



OFFICE OF THE HENNEPIN COUNTY ATTORNEY
MARY F. MORIARTY COUNTY ATTORNEY

To the Minneapolis Community,

This has been an extraordinarily difficult week, month, and in reality, decades for this community. Last week, several members of our community and two police officers fell victim to gun violence. A police officer, Jamal Mitchell, was shot and killed while he tried to assist injured community members. Another person died and others are hospitalized in critical condition. While we can hope this will never happen again, and I will continue to do everything in my power to ensure it doesn't, the truth is that until we address the systemic issues that lead to violence, it will.

A year ago, this community mourned a different loss when Ricky Cobb II was shot and killed by law enforcement during a routine traffic stop— an all too frequent occurrence. While we can hope that it will never happen again, until we address the reasons that Black men end up shot by police, it will.

Too many people have been harmed by gun violence and our community suffers from tremendous trauma. It is time for us to change—for our leaders to address the systemic issues that allow gun violence and harm to thrive.

The announcement I am making today, which I will explain in public tomorrow, is one of the most difficult I've made in my career. I have made the decision that our office will no longer pursue charges against Minnesota State Trooper Londregan for the killing of Mr. Cobb.

I was elected by the people of Hennepin County to make ethical, courageous decisions, not those that would benefit me politically. This decision is not one I made lightly. Several months ago, we charged Trooper Londregan based on the evidence we had at the time, which showed improper use of deadly force in Mr. Cobb's killing.

Recently, however, the defense presented us with evidence that would make it difficult for us to meet our trial burden of proof beyond a reasonable doubt. We handled this case the way I want our staff to treat every case that comes to us. We reviewed each piece of evidence as we received it and made decisions based on that evidence. Sometimes, that means that I have to make difficult choices. But the promise I made to all of you when I took office was that I would approach every case fairly, ethically, and courageously. Although the law requires this decision, I know this is no comfort to the Cobb family, or the community traumatized by police violence.

In the next few days, I will lay out in detail the new pieces of evidence that have fundamentally altered this case. I will also talk about the systemic barriers that made this case unnecessarily difficult from the beginning.

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I want to talk about two of the new pieces of evidence. First, in a court appearance a couple of weeks ago, Trooper Londregan's lawyer claimed, for the very first time, that Londregan would testify that he thought Mr. Cobb was reaching for his gun. We would have to disprove this claim beyond a reasonable doubt. The video doesn't clearly refute that claim (nor does it support it). Second, Trooper Londregan's trainer has recently provided a declaration stating that he did not train Trooper Londregan to refrain from physically extracting people from a running car, which is what set these events in motion.

Today, I want to address the people of Hennepin County as a Lifelong Minnesotan who has watched too many killings of Black men by law enforcement. Prosecuting a case of police violence is always an uphill battle- and that is by design. Law enforcement witnesses do not have to talk to investigators until after they review evidence and have consulted with a lawyer- often paid for by the same police union paying for the legal fees for the defendant's lawyer. In addition, many law enforcement witnesses do not want to provide testimony against the people they serve alongside. We often hear law enforcement lament about community members who do not want to provide eyewitness testimony against people that they know. Law enforcement witnesses in these cases are no different, even though they receive additional protections that are not given to members of the community. That should not be the case.

Ricky Cobb II should still be alive. Our decision to not go ahead with charges does not exonerate Trooper Londregan. There are so many points where this night could have gone differently.

To the community that will be struggling, I understand both your pain and your anger, some of which I know will be directed at me. You've seen elected officials offer excuses time and again. I promise I will continue to fight for change, but I know you don't have to and may not believe me right now. I will show you with my actions.

Second, to our team members who worked on this case and have experienced serious threats and attacks over the last several months, including some death threats, I thank you. You showed up every day to do the important work of this office and were courageous and relentless even while you were under a public microscope.

To the Cobb family, I am so terribly sorry. You deserved better. People in power have played political games with this case while Ricky is dead. Rather than receive the space to grieve, you've been thrust into political theater. Ricky Cobb was your son, your brother, and a cherished friend and to many. He should be alive today. I know this will bring no comfort, but I promise to fight every day to push for the reforms that, had they been implemented, might have kept your son alive. He deserves no less.

Respectfully,

Mary Moriarty