Grand jury clears N.J. officer who shot and killed a man in Orange 2 years ago
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An Orange cop was cleared Tuesday for shooting and killing a man two years ago, the third time a grand jury has determined that a fatal encounter with police was justified since jury duty recently resumed.

Officer Willie Jones shot 46-year-old Jamahl Smith, of Newark, three times in 2019, according to the state attorney general's office. Officials said Smith had a knife and was moving toward police.

Grand juries are required to review each incident to decide if officers did anything wrong, but juries have been suspended because of the coronavirus. Officers involved in firefights with men in Irvington and Secaucus were also cleared this month.

The shooting in Orange took place two years ago on July 13.

Multiple 911 calls reported that someone had been stabbed and that a man had a knife, according to authorities.

Officers climbed to the third floor of Oakwood Towers at 400 Oakwood Avenue and saw Smith carrying a knife, officials said. He ignored demands to drop his weapon and instead moved toward the cops, according to authorities.

A little after 3 p.m., Jones fired three bullets, hitting Smith. Officers offered medical aid, but Smith was pronounced dead at Newark's University Hospital, officials said. The autopsy concluded Smith died from gunshots to his thigh, forearm and abdomen, according to a press release.

Cops also found and helped a 51-year-old woman who had been stabbed, officials said.

An attorney general spokesman said she survived.

The Office of Public Integrity and Accountability, a division of the state attorney general's office, first investigated the shooting and presented evidence to more than a dozen members of a grand jury, according to the release.

After hearing from witnesses and reviewing the medical examiner's autopsy, among other information, a majority concluded the shooting was justified.