

In Public Comment  
To York City Council, 7 June 2016

In the absence of any official response to, or acknowledgement of my comment on 17 May regarding the homicide of De'Quan Williams last 17 October, and still troubled by what seemed to me to be omissions or discrepancies in the District Attorney memorandum supporting his determination that the homicide was justifiable, I felt I had little choice but to try to find answers on my own.

In the synopsis of the Report by the Pennsylvania State Police cited in the Memorandum, the knife reportedly carried by the decedent and thrown at the police officers was described as "a silver kitchen knife"-- with nothing in the Memorandum to give any hint as to size or weight making it a deadly weapon. It was described to me by a family member as much like a paring knife.

After throwing the knife, the decedent was said to have "charged" the officers, but the autopsy information gave no indication of the height or weight of the attacker. The best recollection of the family member was that he was fairly average-- perhaps 5'9" or 5'10" and close to 160 to 170 pounds.

And the Memorandum indicates that an Internal Affairs investigation was conducted by the York City Police Department and a statement was mandated to determine whether the department's protocol on use of force or other department regulations were followed. To my knowledge, no such investigation or statement has ever been released. It should be.

We can only reduce the likelihood of this happening again and again by bringing together all the various emergency responders and all the various mental health professionals and agencies. But until this happens, I believe our humanity is lessened and the civil rights of the victims are being denied. And investigation by the United States Department of Justice may be the only resort.

R. Franklin Williams

