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N.J. releases body cam footage of officers shooting, killing 30-year-old man in Ventnor

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State officials released footage Friday of New Jersey officers shooting and killing a 30-year-old man last month.

Atlantic City and Ventnor cops confronted Amir Johnson of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania on Aug. 6, according to the state attorney general's office. Three Ventnor officers opened fire after Johnson charged while holding a broken glass bottle, officials said.

One Atlantic City cop tried to use a Taser before the shooting, but the machine didn't work.

The incident remains under investigation, and New Jersey law requires a grand jury to eventually review it.

Spokesmen for the Ventnor and Atlantic City departments declined comment and directed questions to the attorney general's office.

Cops stopped on an open road in Ventnor around 4:16 p.m. after a postal worker called 911.

The caller said a man was bleeding from his neck and running around West End Avenue, according to an audio recording of the exchange.

"He just, like, literally stopped traffic in the middle of the road," the postal worker said. "I don't know if he's on something."

"We're going to have someone come over and help him," the dispatcher said.

Officers tried to talk Johnson down as he paced on and off the road for about ten minutes, according to the three videos.

"You alright?" yelled Michael Arena, the first officer on the scene.

Johnson ignored commands to sit down or drop the bottle he was holding, all the while mumbling to himself and shouting at officers.

"We don't want to hurt you," Arena said. "We're gonna get you help."

Johnson said he didn't want help as more cops arrived, stopping traffic in both directions.

“I was just tryin' to get hit by cars,” Johnson said. He also said he wanted to be shot.

The cops gave him a wide berth, often backing up as he approached. One officer called for a negotiator, but it's not clear if one got there in time.

Another officer tossed Johnson a water bottle.

“I still wanna get shot,” Johnson said as he drank. “At least let me finish the water.”

“We don't wanna hurt you,” Arena repeated.

“I would actually prefer to get shot,” Johnson said later while wandering in road. “I'm in a lot of pain, man.”

Johnson became more agitated as more officers arrived. Cops continued to yell they didn't want to hurt him and demanded he drop the bottle.

Shortly before the shooting, an Atlantic City cop pulled out a yellow Taser, but he was unable to get it to fire.

“I don't even think this Taser's even operating,” the cop said. “This is unbelievable.”

When Johnson finally ran at cops, Ventnor officers Arena, Pierluigi Mancuso and Robert Scarborough opened fire, according to officials and the video.

Johnson collapsed on the road. Glass shattered next to him, but officers continued to yell at him to drop the bottle. Johnson is blurred in the video, so it is not clear if he was still holding anything.

About 30 seconds after cops pulled their triggers, officers descended on Johnson. One moved him slightly and several tried to handcuff his hands behind his back.

Johnson continued to fight.

“F*** you,” Johnson yelled between moans.

The video shows police officers calling for an ambulance, but it ends before one arrived.

Johnson was pronounced dead at 6 p.m. at the AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, Atlantic City Campus, officials said.

The attorney general's office said investigators met with relatives of Johnson to review the 911 recording and the videos.

Sarah Johnson, Amir Johnson's cousin, called on the attorney general's office last week to release the video, telling The Press of Atlantic City: “There were many ways you could

have handled that. The fact is you just blatantly murdered him with six bullets like an animal. I don't care what the excuses are. That was not OK. He's a human being."

Whether a shooting is legally justified hinges on whether people are in danger, said Wayne Fisher, a former Newark cop and a police expert with Rutgers University's Center on Policing, although he declined to speak specifically about this incident.

"If someone is charging an officer ... or at a distance where they can inflict harm with a weapon, and where the officer has no other reasonable alternative to eliminate or alleviate the threat, then the policy and the law permit the officer to use deadly force," Fisher said.