



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

No Criminal Charges in December 2020 Officer Shooting

SPOKANE COUNTY, March 23, 2021 – The Spokane County Prosecutor’s Office has determined that Spokane County Detention Services Corrections Officer Sgt. Justin White was justified in his use of lethal force against Nancy J. King. While attempting to communicate with King, she pulled a knife on White and followed him into the jail lobby. As White attempted to back away from her, King ignored White’s commands to drop the weapon.

At approximately 4:59pm on the afternoon of December 4, 2020, Spokane Police were dispatched to the Ramada Inn at 923 E. 3rd Ave., Spokane, on a report of a bomb threat against the Frontier Behavioral Health building at 505 E. North Foothills Dr. While Spokane Police were investigating the call, a second bomb threat was called in at 6:59pm against the Emergency Room at Deaconess Hospital in Spokane. Both calls were determined to have originated at the Ramada Inn, Room #101. The only registered guest in that room was Nancy J. King. In at least one of the calls, King identified herself as the caller. However, King would not open the door to investigating officers. King was seen departing the Inn by a Ramada employee at approximately 7:15pm on the same evening. Believing there was a possible mental health issue, Spokane Police had earlier requested a Designated Crisis Responder but the request was denied.

As investigators reviewed their options, at approximately 7:44pm on December 4, 2020, an individual later identified as Nancy King, entered the outer doors of the foyer at the Spokane County Detention Facility and demanded entry into the inside lobby, which was locked to due COVID restrictions. Despite being told that the lobby was closed,

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King repeatedly demanded to be let inside and began to ring the buzzer. A Detention Facility cashier employee requested assistance from a Sergeant. Corrections Sgt. Justin White responded to speak with King.

As White neared the locked inner doors, he signaled to the cashier to unlock the door to facilitate a conversation between White and King. After a few seconds, King quickly produced a knife from her coat pocket and immediately raised it to within inches of White's face. White, who had been propping the automatic door open with his foot, immediately stepped backwards into the lobby to gain separation from King and the knife. King followed White inside the lobby and continued to advance towards him. White pulled his service weapon and demanded that King drop the knife as he continued to back away from King. King continuously held the knife high, directly at White, as she advanced.

White first backed up to the north and then, due to obstructions from furniture behind him, turned and backed towards the east away from King. King continued to close towards White with the knife drawn and pointed at him. White continued to order King to drop the knife. Just prior to falling over backwards on a bench chair that was behind him, White fired his service weapon at King who was only several feet from him, with the knife pointed directly at him at the time he fired.

Subsequent investigation showed King was armed with a large knife that was recovered at the scene. Video collected from the jail, along with an eyewitness account of the incident, clearly showed that Nancy King was armed and continued to threaten Sgt. White throughout the incident until shots were fired. King was declared deceased at the scene. The autopsy determined that King died of gunshot wounds. Toxicology tests determined that King's blood ethanol level was .12 and she also tested at .15 mg/L for Citalopram.

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Under these facts and circumstances, Sgt. White was justified in his use of deadly force. At the time of the application of deadly force, Sgt. White had an objective good faith belief in the correctness of his actions and that he was acting pursuant to RCW 9A.16.040. Therefore, no criminal charges will be filed against Sgt. White in this matter.

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, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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