

Portland Police Association



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PPA disappointed with proposed discipline regarding Aaron Campbell incident

PORTLAND, OR -- September 15, 2010 -- The 930 members of the Portland Police Association are deeply disappointed and disturbed by the discipline Chief Mike Reese and Police Commissioner Sam Adams are proposing regarding this incident.

As Portland Police Officers, when we encounter critical incidents, we depend on the Portland Police Policy and Procedure Manual, our training, and our experience. We also depend on our leaders to support us when we follow our policies and training in making the decision to use force or deadly force. In this case, it is obvious to the members of the Portland Police Association that there is an abyss between what the Bureau's policies mean as they are taught to our members and how the City interprets those same policies.

This decision by Chief Reese and Mayor Adams sets a dangerous precedent. It teaches us that even if Portland police officers follow the Bureau's policies and training, they act at the peril of their career if political pressure is great enough.

On January 29, 2010, Ron Frashour, Ryan Lewton, Liani Reyna, and John Birkinbine, along with several other police officers, did everything they could to make sure that they protected the lives of everyone involved in this incident, including Aaron Campbell. As found by a Multnomah County grand jury, the officers reasonably believed that Mr. Campbell was armed and dangerous and that it was necessary to engage him to protect the community, the officers and Mr. Campbell. Had Mr. Campbell complied with the commands given by officers, had he not posed an immediate and lethal threat to those around him, there would have been no need to use deadly force against him.

To use the word tragedy regarding this incident is an understatement. A distraught young man lost his life because of his actions. A mother lost a second son in one day. A community's trust has been shaken by the misinformation disseminated by the media. The lives, families and careers of the officers and supervisors involved have been impacted forever. Trust between the rank and file of the Portland Police Bureau and its internal and external review policies has all but disappeared.

What cannot happen is for Portland police officers to face termination and substantial discipline for doing their jobs correctly. If that occurs, as it has today, public safety is deeply compromised. The Portland Police Association will challenge the proposed disciplinary action, and is confident that a neutral third party will conclude that the grand jury made the correct decision. Officers Frashour and Lewton, and Sergeants Reyna and Birkinbine, did what they were required to do – they followed the Bureau's rules and training. Political expediency cannot change that basic fact.