

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Amber Raub

Public Information Officer

St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office

rauba@stlouiscao.org

314-312-9912 (cell)



Circuit Attorney's Office Announces Findings in Emeshyon Wilkins Matter

ST. LOUIS, MO (October 2, 2026) — Circuit Attorney Gabe Gore announced today that the Circuit Attorney's Office (CAO) has completed its review of the June 18, 2024 shooting death of 17-year-old Emeshyon Wilkins. The death of Mr. Wilkins is a tragedy for his family and for our entire community. No decision by this office can ease the heartbreak his family has endured, or the strain a loss like this places on our community.

Applying Missouri law, the CAO conducted a review of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department's (SLMPD) Force Investigation Unit (FIU) investigation to determine whether an officer who used lethal force acted in an objectively reasonable manner in the defense of other officers. Based on our review, we concluded that there is not sufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the officer's decision to use lethal force was objectively unreasonable.

The Circuit Attorney's Office conducted a comprehensive review of the evidence and investigative materials related to this matter provided by SLMPD's FIU. The CAO received the investigative file on October 20, 2025. The office began its review in April 2026. The CAO reviews FIU investigations in the order in which the investigative files are received.

FIU's investigative file contains body-worn camera footage, officer dashcam video, witness and officer statements, police reports, RTCC surveillance, medical examiner findings, laboratory analysis reports, officer notes, photographs, cell phone records, medical records, social media records, government records, and dispatch communications.

The Circuit Attorney's Office's Role in Reviewing Officer Use of Force Investigations

Prosecutors have a legal and ethical obligation to review every investigation submitted to our office carefully and objectively. In reviewing the police officer's use of lethal force against Emeshyon Wilkins, our sole role was to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prove a violation of Missouri criminal law beyond a reasonable doubt. Whether the officer followed St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department policies or protocols is outside the scope of our review. In addition, we make no determination regarding any potential civil liability.

Use of Force Overview

On June 18, 2024, at approximately 12:56 p.m., plainclothes SLMPD Anti-Crime Task Force officers wearing police vests were patrolling in multiple unmarked vehicles when they spotted a stolen silver Mazda SUV in the Baden neighborhood. The Mazda had been reported stolen in St. Louis County. The vehicle was included on SLMPD's stolen vehicle list and had a stolen license plate.

Emeshyon Wilkins, 17, was driving with a 16-year-old male in the front passenger seat. Officers followed the Mazda in unmarked police vehicles. Along the way, Mr. Wilkins stopped in the Penrose neighborhood and picked up a 17-year-old female.

Officers activated their lights and sirens at the intersection of Athlone Avenue and Penrose Street to pull the car over. The Mazda did not stop and fled at a high rate of speed. Officers in another unmarked vehicle deployed spike strips. The Mazda continued on the damaged tires at about 15 miles per hour.

Mr. Wilkins opened the driver's door on Margaretta Avenue, then quickly closed it and continued to drive. At that time, an officer in the lead car announced over the radio, "Driver with a gun in his hand." Moments later, the officer described over the radio that the gun had a flashlight attached.

In the 4200 block of St. Louis Avenue, in The Ville neighborhood, all three occupants exited the car while it was still moving. The female passenger followed officers' commands to stop and was detained without incident.

The male passenger ran east on St. Louis Avenue. He then turned south, jumped a fence, and ran between homes. He encountered an officer approaching from Maffitt Avenue, who ordered him to drop the firearm he was carrying. He complied and was taken into custody without incident.

Mr. Wilkins ran east on St. Louis Avenue, turned south through a driveway, then west into an alley where he encountered an officer who began a direct pursuit. Other officers moved along Maffitt Avenue to contain the suspects from the opposite direction.

As captured on the body-worn camera video, the officer in direct pursuit of Mr. Wilkins yelled, "Get on the f...ing ground now. Drop that f...ing gun. Drop that f...ing gun." Mr. Wilkins kept running towards the gangway leading to Maffitt Avenue, where another officer was approaching. About five seconds after the officer began his direct pursuit of Mr. Wilkins, the officer fired three shots, fatally wounding Mr. Wilkins, causing him to fall to the ground.

Officers recovered a firearm protruding from Mr. Wilkins' right pants pocket, a black cell phone near his right hand, and a backpack. The recovered firearm was a 10mm Glock with a flashlight attached. At the time the firearm was recovered, it was not loaded with a magazine. Officers

seized three magazines, one of which was loaded with 10mm bullets, from Mr. Wilkins' backpack. The slide was not attached to the Glock when it was removed from Mr. Wilkins' pocket. It is unclear whether the slide became detached when Mr. Wilkins fell or whether he was carrying it detached. The National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) associated the 10mm Glock recovered from Mr. Wilkins with a shots-fired incident the day before, on June 17, 2024.

The first radio transmission about the Mazda occurred at 12:56 pm. The lights and sirens of the unmarked police vehicles were activated at 1:03 p.m., and the call of shots fired was broadcast at 1:12 pm. At the time of the pursuit, 14 officers were on the ground in the vicinity of the incident.

Summary of the Officer's Statements

Other officers at the scene briefly questioned the officer who used lethal force about where he was positioned when he fired his weapon. The purpose of this questioning was solely to aid in the recovery of shell casings.

FIU interviewed the officer who used lethal force at SLMPD Headquarters on June 27, 2024. The officer made the following statement regarding his decision to use lethal force:¹

[Emeshyon Wilkins] then turns from me and starts to run south back toward the direction where [other officers in pursuit] are supposed to be, and as I run through this vacant backyard, I give him commands to drop the gun. He is not dropping the gun. I fear, as he gets [inaudible], he is going to be cornered by [the other officers in pursuit], and that he's going to be cornered. He's gonna be in the low and ready, and he is either going to shoot at them or turn back around and kind of shoot at me. For my safety and the safety of the other detectives who were on the end of that gangway he was running towards, and that's when I fired three shots.

CAO Findings

When reviewing an officer-involved shooting investigation, as in every matter, the CAO review is solely for the purpose of determining whether the evidence supports a violation of Missouri criminal law. Our review of the FIU investigation into the death of Emeshyon Wilkins is governed by § 563.031.2(1) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, which permits an officer to use deadly force when he "reasonably believes that deadly force is necessary to protect himself...or another against death, serious physical injury, or any forcible felony."

¹ An SLMPD Spokesperson on the day of the officer-involved shooting indicated that Mr. Wilkins turned and pointed his firearm at the officer who utilized lethal force. SLMPD has acknowledged that the statement "was not consistent with the actual events." SLMPD has also since indicated that the spokesperson's statement regarding Mr. Wilkins turning and pointing his firearm at the officer was not attributable to the officer who used lethal force.

We considered the totality of the evidence, including video, witness statements, and physical and forensic evidence. The officers had reasonable suspicion to stop, detain, or arrest the suspects and continue an investigation into the incident. All of the officers involved in this incident were aware that Mr. Wilkins was armed, and in fact, he and the other male passenger had firearms in their possession. The officer who was in direct pursuit of Mr. Wilkins stated that he saw a gun in Mr. Wilkins' hand during the pursuit. The officer was aware that there were other officers in the immediate vicinity working to apprehend Mr. Wilkins and the male passenger. The officer stated that he believed Mr. Wilkins could use a deadly weapon against himself or the other officers nearby.

In conducting our analysis, we are required to consider the totality of the circumstances and consider the reasonableness of the officer's actions from the perspective of the officer at the time that the decision to use lethal force was made. To support a criminal charge, we would be required to conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that the officer's decision to use lethal force was objectively unreasonable. Based on our comprehensive review of the FIU investigation, there is not sufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the officer's decision to use lethal force in the defense of others was objectively unreasonable.