I outlined during an appearance on Almanac: <http://www.tpt.org/almanac>, which I also encourage you to watch.

In order to bring criminal charges against a police officer for using deadly force in the line of duty, Minnesota law requires the State to be able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the use of force

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was not justified. If the grand jury determines charges are warranted in this case or this office makes that decision, I assure you that we will prosecute this case to the fullest extent of the law.

In times like these, I understand it is incredibly difficult to be patient. But above all else, I know you and other members of our community share my primary goal, which is to achieve justice. In order to do so, we must ensure this process is carried out with the utmost integrity. It is incumbent upon us, as investigators and prosecutors, to not jump to conclusions, but to view our work as a sacred trust with our community. Our system of democracy depends on our ability to diligently follow the facts and remain faithful to the pursuit of justice.

Thank you for your understanding and for being invested and involved in our community.

Sincerely,

John J. Choi