



# News Release

CONTACT: Jared Webley  
Public Policy and Communications Manager  
Office: (509) 477-2479  
Cell: (509) 960-1082  
[jcwebley@spokanecounty.org](mailto:jcwebley@spokanecounty.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **No Criminal Charges in May 2019 Police Shooting**

**SPOKANE COUNTY, Wash, October 25, 2019** – The Spokane County

Prosecutor's Office has determined that Spokane County Deputy Sheriff Joseph Wallace was justified in his use of lethal force against Ethan A. Murray while attempting to contact Murray after a 9-1-1 call regarding a disorderly person at a Spokane Valley apartment complex.

At about 5:26 pm on May 4, 2019, Spokane County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to the area of the Parkside Apartments at Mirabeau at 2820 N. Cherry St. in Spokane Valley, WA. The call was to a portion of a large complex of buildings just east of Cherry St. Police Dispatch advised that a 9-1-1 caller had reported that a male (later determined to be Ethan A. Murray), wearing no shirt, was running between kids that were playing outside, that no weapons were seen, and no assault had occurred, and that the male appeared to be very high. Murray was described as being white, in his 30's, no shirt, black sweats, and covered in dirt. Further, that Murray will come and go from a well-known drug dealer's apartment and had been pacing the fence-line.

SCSO Deputy Joseph Wallace arrived on scene shortly after the call. Wallace observed children playing all about the complex. Wallace also noticed several adults

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who appeared to be gathering up their children from outside. Wallace then observed a female standing just east of K building who waved Wallace over to her. She repeatedly yelled, "Over there", pointing to the northeast. When Wallace asked what was going on, she stated, "He's threatening the children out here!" The woman pointed out Murray as the person she was speaking of.

Wallace observed Murray moving rapidly away from the apartment complex, eastbound to a nearby wooded area. Wallace attempted to catch up to Murray. While doing so, Wallace noticed that Murray was repeatedly reaching around his right waistline area as he moved rapidly to the east. Wallace lost visual contact with Murray as Murray made his way over a large rock up a hill. Wallace took an alternate route to get to the top of the rock in an attempt to cut Murray off. Along the way, Wallace, who was in full duty uniform, had issued several commands to Murray, identifying himself as a police officer and telling Murray to stop. Murray did not comply and yelled expletives at the Deputy.

Upon arrival at the top of the rock, Wallace and Murray were face to face; only a few feet from one another. Wallace yelled again something to the effect of, "Police! Stop!" He responded with "Fuck You! Make me!" Murray immediately became confrontational and aggressive towards Wallace. Murray took a bladed stance and balled his fists, holding his left one up and his right one cocked back. Murray yelled loudly at Wallace. Murray punctuated each word he spoke with a lunge in Wallace's direction.

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Fearing that an attack was imminent, Wallace drew his firearm and pointed it at low ready; towards the ground in front of Murray, and advised police dispatch that he had one at gunpoint.

Wallace yelled, "Show me your hands!" Murray responded, "No!" Again, Wallace yelled, "Show me your hands!". Murray then said something to the effect of, "You can't make me!" and then, "It's just you and me out here!". Wallace then pleaded with him, "You have to stop. I don't want to hurt you. Just put your hands up". Murray then repeated, "Just you and me" and reached his right hand towards his right pants pocket. Suddenly, Murray pulled what appeared to be a knife out of his right pants pocket. Wallace yelled, "Put it down!" Murray did not comply. He quickly advanced on Wallace holding the object in an offensive position in his fist. Believing that he was about to be stabbed, Wallace pointed his pistol at Murray and fired several times. Murray was struck several times and was soon declared deceased at the scene.

A witness nearby observed and overheard a significant portion of the encounter. Her statement is contained in the complete incident review.

In the subsequent investigation, it was learned that Murray was not armed with a knife. The object Murray pulled from his pocket was a pair of black sunglasses that were located very near the position that Murray had been standing during the confrontation.

Under the facts and circumstances known at the time of the confrontation, Deputy Wallace was justified in his use of deadly force. The law takes into account what the

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Deputy reasonably believed while on scene. At the time of the application of deadly force, Deputy Wallace had a reasonable belief that Murray was armed with a deadly weapon and, therefore, posed a threat of serious bodily injury to him. Deputy Wallace had a good faith belief in the correctness of his actions. Therefore, no criminal liability attaches and no criminal charges will be filed in this matter.

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### ***About Spokane County***

*Spokane County government serves over half a million citizens and 13 municipal jurisdictions, making it the fourth-largest county in the State of Washington. For more information, visit [www.spokanecounty.org](http://www.spokanecounty.org), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).*