

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 2022 TERM

PARTIAL GRAND JURY REPORT

The Grand Jury has investigated the circumstances leading up to the May 3, 2021 deaths of Eric Smith and La'Mello Parker and makes the following report:

On May 3, 2021, investigators from the East Baton Rouge (Louisiana) Sheriff's Office responded to the residence of Christin Parker in reference to a reported shooting incident. Upon arrival, investigators discovered Christin Parker and Brandon Parker were deceased from apparent gunshot wounds. The Grand Jury finds that there is sufficient cause to believe that Eric Smith ("Smith") committed the murders of Christin and Brandon Parker. The Grand Jury finds that, following the murders, Smith kidnapped three month old La'Mello Parker and fled the scene. Investigators quickly obtained arrest warrants for Smith charging him with two counts of first degree murder and one count of kidnapping.

East Baton Rouge Sheriff's investigators began tracking Smith's cell phone location and determined that he was driving eastbound on Interstate 10 in Louisiana. A multi-jurisdictional search began, and Smith's vehicle, a blue Nissan Versa, was spotted in Slidell, Louisiana. Police attempted a traffic stop, but when Smith failed to stop, a pursuit ensued eastbound into Mississippi.

Once Smith entered Mississippi, deputies with the Hancock County Sheriff's Department and troopers from the Mississippi Highway Patrol joined the pursuit. Spike strips were deployed around the 11-mile marker of Interstate 10 leading to the deflation of Smith's vehicle's passenger side tires. Shortly thereafter, Smith exited his vehicle in the middle of the Interstate. Smith had

La'Mello Parker clenched against his chest using one hand and held a gun in his other hand. Smith raised the gun and shot in the direction of officers parked stationary behind Smith's vehicle. Smith then reentered his vehicle and led police on a low speed chase eastbound. This series of events was captured by in-dash camera and viewed by the Grand Jury.

Once Smith entered Harrison County, officers from other agencies, including Harrison County Sheriff's Department deputies, joined the pursuit. Deputies made multiple attempts to contact Smith in an effort to negotiate a surrender, however, Smith failed to answer his phone. At approximately the 40-mile marker of Interstate 10, Smith's vehicle was forced into the grassy median by a pursuing deputy. Smith's vehicle became stuck in the mud, facing westbound, and nearly parallel to pursuing officers. The deputy who forced Smith's vehicle from the road also got his patrol car stuck in the mud. The deputy exited his vehicle, drew his gun, and ran back toward the eastbound lane. The deputy then realized that his K-9 got out of his vehicle and he attempted to recover the K-9. As a result, the deputy was in Smith's line of fire. Smith rolled down his driver side window, extended a handgun from the window, and fired in the direction of the deputy and others. Smith's bullet hit a nearby patrol unit. At this point, multiple law enforcement officers returned fire simultaneously, resulting in Smith being shot three times by law enforcement and La'Mello Parker being shot one time by law enforcement. This series of events was captured on video and viewed by the Grand Jury. Smith was pronounced dead at the scene. La'Mello Parker was immediately rushed to a nearby hospital and transferred to a hospital in Mobile, Alabama. He ultimately died as a result of the gunshot wound he sustained.

The role of the Grand Jury in conducting its review of the facts and circumstances of any officer involved shooting is limited to determining whether or not a criminal violation of Mississippi law has occurred and, if so, whether any living person should stand trial for such

violation. After full and deliberate consideration of all the facts and circumstances leading up to the May 3, 2021 shooting of Eric Smith and La'Mello Parker, and the circumstances as they existed at the time of the shooting, the Grand Jury finds no criminal conduct on behalf of the law enforcement officers involved. The Grand Jury recommends that agencies address procedures in place and implement training related to communication and chain of command in multi-jurisdictional cases.

Therefore, we find that no further action is warranted by this body.

Respectfully submitted this the 14th day of April, 2022.



MICHAEL TIMS
FOREMAN OF THE GRAND JURY
FEBRUARY 2022 TERM

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