DANE COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ISMAEL R. OZANNE

PRESS RELEASE
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DISTRICT ATTORNEY DECISION REGARDING CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR THE DEATH OF COREY RUIZ AS THE RESULT OF AN OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING ON JULY 22, 2026

On July 22, 2026, Corey Ruiz was shot and killed during an arrest made by the City of Madison Police Department. Mr. Ruiz's death is and was a tragedy. I have met privately with his family and offered my condolences, and I publicly extend my sympathies to his family, friends and community who continue to grieve his loss.

This Officer-Involved Shooting (OIS) occurred in the middle of the day, in a busy intersection, in a neighborhood which has experienced the trauma of violent crime due to home invasions and multiple officer-involved incidents. As Dane County's District Attorney, I am well aware of this reality.

In Wisconsin, when a death is caused by an officer, Wis. Stat. 175.47 requires that at least two investigators from outside agencies or agencies not involved in the critical OIS incident lead the investigation. This investigation was conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) and is in compliance with the statute.

Additionally, police executives and supervisors have the exclusive responsibility of establishing appropriate training and protocols for use in response to crisis events, and of selecting from the tactical options available to police in responding to particular events.

The role of the District Attorney's Office is limited to a review of the facts to determine whether further investigation is merited and, after all available evidence is obtained, whether criminal charges could be merited for any individual who has survived the incident. Relevant evidence includes statements of officers at the scene, scene diagrams, video from squad cameras, citizens' phones, and evidence collection. There were no body worn cameras utilized in this incident. In this case, I have reviewed this evidence which is all consistent.

Evidence Summary

In this incident, on July 22, 2026, just after 12:40 PM, a 911 caller indicated an individual just tried to break into their house. After they activated an alarm the individual took one of the homeowners' bikes and rode away toward Jenifer St. The caller described the individual as a lighter skinned black male, approximately 35 years old. There were no weapons seen at this time and the person in question was wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt, which said "Boston" on the front, and Hawaiian style shorts.

The caller indicated her husband had recovered their bicycle on Williamson St. behind some apartments. An image of the individual was captured on their Ring video footage. The caller also stated the individual had been seen ditching another Trek bicycle, which the dispatcher said may be related to another dispatch call.

A neighborhood officer responded to the caller's address and while taking the report was able to view the Ring video footage. The officer identified the male individual captured on the Ring video as Corey Ruiz. The officer knew Mr. Ruiz from past professional contacts and saw Mr. Ruiz the day before.

Further investigation of the Ring video footage captured the same individual, Mr. Ruiz, coming to the location at approximately 5 AM on July 22, 2026, trying the car door and entering the backyard area before leaving with a bicycle. This information was not known to the homeowner and/or law enforcement at the time of the original call or during the officer-involved incident.

The neighborhood officer located Mr. Ruiz near E. Washington Ave. on a path near the Yahara River. The officer requested backup before attempting to contact Mr. Ruiz. Once backup arrived police attempted to contact Mr. Ruiz. Mr. Ruiz was seen riding toward officers at which time lights and sirens were activated and an officer exited the squad and yelled "Police, Stop" but Mr. Ruiz ignored the officers' commands as he passed officers and headed inbound on E. Washington Ave.

Law enforcement lost sight of Mr. Ruiz as they headed outbound on E. Washington Ave. before making U-turns to head in the direction that Mr. Ruiz had traveled. Law enforcement again caught sight of Mr. Ruiz as he was biking toward Williamson St. Mr. Ruiz was captured on squad video riding onto Williamson St. before heading up a driveway between houses followed by law enforcement. Law enforcement lost sight of him again. Mr. Ruiz continued to move throughout the neighborhood as police continued to look for him. Law enforcement officers were dressed in full military style uniforms and operating marked and unmarked squad vehicles utilizing lights and sirens.

Mr. Ruiz was seen on the Willy Street Co-Op video cameras checking bikes at the bike rack outside the entrance. No weapon was visible in Mr. Ruiz's hands or on his person. Mr. Ruiz rode through the parking lot and then headed out of the lot turning left onto Jenifer St., while being pursued by law enforcement.

Mr. Ruiz turned left onto S. Balwin St. riding toward Williamson St. As Mr. Ruiz was approaching the intersection of S. Baldwin St. and Williamson St., a law enforcement officer exited his squad and made contact with Mr. Ruiz as he was riding past on the sidewalk. Mr. Ruiz lost control and tumbled off of the bicycle and into the intersection of S. Baldwin St. and Williamson St.

The officer made contact with Mr. Ruiz in the intersection as he was still on the ground. The officer gave repeated verbal commands "get your hands behind your back, quit reaching in your waist," as he attempted to take Mr. Ruiz into custody. Two other officers made contact with Mr. Ruiz and were trying to bring Mr. Ruiz's arms behind his back to place him into handcuffs as more verbal commands were given. Mr. Ruiz was not complying with officers' commands and continued to resist. Mr. Ruiz produced a knife from his person and had it in his right hand. An officer was heard repeatedly stating, "he's got a knife, he's got a knife, he's got a knife." Mr. Ruiz continued to struggle with officers and was able to stand while officers attempted to take him into custody.

Another officer arrived and approached with their Taser drawn yelling "Taser, Taser, Taser" before deploying the Taser. A second officer deployed their Taser at close range toward Mr. Ruiz in quick succession. One set of Taser prongs made contact with Mr. Ruiz's left hand. The other set of Taser prongs were on Mr. Ruiz's left side. Mr. Ruiz fell or was taken to the ground just before three shots were fired by an officer. Mr. Ruiz was hit with two of the three shots; once in the torso and once in the head.

Fire/EMS were requested and when they arrived, they took over life-saving measures. Mr. Ruiz was transported to the hospital where he was later pronounced deceased.

Toxicology findings showed Mr. Ruiz to have the following in his system: Methamphetamine 46 ng/mL, Benzoylecgonine 1500 ng/mL, Ecgonine Methyl Ester 540 ng/mL, and a presumptive positive finding for Cannabinoids.

It is not my typical practice to include the statutory language verbatim in the release of my decisions, but I feel it is important to do so at this time.

939.48 Self-defense and defense of others. (1) A person is privileged to threaten or intentionally use force against another for the purpose of preventing or terminating what the person reasonably believes to be an unlawful interference with his or her person by such other person. The actor may intentionally use only such force or threat thereof as the actor reasonably believes is necessary to prevent or terminate the interference. The actor may not intentionally use force which is intended or likely to cause death or great bodily harm unless the actor reasonably believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself.

(4) A person is privileged to defend a 3rd person from real or apparent unlawful interference by another under the same conditions and by the same means as those under and by which the person is privileged to defend himself or herself from real or

apparent unlawful interference, provided that the person reasonably believes that the facts are such that the 3rd person would be privileged to act in self-defense and that the person's intervention is necessary for the protection of the 3rd person.

The general rule is as follows:

- A person may threaten or use force reasonably believed necessary to terminate unlawful interference with his or her person
- They may only use the amount of force necessary to terminate the unlawful interference
- They may use force likely to cause death or great bodily harm only in response to a reasonable belief of impending death or great bodily harm

"A knife can be used as a dangerous weapon and may pose a grave danger of bodily harm and/or death to an individual. A person fleeing from police who, when contacted, physically resists and produces a knife from their person does pose a threat of great bodily harm and/or death to the officers," said Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne. "Responding to that threat with deadly force is permitted under the law."

A person does not have to like and/or agree with the law, however I am sworn to apply the law to the facts at hand. The law applies equally to members of law enforcement and to those who are not.

Decision

Under Wisconsin law, which applies equally to members of law enforcement and to those who are not, any person may use deadly force to respond to a genuine fear of deadly force to that person or any other person. This critical incident involved City of Madison police officers who were attempting the apprehension of an individual wanted for attempted burglary of an occupied home, who was actively evading police, and when contact was made physically resisted, produced a weapon, and appeared to be unphased by two less than lethal devices used by officers. I conclude it was reasonable for the officer to use deadly force when this person resisted officers, produced a knife, and was not affected by multiple attempts to use Tasers while officers attempted to take him into custody.

Therefore, after a review of summary reports, diagrams, videos (compiled from squads, surveillance, and citizens), and other evidence, the Dane County District Attorney's Office decided on Thursday, November 19, 2026, that there is no potential criminal court liability for the City of Madison police officers involved in the July 22, 2026, shooting incident at the intersection of S. Baldwin Street and Williamson Street, in the City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin.

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