



NEWS RELEASE

HUNTSVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT
815 Wheeler Ave, Huntsville, Alabama 35801

Statement from Police Chief Mark McMurray regarding Officer William Darby's arrest:

Good afternoon,

Suicide and mental illness are a national epidemic. Huntsville is not immune from the consequences of these personal tragedies. As a country and as a community, we are all struggling with these mental health issues. Our police department has been intensively training with Mental Health professionals on how to best respond in situations. We are currently working with organizations, such as Wellstone, and the Mental Health Court. We have a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), which is highly trained to respond, and we are training each officer in the department on how to handle these situations. We are continuing to learn new and better ways to identify and help those struggling with depression and suicidal behaviors.

To the Parker family, you have - and will continue to have - our deepest condolences. You are not alone in your grief. We at the Huntsville Police Department, have family members working through similar emotional life challenges, including loss of loved ones, depression, and mental illness.

I would like to give you some additional information beyond that presented in the press release. As my Public Information Officer said, this case involves an on-going criminal matter, yet to be presented in a court of law. Therefore, I will not be discussing any specific details that might impede the trial process.

On April 3, 2018, HPD Officers were dispatched to an address on Deramus Avenue in response to a possible suicidal person armed with a gun. When officers arrived, they encountered forty-nine year old Jeffery Louis Parker armed with a gun and threatening suicide. After Mr. Parker

refused multiple lawful commands to drop his weapon, Officer Darby shot and fatally wounded Mr. Parker.

HPD convened an Incident Review Board and determined that Officer Darby's use of deadly force was within policy. The District Attorney then presented this case to the Madison County Grand Jury. Yesterday, a Grand Jury indicted Officer Darby on the charge of Murder. As police officers, we respect and submit to the legal system.

Therefore, this case will continue through the judicial system. Our officers are entitled to the same rights of due process and procedure afforded to all citizens, including the presumption of innocence.

Officer Darby has been relieved of his duties as a Police Officer and will remain in Administrative capacity pending the outcome of this trial.

Officer Darby was called upon to make split second decisions in a nightmare scenario, the likes of which most people will never experience. His training allowed him and his fellow officers to survive as he rushed bravely, without hesitation, into one of the most volatile and unpredictable situations a police officer is called upon to face. Officer Darby performed his duties in accordance with his training. He is by no means a "Murderer".

Had Officer Darby not acted decisively, we could have been here today to add yet another officer's name to the memorial wall behind me. Officer Darby will continue to have the full support of the Huntsville Police Department as he awaits his day in court, where the totality of the circumstances surrounding his actions will be presented to a jury. Thank you.

Mark McMurray
Chief of Police
City of Huntsville

