

JOINT PRESS RELEASE WITH THE NEW JERSEY STATE TROOPERS' FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION.

This office represents the unnamed trooper involved in the shooting of a 14 year old youth in Trenton, N.J. on August 7, 2015. The event took place near the intersection of Calhoun Street and Louise Lane and the youth was identified as Radazz Hearn. Remarks made by elected officials and the family attorney for Radazz Hearn concerning the shooting incident on August 7, 2015 have been gratuitous, inflammatory and dangerous. The actions of the Trooper and Mercer County Sheriff's officer involved in that shooting are completely justified. Simply put, you cannot threaten law enforcement officers with a gun and not expect that something bad will happen to you.

The Trooper and Sheriff's officer involved in the shooting are part of a specially formed task force (Targeted Integrated Deployment Effort – T.I.D.E.) which was formed at the direction of the attorney general to stem the tide of violent crime in Trenton, including the daily, endless shootings that occur in that city. Gunfire in Trenton is so rampant that shotspotters, a system designed to immediately alert police of gunfire and its specific location, have been placed throughout areas of the city which have been determined as being the most dangerous for violent crime, street gangs, and shootings.

For the past three years, troopers and other law enforcement officers assigned to the T.I.D.E. initiative have performed spectacularly while impacting the crime ridden areas of Trenton, clearly improving the quality of life and safety of the law abiding people who reside amongst the thugs who engage in a wide range of criminal acts, including drug dealing, assaults and murders. These dedicated law enforcement officers leave their families daily and place their lives on the line as they confront the hardened and dangerous criminals that bring nothing but terror to the good citizens of Trenton.

The efforts of the courageous officers assigned to this special unit have yielded amazing results, effectuating hundreds of arrests from as many investigations for an array of criminal activities including drug possession, drug distribution, weapons possession and other violent crimes. They have also removed over a hundred firearms from the streets of Trenton; firearms that could potentially have harmed innocent civilians. The officers' work has been recognized by the Attorney General, the upper commands of their respective agencies, as well as the Mayor of Trenton, who personally congratulated the members of this unique crime fighting unit for their outstanding work and for keeping the citizens of Trenton safe.

As you can imagine, operating in such a volatile criminal atmosphere does not come without the threat of potential deadly force incidents. Members of the T.I.D.E. initiative have shown incredible restraint while defusing potential deadly force incidents. Their commitment to the safety of the citizens of Trenton, as well as their professionalism, never wavered, even in the face of extreme danger such as being shot at and assaulted.

Therefore, it is inconceivable that elected officials and others have adopted a narrative used nationally to impugn the reputation of these fine officers. In less than one week after an investigation into the shooting on August 7th commenced, community leaders and elected

officials met at what can easily be deemed a rally for Radazz Hearn. Comments such as stating that the nation's trust in police and the criminal justice system have been shaken from unexplained and unnecessary deaths due to interactions with law enforcement from Congresswoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman were obviously made to undermine the investigation of the shooting and cast the officers involved in a negative light. Additionally, Congresswoman Watson-Coleman's statement that cases like this should be handled quickly and decisively as in the case of an officer in Cincinnati who was arrested and charged with shooting an unarmed individual, clearly suggests that the trooper and sheriff's officer in this case are guilty of a criminal act without referencing a single fact to support that innuendo. Such remarks by a public official and community leader are divisive and can only serve to stoke the fires of discontent and surely lead to civil disobedience. In short, they are utterly irresponsible.

The ineptness of Congresswoman Watson-Coleman's remarks is clearly reflected by her references of what occurred in Ferguson and Baltimore as an example of what to be concerned about in this instance. After a long and thorough investigation by both the St. Louis County District Attorney's office and the U.S. Department of Justice, the officer involved in the Ferguson shooting was cleared of any criminal act, and all of the inflammatory remarks about him were debunked, especially the "hands-up, don't shoot" statements. The case against the Baltimore police officers, which was brought about in a "swift" investigation is swiftly unravelling. Congresswoman Watson-Coleman would best serve her constituency if she endorsed the process as implemented by the attorney general instead of making gratuitous remarks while demanding that the federal government supercede the investigation. Making such a demand only days after the investigation began serves only to undermine the integrity of the attorney general's office which, itself, creates an atmosphere of distrust.

More inflammatory, however, are the statements made by the Hearn family attorney, Samuel Anyan, Jr. To state that the officers were "trying to execute a 14 year old boy" goes well beyond all concepts of proper decorum and decency. One would expect to hear such words from a radical revolutionary bent on mass civil disobedience and destruction instead of hearing it from a learned professional who should practice within the bounds of good form.

While it is important to conduct a thorough investigation into the shooting that occurred on August 7, 2015, in view of all of the questions made of the officers' actions in that incident, I find it striking that nobody inquired about why a 14 year old youth was out on the street late at night. It appears that community leaders, including elected officials, are more concerned about impugning law enforcement officers without a shred of evidence than focusing on the conditions of neighborhoods where street gang violence is prevalent.

The trooper and sheriff's officer involved in the shooting of Radazz Hearn acted within the strict requirements of the attorney general guidelines which govern the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers. I am certain that the facts of this case will bear that result. The officers were in fear of imminent and deadly harm from a 14 year old youth who was in possession of a firearm.

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