

Earlier today I read the District Attorney's Memorandum of March 16 determining the death of De'quan Lynn Williams last October 17 a justifiable homicide by York City Police. I approached the 27-page document with no hope or expectation of condemning or condoning its conclusions, as I hope the District Attorney approached his responsibility in the matter. Although I want to re-read and further consider parts of it, I want to share some tentative conclusions with you.

First, it appeared as though the investigation by the Pennsylvania State Police was thorough and exhaustive-- as we would have wanted and expected.

Second, and to the District Attorney's credit, the report did not attempt to exonerate to police officers by convicting the victim-- mentioning only in brief passing Mr. Williams' past involvements with law enforcement and mental health treatment.

It appeared to me that the Statement of Law attempted to fairly balance the rights of all. But did you know that the use of force-- including, I presume, deadly force if needed-- to prevent suicide? If you understand that, you're smarter than I am-- or not really listening.

It was shown that the officers were within their rights in not making statements to Internal Affairs or the State Police, although that raises two concerns. Any exercise of Fifth Amendment rights always tends to arouse suspicion. And how will the effect of the conscientious use of the bodycams on this right be handled?

The District Attorney ended the Memorandum saying, "the matter is now closed". But I say the discussion should now be opened: is this the best way we can handle the pleas for help from a mother of a mentally ill young man? I believe we can do better. I know we have to try.

*Richard Williams*