

Case #2025-0436
On-Duty

Subject: Summation

To: Undersheriff D.S. Coarsey #6957

From: Internal Affairs Unit / Detective R.L. Green #61820

Reference: Unnecessary Force
Failure to Conform to Work Standards

Complainant: In-house

Member: Police Officer Donald Bowers #69914

On July 20, 2025, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) Internal Affairs Unit initiated an administrative investigation after being made aware of a video captured by citizen William Anthony McNeil Jr. The video captured a portion of events leading up to McNeil's arrest on February 19, 2025, documented under JSO Central Communications Record (CCR) 2025-0101868. The video showed Police Officer Donald Bowers #69914 breaking McNeil's window and striking McNeil in the face. The video was made available on multiple local news outlets and forwarded to the JSO, and the Internal Affairs Unit received multiple phone and online complaints in reference to the video. Additionally, McNeil participated in several press conferences in which attorney's speaking on McNeil's behalf alleged Bowers made an *"unlawful traffic stop"* and used *"excessive force."*

Investigative Note: Internal Affairs did not receive a complaint in reference to this incident prior to it being posted on social media. The administrative investigation was initiated after the video recorded by McNeil was posted to multiple social media platforms on July 20, 2025, five (5) months after the incident. The JSO

Integrity Unit attempted to contact McNeil multiple times for a statement. The Internal Affairs Unit also attempted to contact McNeil via telephone and certified letter. As of September 2, 2025, McNeil has not responded to any attempts to contact him and has not made any statements to the Integrity Unit or the Internal Affairs unit.

Investigative Note: On July 21, 2025, Bowers' law enforcement authority was rescinded, and he was transferred to the JSO Tele-Serv Unit.

Investigative Note: The JSO Integrity Unit concluded a criminal investigation into Bowers' actions during the traffic stop associated with CCR#2025-0101868. After consulting with Assistant State Attorney (ASA) Joseph Licandro with the Office of the State Attorney (SAO), the criminal case was closed with a case status of "*exonerated/ non-criminal.*" Additionally, on August 13, 2025, the SAO released an Investigative Memorandum which reiterated that no further action would be taken by the SAO.

CASE MATERIALS REVIEW

Internal Affairs reviewed the following pertinent documentation in reference to this administrative investigation:

- Digital Videos of press conferences held by Attorney Ben Crump and Attorney Harry Daniels that took place on July 21, 2025, and July 23, 2025. McNeil was present during the conferences and was present while Crump and Daniels outlined several allegations in reference to the traffic stop associated with CCR# 2025-0101868. The following allegations were made during the press conferences:
 - It was alleged that the traffic stop that was conducted by Bowers was "*unlawful.*"
 - It was alleged that it was not raining during the traffic stop.
 - It was alleged that McNeil provided the documents requested by Bowers.
 - It was alleged that McNeil was wearing his seatbelt at the time of the traffic stop.
 - It was alleged that McNeil was not resisting arrest.

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- It was alleged that the reports completed in reference to the arrest of McNeil were intentionally falsified because officers at the scene “didn’t know *[McNeil was filming].*”
- It was alleged that officers were “*knocking [McNeil’s] head against the concrete while [McNeil] was in handcuffs.*”
- It was alleged that no evidence was located in the vehicle occupied by McNeil.
- Internal Affairs also received multiple complaints from citizens that included the following additional concern:
 - Officers responding to the traffic stop did not have the headlamps of their marked police units on during inclement weather.
- The JSO Arrest and Booking Report authored by Police Officer Grant Kerce #83421 on February 19, 2025, and documented under CCR# 2025-0101868. The report contained Bowers’ statement in reference to the arrest of McNeil, the charges McNeil was arrested for, and property that was seized during the investigation. The JSO Arrest and Booking Report contained the following pertinent information:
 - Bowers provided Kerce with the following statement for the narrative portion of the JSO Arrest and Booking Report:

“On 2-19-25, while on patrol in my marked patrol vehicle I observed a silver SUV (Suspect vehicle) at the stop sign of West Palm Ave and Columbus Ave. The suspect vehicle did not have its headlights or tail lights illuminated in inclement weather. I also observed the driver was not wearing his seatbelt.

I initiated a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle at which time it came to a stop near the intersection of West Palm Ave and Commonwealth Ave. Upon approaching the driver side of the vehicle, the driver quickly opened the driver’s door. The driver, later identified as William McNeil (Suspect) immediately became verbally combative. I advised the reason for the stop which he refused to listen to. I asked the suspect for his driver’s license, registration and proof of insurance to which he replied; “call your supervisor”. The suspect refused to comply and shut the driver’s

door and locked it. I gave numerous orders to the suspect to provide his identification which he refused.

Do (sic) to the suspect's actions, I requested assistance via portable radio. Several officers responded to the scene to assist.

I advised the suspect that he was being placed under arrest for resisting officer without violence. The suspect still refused to exit the vehicle. I gave the suspect several warnings that I was going to break the window and remove him from the vehicle if he did not comply with lawful commands.

The suspect continued to refuse to comply, at which time I broke the driver's window and opened the driver's door. I along with other officers on scene removed the suspect from the vehicle. The suspect was reaching for the floorboard of the vehicle where a large knife was sitting. The suspect continued to attempt to pull away from officers and refused to place his hands behind his back. Physical force was applied to the suspect and he was taken to the ground. The suspect still refused to place his arms behind his back.

The suspect was eventually placed in handcuffs and placed in the back of a patrol vehicle. The suspect complained that his tooth was chipped. I observed blood on the suspect's mouth.

JFRD Eng/ Res 17 (Run# 25242) responded and medically cleared the suspect."

- The JSO Arrest and Booking Report indicated that the following items were seized after McNeil was taken into custody:
 - Eight (8) grams of marijuana inside a plastic bag recovered from McNeil's person.
 - A pipe "with residue" recovered from inside the vehicle driven by McNeil.
 - Five (5) grams of "marijuana edible" recovered from inside the vehicle driven by McNeil.

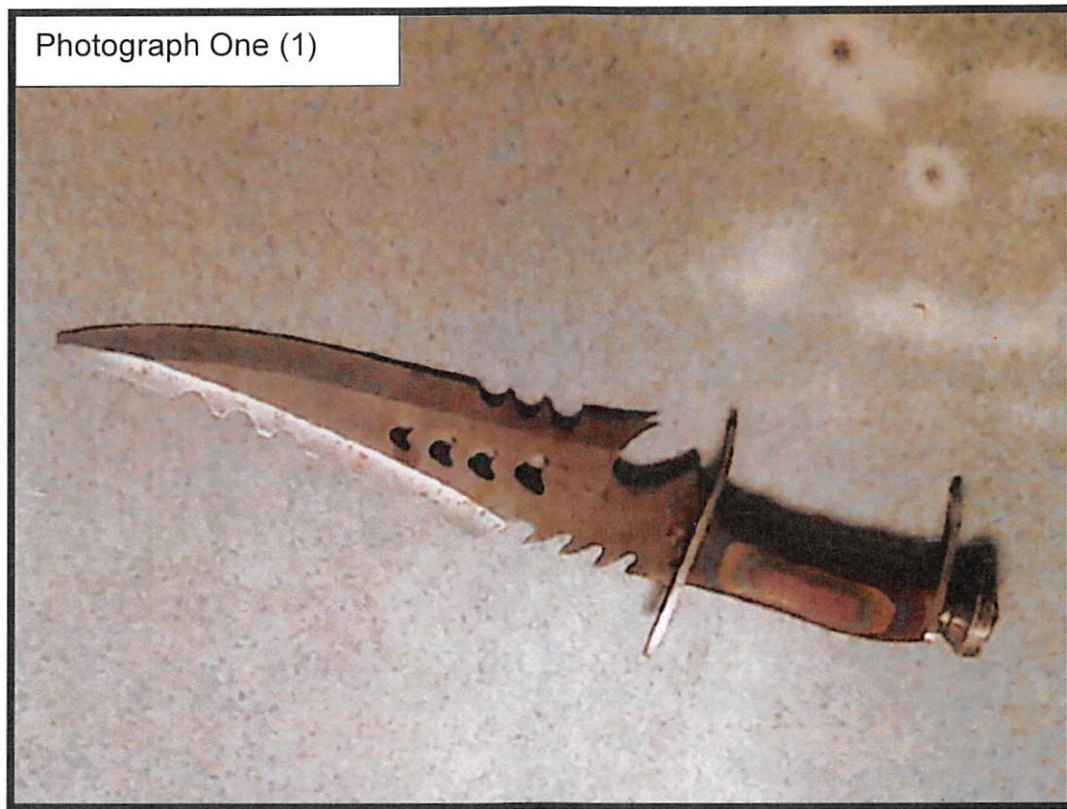
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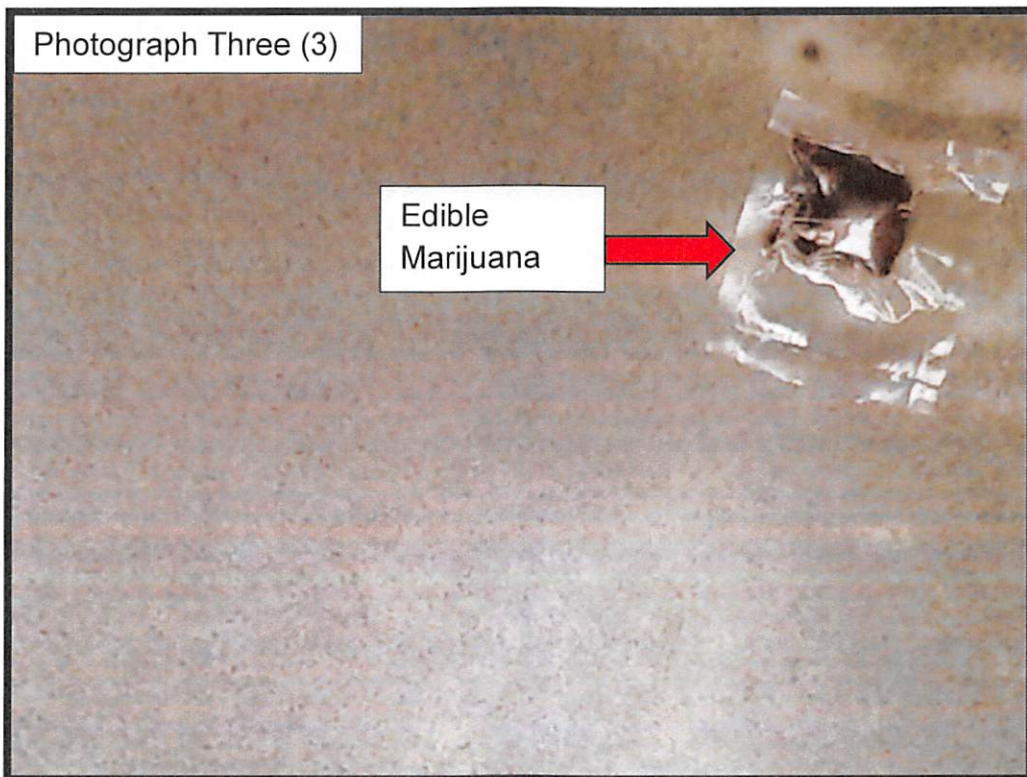
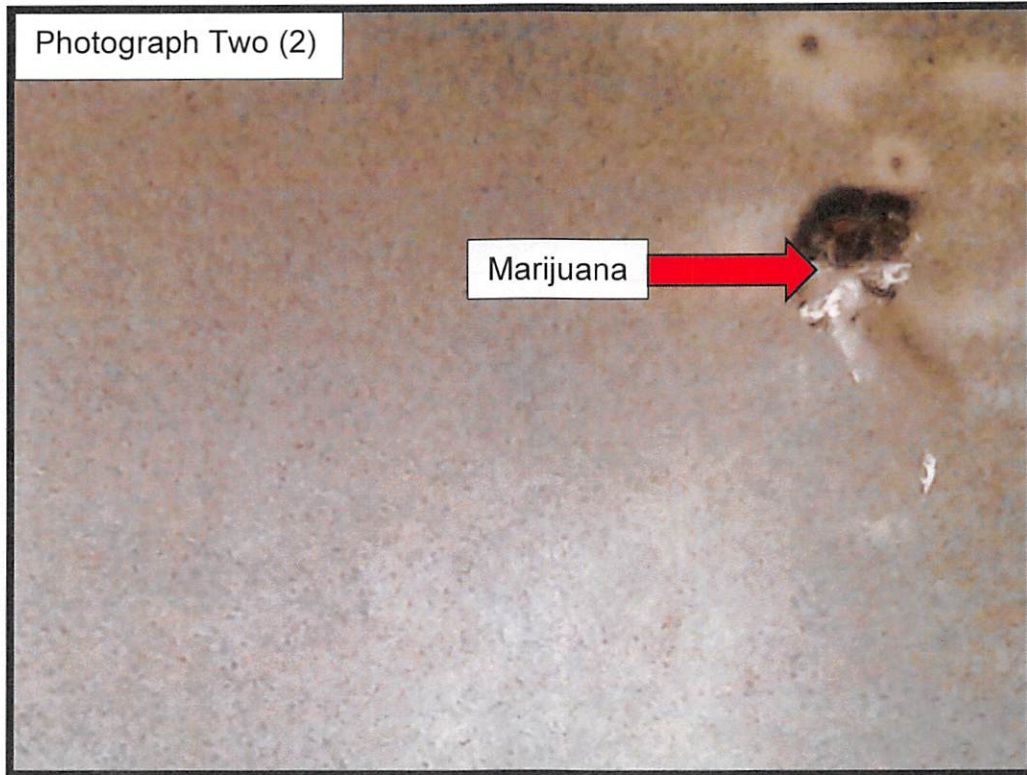
- A scale listed as *"narcotics equipment"* recovered from inside the vehicle driven by McNeil.
- A *"large knife"* recovered from inside the vehicle driven by McNeil.
- The JSO Arrest and Booking Report indicated that McNeil was arrested for the following criminal charges and traffic violations:
 - Possession of less than twenty (20) grams of marijuana, a first-degree misdemeanor.
 - Resisting an officer without violence to his or her person, a first-degree misdemeanor.
 - Use or possession with intent to use drug paraphernalia, a first-degree misdemeanor.
 - Driving while license is suspended for financial responsibility, a second-degree misdemeanor.
 - Driving with no headlights in rain, fog, smoke, etc., a moving violation.
 - Operating a vehicle with no seat belt, a Florida seatbelt violation.

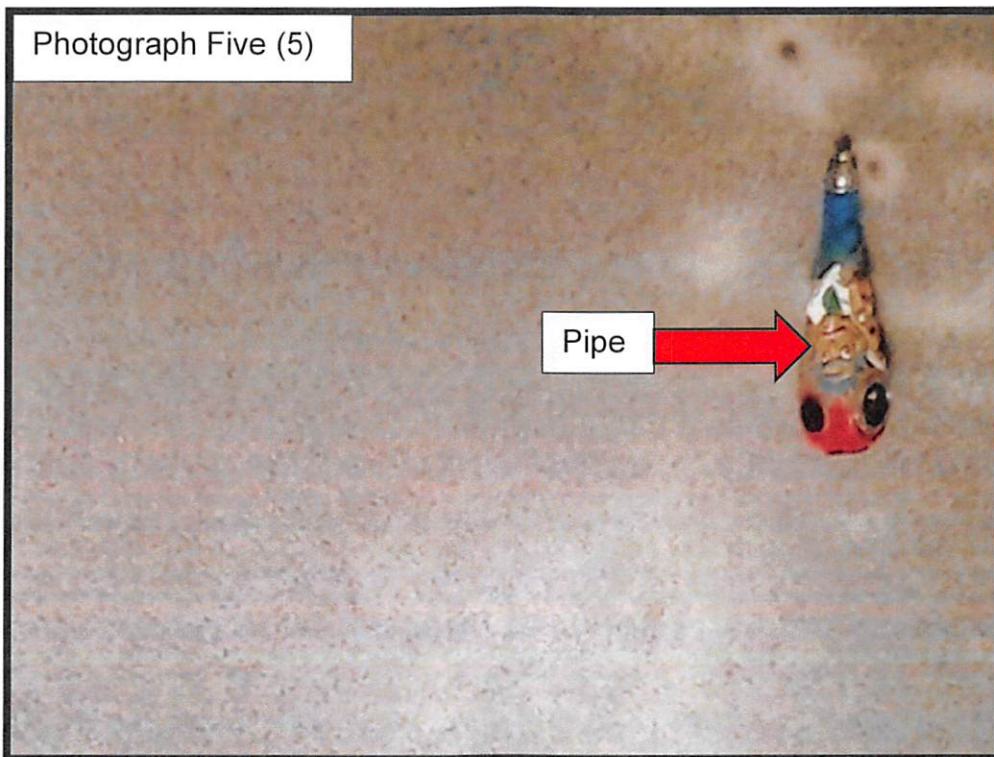
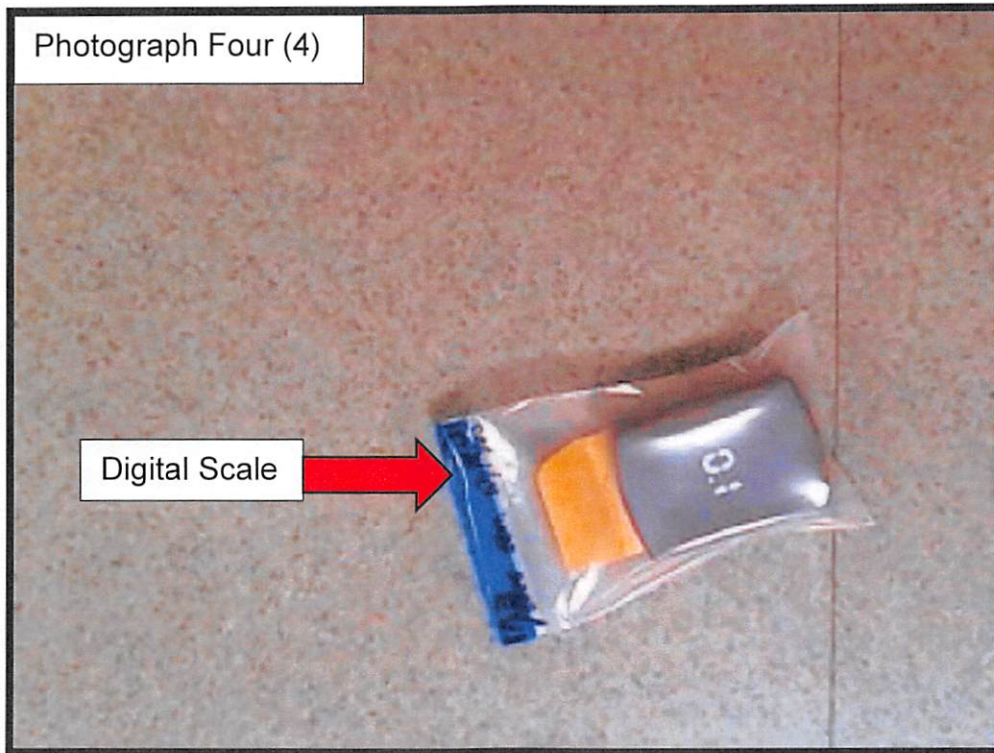
Investigative Note: Clerk of the Court records for Duval County, Florida indicated that on February 20, 2025, McNeil pled guilty to resisting an officer without violence to his or her person and to driving while license is suspended for financial responsibility. The other charges against McNeil were dismissed on February 20, 2025.

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- Photographs One (1) through Five (5) of property pertinent to this administrative investigation submitted to the JSO Property and Evidence Room by Bowers on February 19, 2025:







- JSO Integrity Unit report authored by 119.071(4)(c) F.S. The JSO Integrity Unit report documented the criminal investigation into the actions taken during the traffic stop associated with CCR# 2025-0101868. The report contained the following pertinent information:
 - The Integrity Unit investigation began on July 20, 2025, after JSO was made aware of the video recorded by McNeil.
 - The Integrity Unit reviewed the video recorded by McNeil, Body Worn Camera (BWC) from the incident, and all applicable reports completed in reference to the incident including Bowers' Response to Resistance (RTR) report. The report stated (verbatim), *"From watching the video posted by McNeil, I found that the initial strike to McNeil's face was not properly documented by Bowers; however, the second strike was. I was also able to see in this video that McNeil was pulling away in what may have been an attempt to walk away. I was not able to see him reach towards the floorboard of the vehicle when being taken out of the vehicle, due to the camera view."*
 - The Integrity Report documented all efforts to contact McNeil stating (verbatim), *"Sunday/ 07-20-2025 at 1323: I attempted to make contact with McNeil at the phone number listed in the report (904-760-0257). The number was disconnected. I researched several police databases and found two possible other numbers for McNeil (904-354-8694) and (904-761-3293). I first called 904-354-8694 and spoke to Annett James (Grandmother of McNeil). I identified myself and explained that I was attempting to speak with him by phone about a recent incident. I further explained that the last number I had for him was disconnected. I inquired if he had a new number where I could call and speak to him. She advised he was not at her home and she was not able to keep up with all her grandchildren's numbers. She took down my name and number and advised she would attempt to give it to him. I then called 904-761-3293 and found this number to be disconnected. I noted in the report that McNeil's vehicle was released to Latoya Chemeka Soloman. I conducted research into Soloman and found she was born Latoya Chemeka James and is the mother of McNeil. I found a possible number for her as (904-566-8368). Sunday/ 07-20-2025 at 1542: I called 904-566-8368 and found this*

number to also be disconnected. I did see that she had a recent address at 1097 Woodstock Ave. which is near where McNeil was arrested."

- *The Integrity Unit interviewed Police Officer Devan Miller #80686 on July 21, 2025, at 10:20 am, and summarized the interview in their report stating (verbatim), "He stated that he heard Bowers call for a back-up officer on the radio and responded to assist. He stated that he pulled his marked unit in front of McNeil's vehicle to block it from leaving. He stated that he also pulled Bowers' vehicle up from the rear to complete a block of the vehicle. He stated that he stood on the passenger side of McNeil's vehicle and attempted to get him to open the door and explaining the reason for the stop. While speaking to McNeil, who was refusing to open the door and comply with orders, he observed him continuously dipping his hands below the steering wheel towards the floor. He advised that Officer Bowers announced that he was going to break the window around the time other officers arrived on scene. He stated that after the glass broke, he walked around the vehicle to join Bowers on the driver's side. He stated that he saw that Bowers' arm or hand was cut so he reached into the vehicle to help unlock the door. He stated that they removed McNeil from the vehicle and took him into custody. While attempting to gain compliance, he advised he struck McNeil's legs approximately 4-6 times. I asked if he had watched the cell phone video that was posted on social media. He stated that he had. I asked if he observed Officer Bowers deliver the initial strike to McNeil. He stated that he did not. I asked if they ever spoke of this strike after the fact and off camera. He stated that they never had any conversations about this at all."*
- *The Integrity Unit interviewed Bowers on July 21, 2025, at 12:00 pm and summarized the interview stating (verbatim), "Bowers explained that he conducted the traffic stop on West Palm and Commonwealth. He stated that as he approached the vehicle, the driver opened the door. He stated that he attempted to explain the reason for the stop and that the driver began to argue about the stop. He stated that he was not going to argue with him and the driver slammed the door and locked it. He instructed the driver to open the door several times and called for a back up officer to respond."*

He stated that once a back up officer arrived on scene, he had them position their vehicles to prevent him from fleeing. He stated that he stood outside the vehicle for several minutes ordering him to open the door or they would have to break the glass and that he was under arrest for resisting. He stated that the driver then put his seat belt on to make it even harder for them to get him out. He advised he did not know what the driver's intentions were for failing to comply this way. He stated that he was not able to see his hands, and that this situation was very unnerving. After he broke the glass, before he could reach for the door lock, Bowers stated that he had delivered a distractionary strike to the face, like a push to his face to distract him. He stated further that based on his training and experience in Narcotics, when you extract someone from a vehicle one of the first things you do is deliver a distractionary strike to stun them so that you can figure out how to get the door unlocked. This is done to be as safe as possible for all involved. After the strike, the driver did show his hands and Officer Miller assisted with unbuckling him and removing him from the vehicle. Bowers stated several times in the interview that McNeil was reaching towards the floor/center of the vehicle.

I asked about the lack of documentation of the initial strike in the Response to Resistance report. He agreed to speak to me and stated that several things played into this. He initially went to the hospital before writing the report. He stated that his body camera also did not show the strike when he reviewed it for writing the report. He stated he also did not document the strike because he did not think of it as a use of force and rather as a tool to distract. He stated that the strike was not meant to cause injury and only to stun him. He also added that it did not cause any injury. He concluded that eventually a large knife was found under the seat which was placed into property. He mentioned this to show that he was not out of line for thinking he may have a weapon because he did have one near his feet."

- The Integrity Report concluded stating that Bowers' actions were not "criminal in nature." The report further stated that ASA Licandro agreed that there was "insufficient evidence to move forward with a crime."

- All related digital videos relevant to this administrative investigation were reviewed by Internal Affairs. The entire incident was documented utilizing multiple video angles from BWC and the video recorded by McNeil. For the ease of the reader, the documentation of the video utilized Eastern Standard Time rather than video counter timestamp. For reference, the video counter time stamp was included in any screenshots captured for the summation. The following videos were utilized:
 - The video recorded by McNeil and posted to social media.
 - Bowers' BWC, digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1617_D01A52246"
 - Miller's BWC (1), digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1620_D01A2047C"
 - Miller's BWC (2), digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1626_D01A2047C"
 - Police Officer Darvin Ruise's #77650 BWC, digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1621_D01A1861M"
 - Police Officer Claude Fleurimond's BWC, digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1621_D01A4432F"
 - Police Officer Joel Belgard's #77638 BWC, digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1622_D01A52826"
 - Police Officer Grant Kerce's #83421 BWC, digitally titled, "Axon_Body_4_Video_2025-02-19_1626_D01A1551M"

Investigative Note: The JSO Integrity Report indicated that Ruise and Fleurimond's BWC's were not activated. The videos were ultimately located under a different CCR number within the evidence.com online storage application, preventing them from being located using the CCR number. This typically occurs when officers are en route to a call for service and divert to another call for service. The videos were properly tagged and reviewed for this administrative investigation.

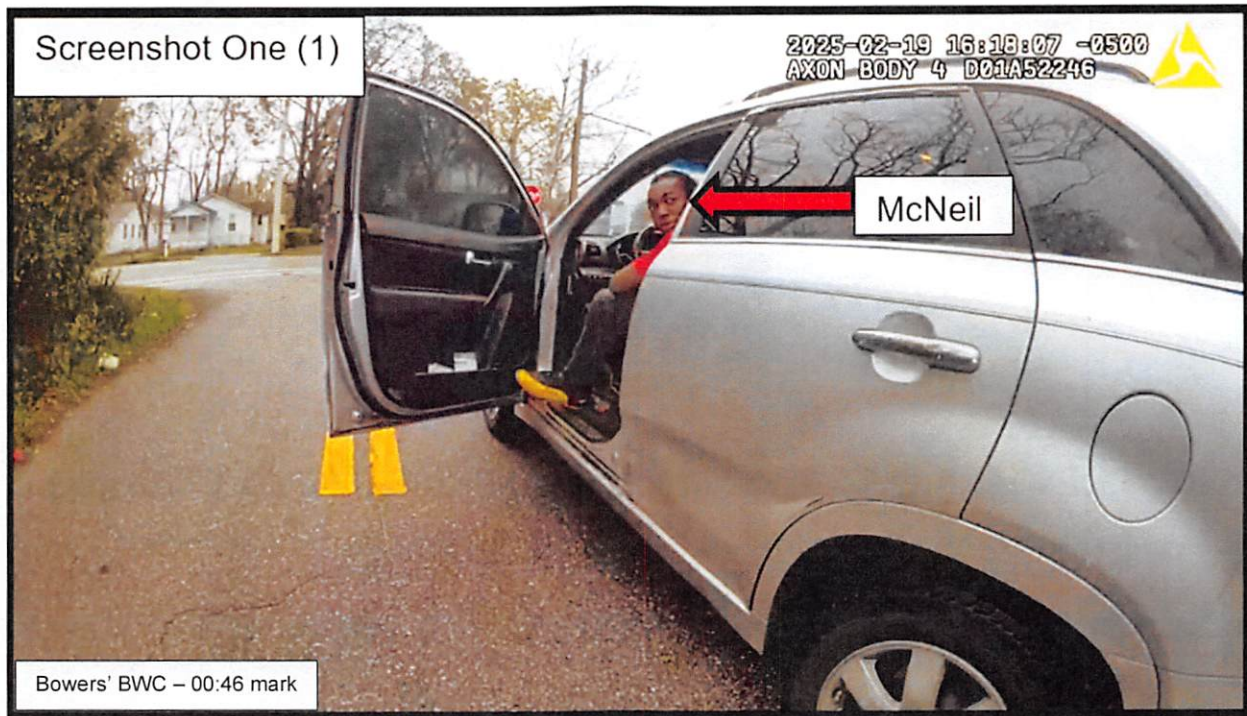
- At 4:17:20 pm, Bowers activated his BWC as he exited his marked patrol vehicle after conducting a traffic stop at West Palm Avenue south of the intersection with Commonwealth Avenue. Bowers walked towards the vehicle driven by McNeil.

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Raindrops were visible on Bowers' marked patrol vehicle as well as the vehicle driven by McNeil. The ground appeared to be wet, and the weather was overcast.

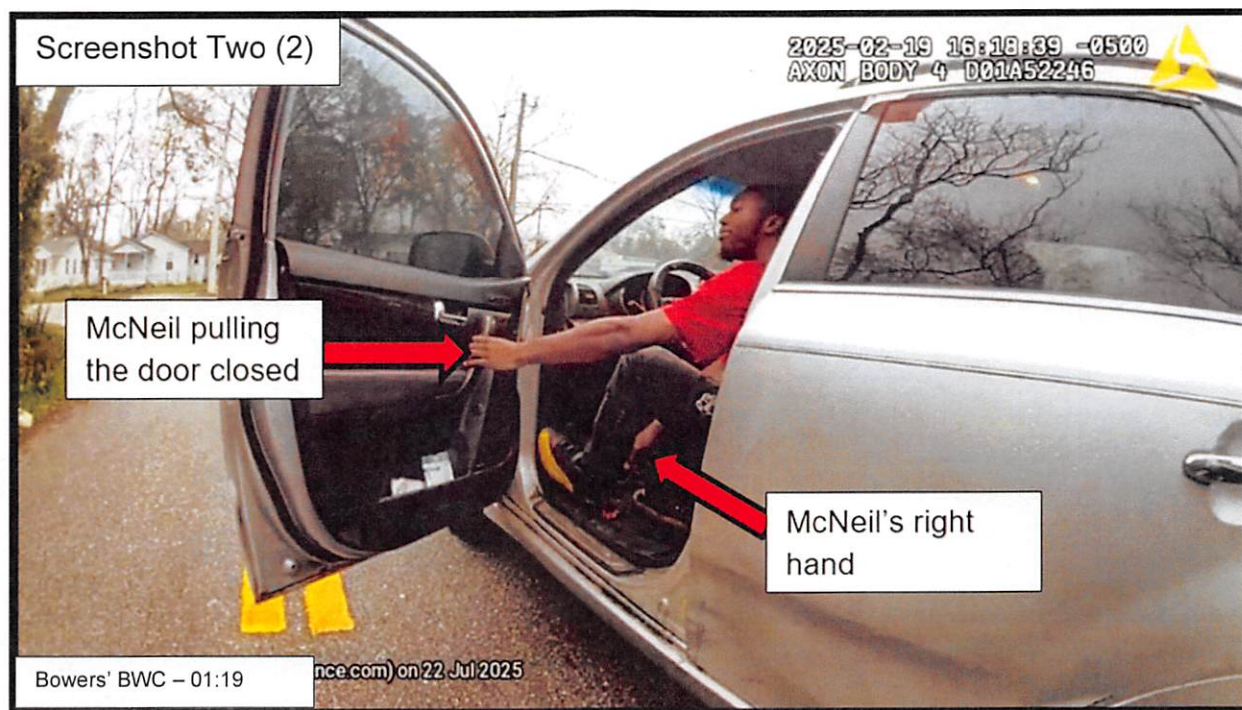
Investigative Note: According to wunderground.com, a website that provides historical weather data, *"light rain"* was recorded during the day of February 19, 2025.

- At 4:18:07 pm, McNeil opened the driver's side front door and remained seated in the vehicle, as depicted in Screenshot One (1).



- The following conversation could be heard between Bowers and McNeil:
 - McNeil: "Yes, sir?"
 - Bowers: "Is there a reason why you're popping the door open like that?"
 - McNeil: "Yeah, I don't have a window that works, is there a reason that you're pulling me over?"
 - Bowers: "Absolutely there's a reason why I pulled you over. For one thing, inclement weather, you don't have your lights on. Two things, you're not wearing your seatbelt."

- McNeil: *"It's daylight, I don't need the lights, and it's not weather, it's not raining. It's not raining."*
- Bowers: *"Oh, this isn't inclement?"*
- McNeil: *"It's not raining, bro."*
- Bowers: *"Ok, I'm not arguing with you, I'm telling you why I'm pulling you over. Give me your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance."*
- McNeil: *"No, no, call your supervisor. Why?"*
- Bowers: *"Excuse me?"*
- McNeil: *"Call your supervisor. Why did you pull me over?"*
- At 4:18:30 pm, Bowers could be heard calling for an additional patrol unit to assist him stating he had an *"uncooperative adult driver."* The following conversation continued between McNeil and Bowers:
 - Bowers: *"I've already told you."*
 - McNeil: *"Why did you pull me over?"*
 - Bowers: *"Step out of the vehicle."*
 - McNeil: *"No."*
 - Bowers: *"Step out of the vehicle."*
 - McNeil: *"No."*
- At 4:18:39 pm, McNeil grabbed the handle of the driver's door with his left hand. McNeil's right hand could be seen near the floorboard of the vehicle, as depicted in Screenshot Two (2). McNeil then shut the door.

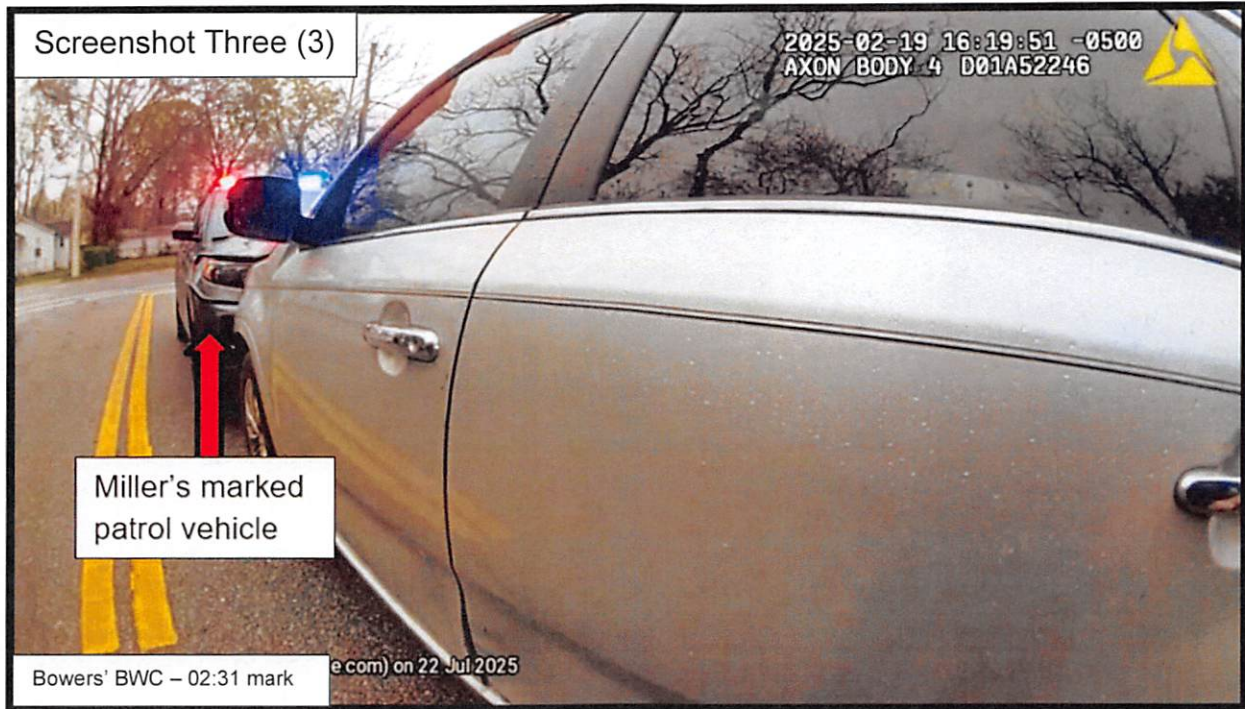


- At 4:18:40 pm, Bowers attempted to open the driver's side door, however, the door was locked. Bowers utilized his police radio and stated that McNeil shut and locked the door of the vehicle. McNeil could be heard hitting the window from inside the vehicle and yelling, *"Call your supervisor. What's your reason for pulling me over?"*
- At 4:19:12 pm, Bowers stated, *"Keep your hands where I can see them, sir."* Bowers was then heard stating, *"Yeah, I got my camera turned on too."* McNeil was heard asking why he was *"pulled over"* and Bowers stated, *"I already told you."* McNeil responded by stating, *"No, you didn't."*

Investigative Note: In comparing the timestamps, Internal Affairs noted that the video filmed by McNeil did not begin until 4:21 pm, however, Bowers indicated that McNeil appeared to be filming at 4:19 pm, two (2) minutes prior.

- At 4:19:23 pm, Bowers was heard informing McNeil that he was *"under arrest for resisting"* twice. Bowers also stated, *"Keep your hands where I can see them, sir."*
- At 4:19:42 pm, Miller's police vehicle turned from Edgewood Avenue onto West Palm Avenue with the emergency lights activated. Bowers was heard attempting to open the rear driver's side door of the vehicle driven by McNeil. As depicted in

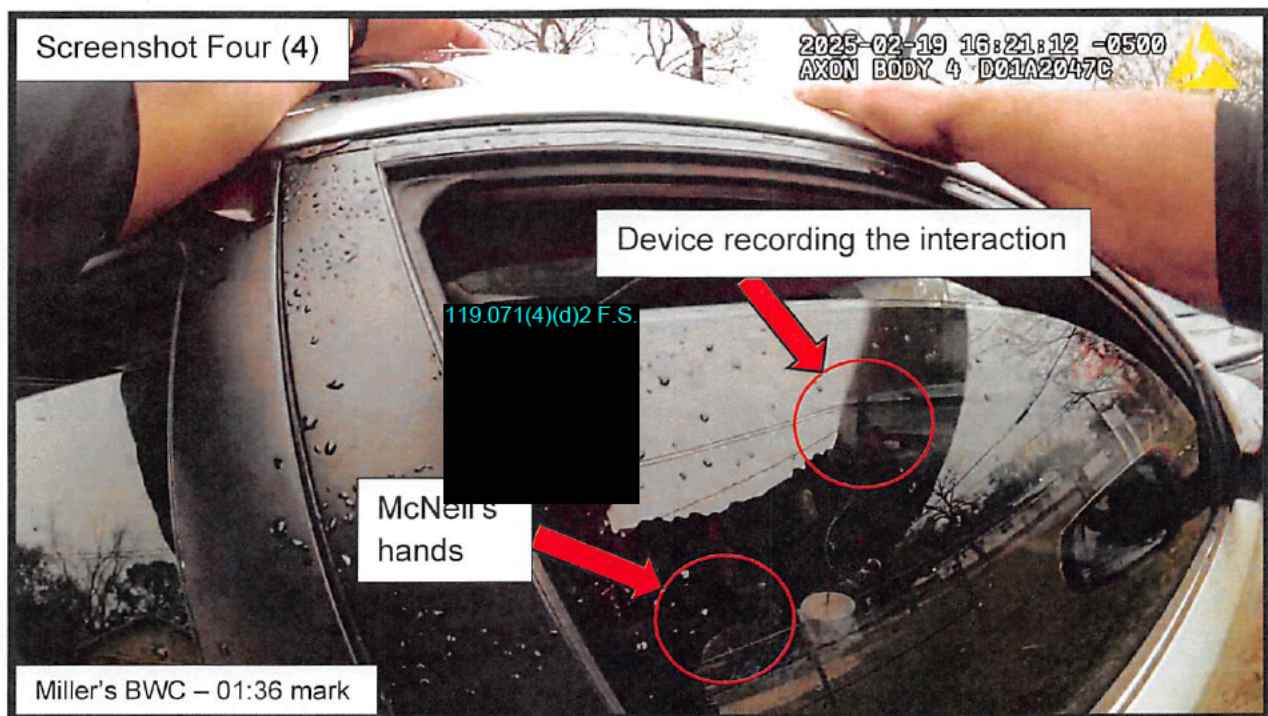
Screenshot Three (3), Miller pulled his marked police vehicle directly in front of McNeil's vehicle.



- At 4:19:55 pm, Bowers stated, *"Sir, this is your last warning to open the vehicle and exit before we are going to break the window."* Bowers stated, *"Open the door and exit or we are going to break a window"* two (2) more times. Bowers informed Miller that McNeil was *"under arrest."*
- At 4:20:09 pm, McNeil spoke to Miller through the rear passenger side window which was slightly open. McNeil stated, *"Can you just ask him, what did I do wrong?"* Miller stated, *"Well, we're conducting a traffic stop right now. You need to comply."* Bowers stated, *"No, he's under arrest."*
- At 4:20:16 pm, Miller moved Bowers' marked police vehicle to contact the rear of the vehicle driven by McNeil.
- At 4:20:18 pm, Bowers stated, *"Open the door and exit. You are under arrest for resisting"* four (4) times. McNeil was heard yelling, *"Call your supervisor."*
- At 4:20:49 pm, Miller spoke to McNeil through the back passenger window. The following conversation was heard:

- Miller: "Can you unlock the door and step out?"
- McNeil: "Can you talk to me though."
- Miller: "I will. Can you step out?"
- McNeil: "You don't even know the whole situation."
- Miller: "There is a traffic stop being conducted. You are required to comply."
- [Inaudible statements from McNeil]
- McNeil: "He gave no lawful reason for why he pulled me over."
- Miller: "Ok, so what did he ask for when he, I guess, talked to you?"

Investigative Note: The video captured by McNeil and posted to social media began immediately after Miller's previous question. As seen in Screenshot Four (4), McNeil's hands were folded in his lap and not near the device on the dashboard capturing the digital video, indicating that McNeil was already filming.



- McNeil: "When he pulled me over, he walked up, and I opened my door because my window don't (sic) work."
- Miller: "Oh yeah?"

- McNeil: *"I said, 'So what I did (sic) wrong?' He said, 'For one, your headlights are off under this weather.' I'm like, there's multiple people's headlights off, first of all."*
- Miller: *"Ok well, that's still a legitimate reason to pull somebody over."*
- McNeil: *"There's no rain."*
- Miller: *"It doesn't matter. You're still required to have headlights on."*
- McNeil: *"Can you pull that law up?"*
- Miller: *"huh?"*
- McNeil: *"Can you pull that law up?"*
- Miller: *"When you step out of the car, I will."*
- McNeil: *"Can you pull, can you call your supervisor? Can you call your supervisor?"*
- At 4:20:58 pm, while Miller was speaking to McNeil on the passenger side of the vehicle, Belgard could be heard speaking to Bowers over the police radio. Belgard was heard asking Bowers if McNeil was *"still refusing to get out of the vehicle."* Bowers was heard telling Belgard that McNeil was still refusing to exit the vehicle and that the vehicle was *"blocked"*, and that McNeil and Miller were speaking through the passenger side rear window. Belgard was heard informing Bowers that he was almost at the scene of the traffic stop. Sirens could be heard approaching the area.

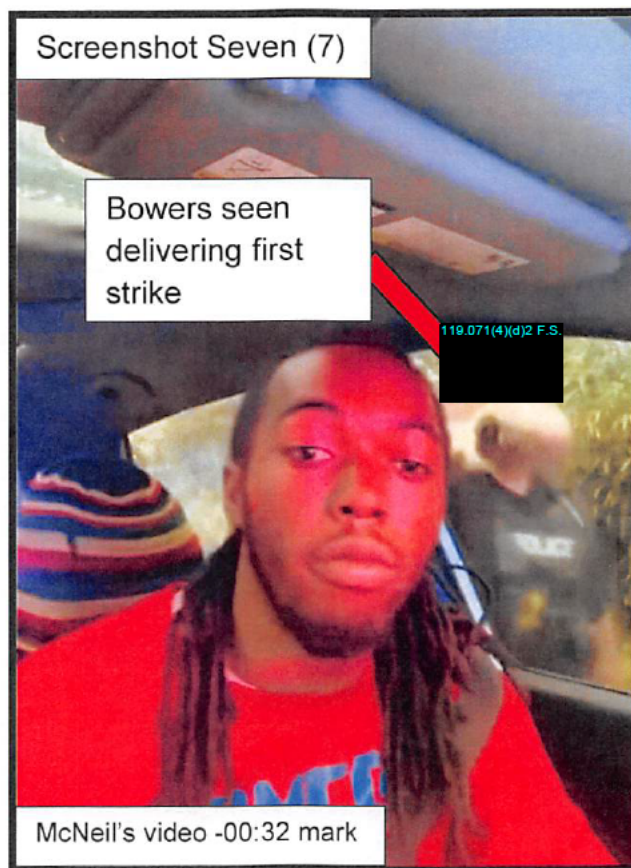
Investigative Note: Belgard was acting as Patrolman in Charge (PIC) on February 19, 2024. In a supervisor's absence, an Officer-in-Charge, commonly referred to as PIC is selected to assume the supervisory responsibilities for the assigned squad.

- At 4:21:40 pm, Belgard and Fleurimond were seen arriving from Commonwealth Boulevard as depicted in Screenshot Five (5). Both Fleurimond and Belgard had their emergency equipment activated. Bowers informed Miller he was about to *"break the window."* Miller was heard stating, *"Alright go for it."*

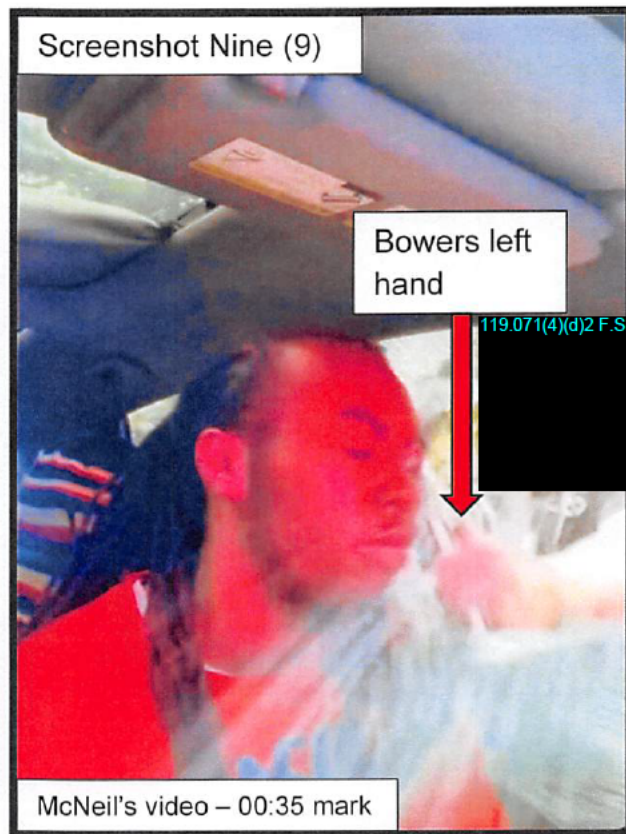


- At 4:21:45 pm, Bowers struck the driver's side window of the vehicle driven by McNeil with a glass breaking tool in his right hand, as seen in Screenshot Six (6) and Screenshot Seven (7)

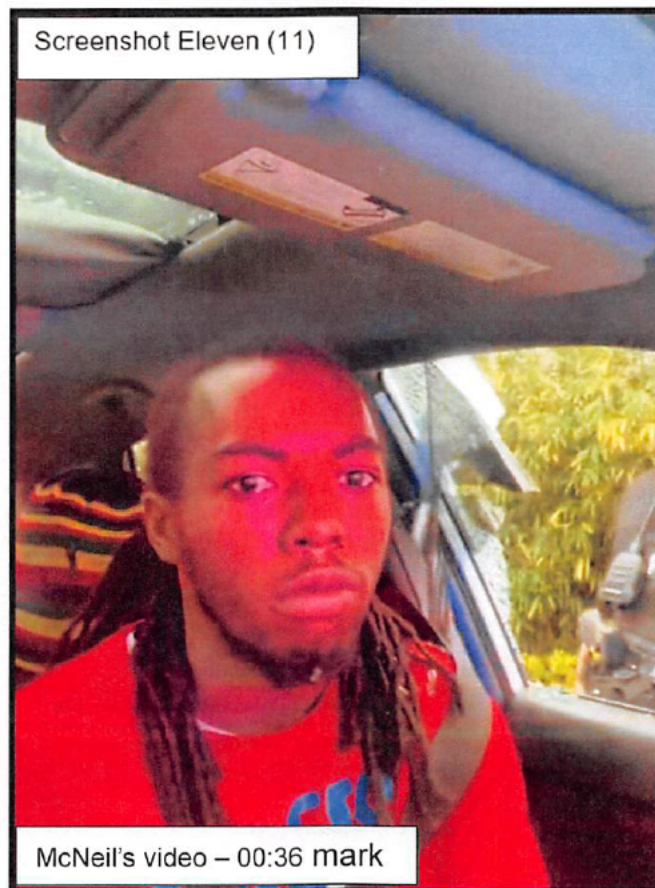
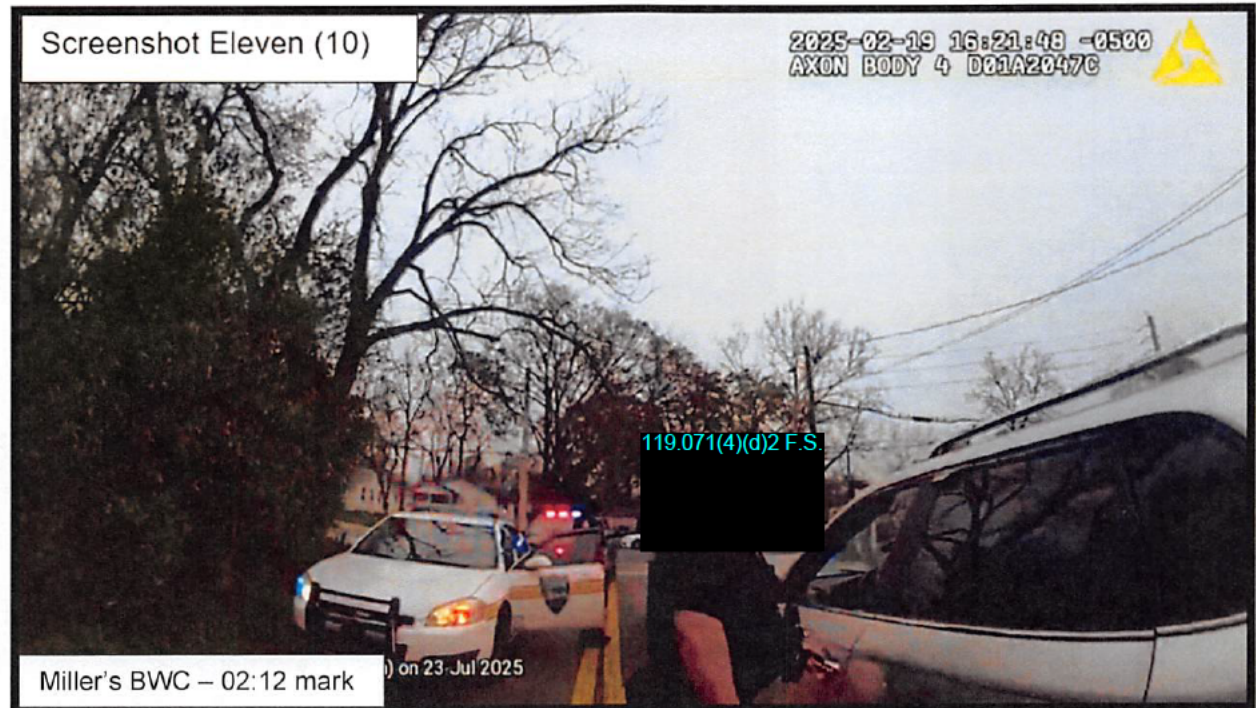




- At 4:21:46 pm, Bowers delivered a second strike to the driver's side window, causing the glass to break. The driver's side window glass shattered, as depicted in Screenshot Eight (8). Bowers then pushed the glass out of the frame with his left hand, as depicted in Screenshot Nine (9).



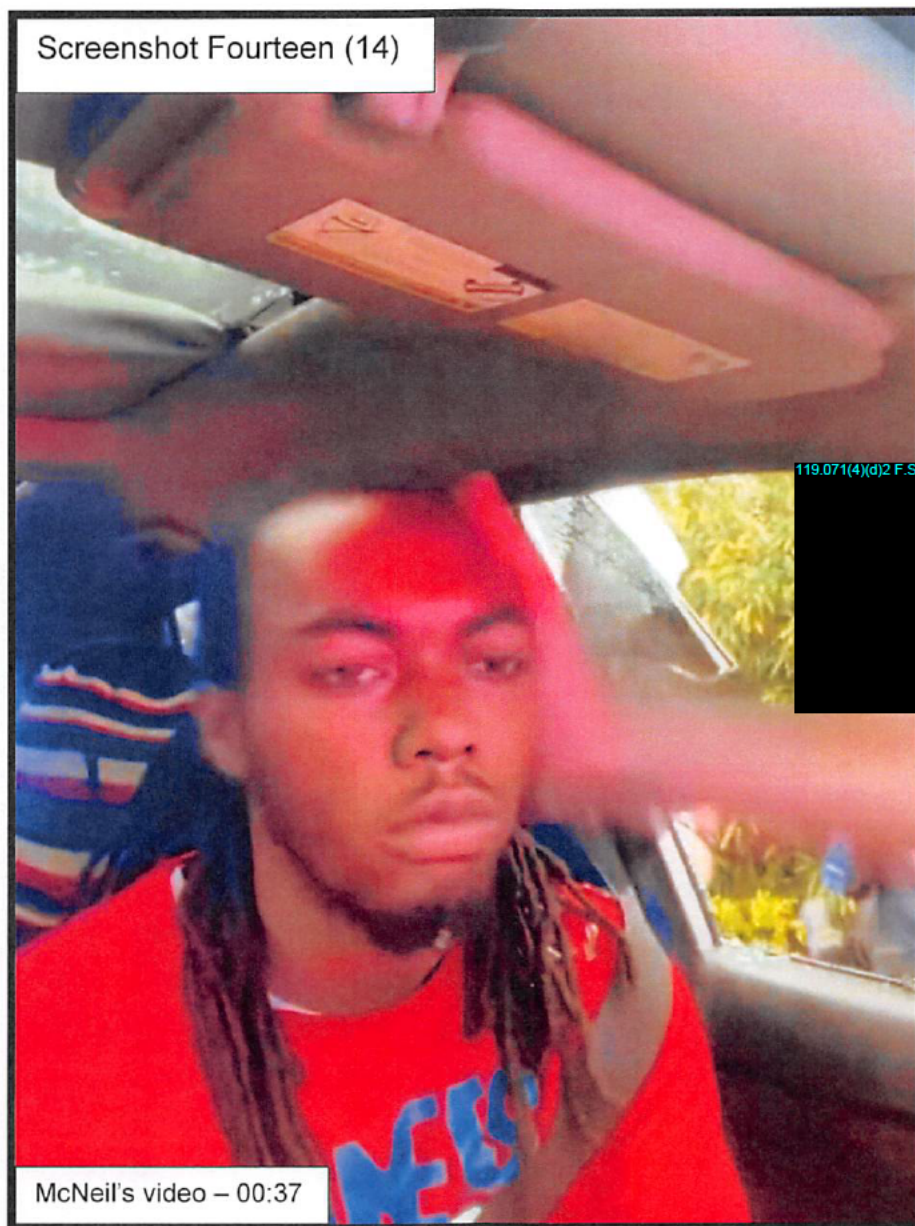
- At 4:21:48 pm, Bowers could be seen trying to pull on the door handle, which remained locked. As depicted in Screenshot Ten (10), Bowers stated, “Exit the vehicle, now.” In the corresponding angle from the video recorded by McNeil, McNeil could be seen continuing to sit in his vehicle and making no movements to exit the vehicle, as depicted in Screenshot Eleven (11).



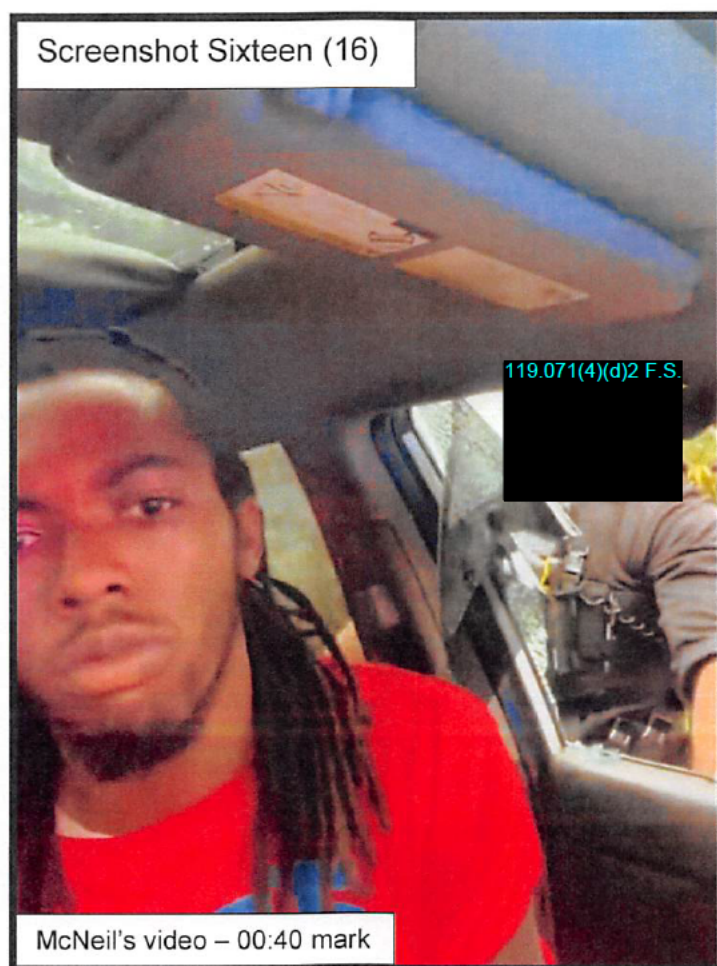
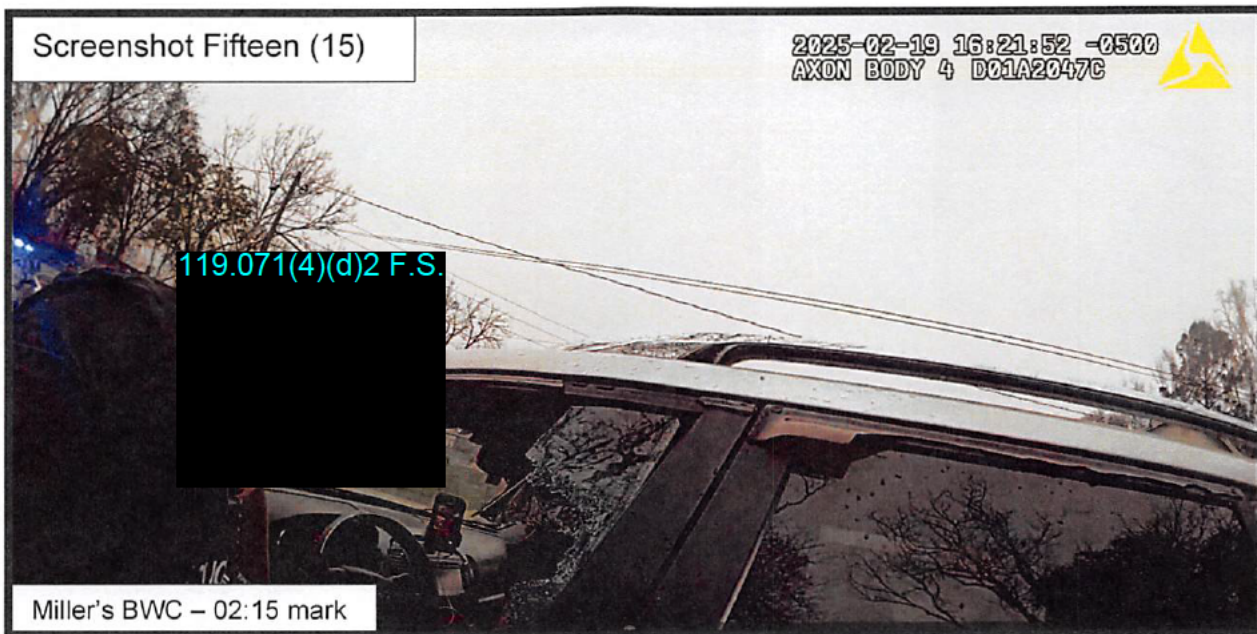
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- At 4:21:49 pm, Bowers could be seen reaching into the vehicle operated by McNeil and thrusting his left arm through the window towards McNeil, as depicted in Screenshot Twelve (12). In the corresponding angle of McNeil's video, at the 00:37 mark, Bowers' open left hand could be seen making contact with the left side of McNeil's face, as depicted in Screenshot Fourteen (14).





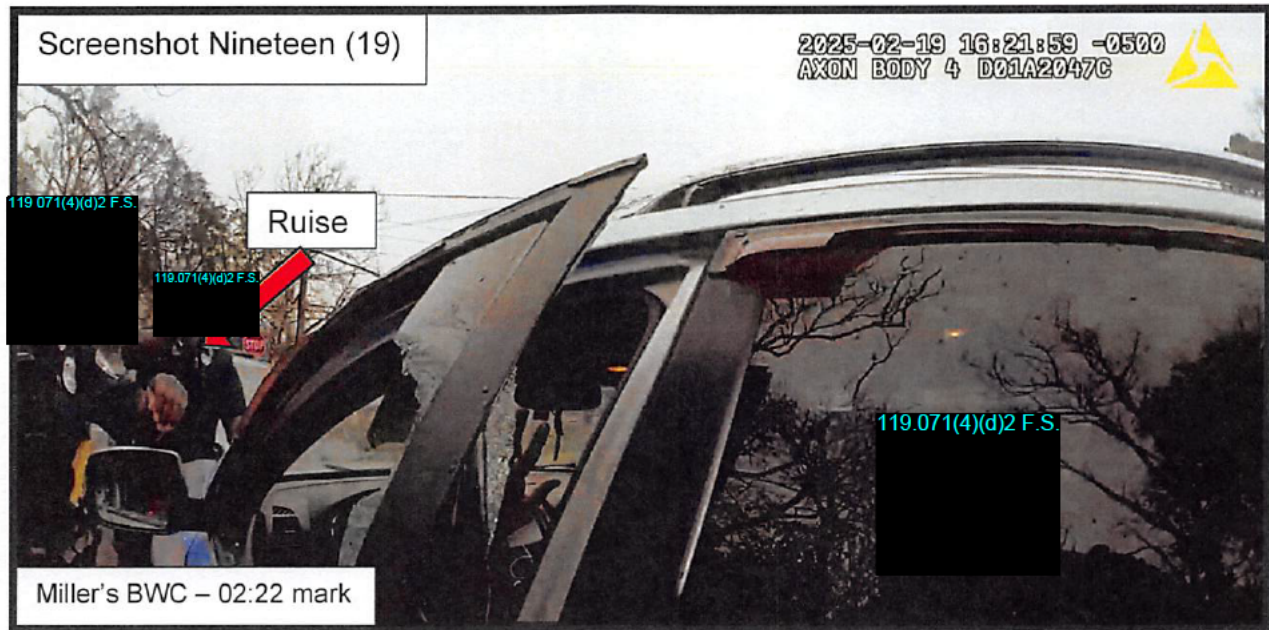
- At 4:21:52 pm, Bowers reached into the vehicle with his left hand and began attempting to unlock the door, as depicted in Screenshot Fifteen (15). McNeil continued to sit in the vehicle with his hands out of view and toward his lap as depicted in Screenshot Sixteen (16). No injuries could be seen on McNeil's face as a result of the strike by Bowers.



- At 4:21:53 pm, Bowers stated, *"Show me your hands."* McNeil raised his hands up as depicted in Screenshot Seventeen (17) and dropped them back to his lap. McNeil then folded his arms across his chest while Bowers continued to attempt to unlock the driver's side door from the inside.



- At 4:21:59, Ruise was seen standing in front of McNeil's vehicle while McNeil was still in the driver's seat. Ruise had his weapon drawn and pointed at McNeil, as depicted in Screenshot Eighteen (18). McNeil, upon seeing Ruise with his weapon drawn, raised his hands again but immediately dropped them into his lap and out of sight of the camera inside his vehicle.

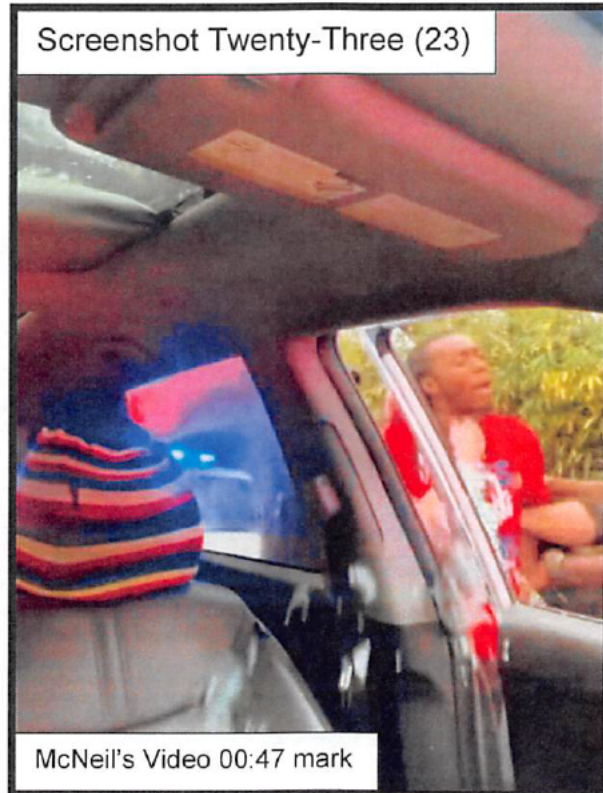


- At 4:22:00 pm, Bowers was able to unlock the door to the vehicle with his left hand. McNeil was heard asking, "*What is your reasoning sir?*" Miller then opened the door and unbuckled McNeil's seatbelt. Miller and Fleurimond could be heard telling McNeil to "*exit the vehicle*". McNeil was heard asking again, "*What is your reason?*" McNeil did not appear to make any effort to exit the vehicle.
- At 4:22:05 pm, Miller pulled McNeil from the vehicle, grabbing McNeil's left arm as depicted in Screenshot Twenty (20). Multiple officers were heard telling McNeil to get on the ground. McNeil appeared to be pulling away from Miller and was spun around as Bowers grabbed his head, depicted in Screenshot Twenty-One (21). McNeil was heard stating, "*no.*"



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- At 4:22:07 pm, Bowers could be seen striking McNeil in the chin with his right closed fist, as depicted in Screenshots Twenty-Two (22) and Twenty-Three (23)



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- At 4:22:10 pm, McNeil was taken to the ground by Miller, Belgard, and Bowers. Bowers placed both hands on McNeil's head and held it place, as seen in Screenshot Twenty-Four (24). Miller was seen striking McNeil in the legs. Handcuffs were placed on McNeil and McNeil stopped physically resisting. Response to resistance efforts stopped at 4:22:20 pm.

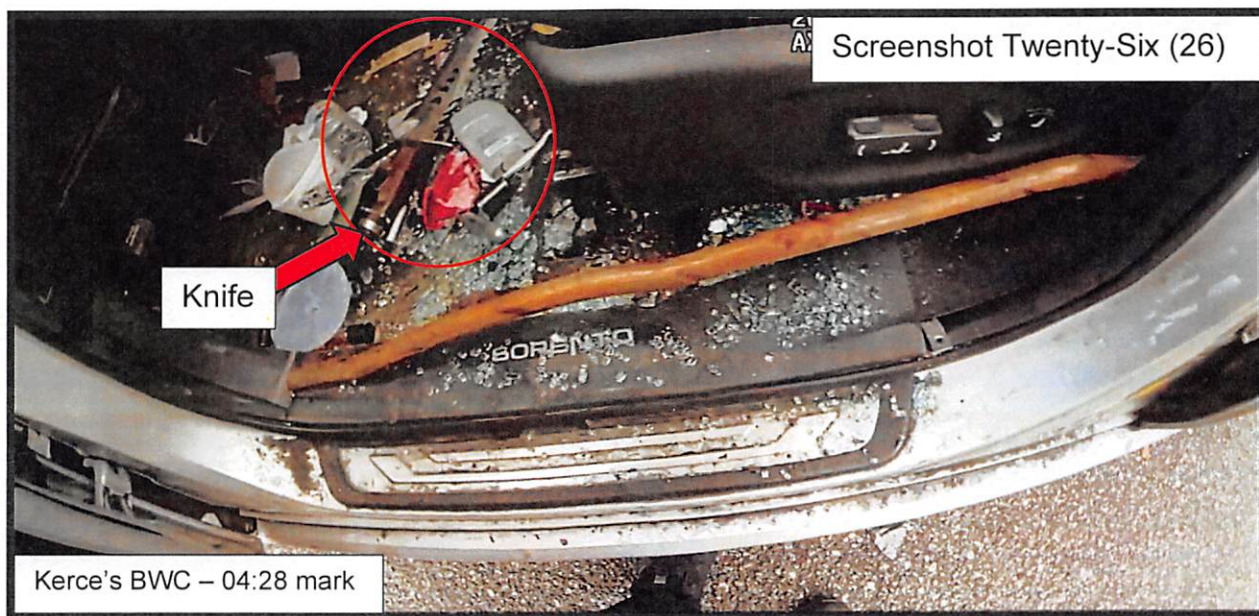


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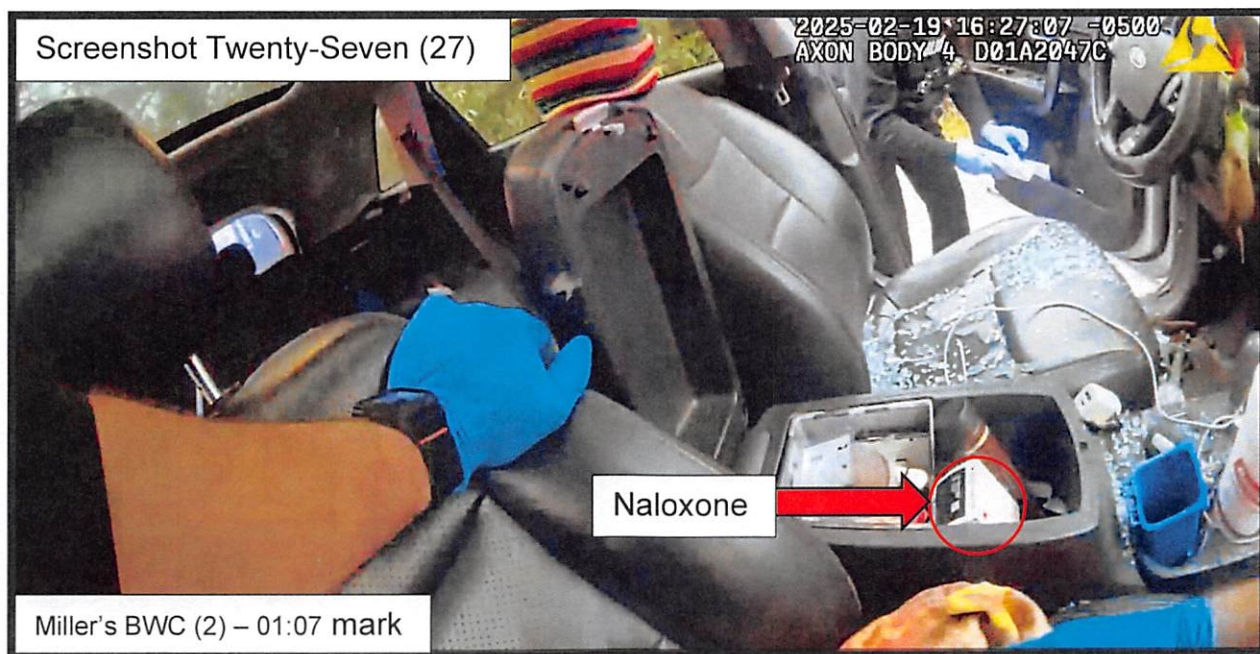
- At 4:22:49 pm, Belgard removed a plastic bag of marijuana from McNeil's right front pocket as depicted in Screenshot Twenty-Five (25)



- At 4:26:43 pm, Kerce and Miller began searching the vehicle driven by McNeil. A large knife was located on the driver's side floorboard of the vehicle as depicted in Screenshot Twenty-Six (26).



- At 4:27:07 pm, Miller opened the center console of the vehicle, revealing a box of Naloxone, as depicted in Screenshot Twenty-Seven (27).



Investigative Note: Naloxone, typically referred to as the brand name “Narcan”, is a medication used to reverse or reduce the effects of opioids, such as heroin or fentanyl, after an overdose.

- RTR report authored by Bowers on February 19, 2025, at 8:49 pm. The RTR report contained the following pertinent information (verbatim):
 - “On 2-19-25, while on patrol in my marked patrol vehicle I observed a silver SUV (Suspect vehicle) at the stop sign of West Palm Ave and Columbus Ave. The suspect vehicle did not have its headlights or tail lights illuminated in inclement weather. I also observed the driver was not wearing his seatbelt.

I was wearing a black outer carrier with "POLICE" and JSO insignia patches.

I initiated a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle at which time it came to a stop near the intersection of West Palm Ave and Commonwealth Ave. Upon approaching the driver side of the vehicle, the driver quickly opened the driver's door. The driver,

later identified as William McNeil (Subject) immediately became verbally combative. I advised the reason for the stop which he refused to listen to. The subject then stated "Call your supervisor". I asked the subject for his driver's license, registration and proof of insurance to which he replied; "call your supervisor". The subject refused to comply and shut the driver's door and locked it. I gave numerous orders to the subject to open the door and provide his identification which he refused.

Do (sic) to the subject's actions, I requested assistance via portable radio. Several officers responded to the scene to assist.

I advised the subject that he was being placed under arrest for resisting officer without violence. The subject still refused to exit the vehicle. I gave the subject several warnings that I was going to break the window and remove him from the vehicle if he did not comply with lawful commands.

Officer [D]. Miller #80686 arrived on scene and also advised the subject he needed to open the driver's door.

The subject continued to refuse to comply, at which time I broke the driver's window and opened the driver's door. I along with other officers on scene removed the subject from the vehicle. The subject was reaching for the floorboard of the vehicle where a large knife was sitting. The subject continued to attempt to pull away from officers and refused to place his hands behind his back.

The subject attempted to walk away from officers while we were attempting to gain control of him. At this time I struck the subject one time in the face with a closed fist making contact with his mouth. The strike was successful in making the subject stop attempting to pull away from other officers' grasp and he was taken to the ground. I maintained control of the subject's head by holding his hair with both hands. The subject still refused to place his arms behind his back initially, but was

eventually placed in handcuffs and placed in the back of a patrol vehicle. The subject complained that his tooth was chipped. I observed blood on the subject's mouth.

JFRD Eng/ Res 17 (Run# 25242) responded and medically cleared the suspect.

I received a swollen knuckle on my right hand from the strike.

Report closed."

- The booking photograph of McNeil. In the photograph, McNeil's lower lip appeared to have a laceration as depicted in Photograph Six (6)



INTERVIEWS

On July 24, 2025, at 11:23 a.m., Internal Affairs obtained a sworn, recorded statement from Police Officer Joel Belgard #77637. Detective R.L. Green #61280 was present for the interview.

Belgard stated he has been with the JSO for approximately nine (9) years and on February 19, 2025, he was assigned to the District Five (5) task force in patrol. Belgard recalled that he was the PIC of the District Five (5) task force on February 19, 2025, and recalled that Bowers and Miller would have been under his supervision that day. Belgard could not recall the weather conditions on February 19, 2025. Belgard stated when he heard Bowers notify the District Five (5) police dispatcher that he was conducting a traffic stop, he immediately began driving towards the location of the traffic stop, stating that the task force *"usually"* provides each other with assistance on traffic stops. Belgard recalled that while he was on his way to the area of the traffic stop, he heard Bowers state that the driver of the vehicle closed the door of the vehicle and heard Bowers ask for another officer to respond. Belgard stated he then activated his marked unit's emergency equipment including lights and sirens.

Belgard stated he observed Bowers breaking the window of the vehicle driven by McNeil as he arrived at the scene, but he did not see Bowers strike McNeil. Belgard recalled that he was only able to see Bowers reach into the vehicle. Belgard explained that he was still maneuvering his vehicle around the other police vehicles at that point. Belgard stated he approached the officers taking McNeil into custody and noticed that McNeil was resisting the officers as they tried to get McNeil on the ground. Belgard stated he observed that McNeil's *"arms were tense"* and he was *"puling against Officer Miller's grasp."* Belgard recalled that McNeil was saying *"no, no, no,"* in response to the officers telling McNeil to *"get on the ground."* Belgard stated, *"I could tell he was tense and trying to lean away from officer Miller's grasp, and that is when we push him to the ground."*

Belgard stated he did not observe any force used at the scene that he would consider to be outside of JSO policy. Internal Affairs asked Belgard if he recalled any statements made by McNeil and Belgard stated, *"He immediately said, I'm going to sue you, which, to me, speaks to his frame of mind about the whole incident."*

On July 30, 2025, at 9:54 a.m., Internal Affairs obtained a sworn, recorded statement from Police Officer Claude Fleurimond #84919. Detective R.L. Green #61280 was present for the interview.

Fleurimond stated that on February 19, 2025, he was assigned to patrol District Five (5) as a patrol officer. Fleurimond stated it was raining on February 19, 2025, but he could not recall if it was raining at the time of the traffic stop. Fleurimond recalled that he heard Bowers ask for assistance on his police radio and he knew he was close to Bowers' location. Fleurimond stated that he activated his police vehicle's emergency equipment, including his lights and sirens, and drove to Bowers' location.

Fleurimond recalled that when he arrived at the location of the traffic stop, he observed Bowers at the window of the vehicle driven by McNeil and Bowers and other officers were in the process of removing McNeil from the vehicle. Fleurimond stated that the officers were giving McNeil verbal commands to *"stop resisting"* and he could see McNeil *"moving his arm, not complying with the orders they were giving him."* Fleurimond stated he assisted the officers with getting McNeil to the ground.

Fleurimond testified that he did not see Bowers strike McNeil while McNeil was still in the vehicle, stating he walked up after the window was broken and as McNeil was being pulled from the vehicle.

On August 1, 2025, at 9:52 a.m., Internal Affairs obtained a sworn, recorded statement from Police Officer Devan Miller #80686. Detective R.L. Green #61280 was present for the interview.

Miller stated he has been with the JSO for approximately five (5) years and on February 19, 2025, he was assigned to the patrol District Five (5) task force. Miller stated that Bowers was also on the task force at that time and on February 19, 2025, Belgard was the PIC of the District Five (5) task force. Miller recalled that on February 19, 2025, it was raining, stating, *"It was inclement. It was raining. It had just got done raining as well and I believe that there was still water on my windshield, I had been using my windshield wipers."* Miller stated when he heard Bowers ask for assistance, he activated his police vehicle's emergency equipment and drove to the location of the traffic stop.

Miller stated that when he arrived at the scene, he pulled his vehicle to the front of the vehicle occupied by McNeil to ensure McNeil did not flee the scene. Miller stated that when he exited his vehicle and walked past the vehicle occupied by McNeil, McNeil attempted to speak with him. Miller stated he instructed McNeil to *"comply."* Miller stated he then got Bowers' keys to his patrol vehicle and moved the vehicle forward to prevent McNeil from backing the vehicle away from the scene. Miller recalled that he then went back to the passenger side of the vehicle and began speaking with McNeil, who continued to argue. Miller stated that McNeil asked to see the Florida State Statute in reference to driving in inclement weather with no headlights and Miller informed him that he would show him as soon as he exited the vehicle. Miller stated that McNeil refused to exit the vehicle again. Miller stated Bowers let him know he intended to break the window to remove McNeil. Miller testified that he moved to the driver's side of the vehicle as Bowers broke the window stating, *"I observed officer Bowers conduct a window pop, and once the window had been popped, I observed officer Bowers reach his arm into the window. When he pulled it out, he had glass shards. It looked like he had sustained injuries from the window. I was wearing a long sleeve shirt at the time, so I stuck my arm into the window so I could, you know, prevent damage to myself."*

Miller recalled that McNeil continued to resist as he was removed from the vehicle stating, *"I pulled him out, I grabbed his, I believe it was his left arm, and tried to pull him out, and I told him to get to the ground, and then he screamed No, and then kind of widened his stance, so then I started, or I maneuvered to the back of his body."* Miller stated he could not see McNeil's face and did not know if he had any injuries to his face as McNeil was being removed from the vehicle. Miller further stated, *"He was actively resisting. So, I could feel that his arms are trying to pull away from his body. Because I think I had, I was trying to put his arms behind his back. He wasn't doing it. And then I could feel him like, bracing his arms and trying to push and pull away from it."* Miller stated he conducted a *"double leg takedown"* to get McNeil on the ground. Miller stated that because McNeil was refusing to put his hands behind his back, he delivered *"six closed fist strikes to the back of [McNeil's] hamstring."* Miller stated he believed the strikes caused McNeil to comply. Miller stated he believes the injuries to McNeil's face occurred

when he conducted the takedown maneuver. Miller stated he did not see anyone at the scene slam McNeil's head on the ground.

Miller recalled that after McNeil was in custody, a search of the vehicle was conducted. Miller stated that a knife was located *"directly where [McNeil's] legs would have been."* Internal Affairs asked Miller if he believed McNeil would have had access to the knife while he was inside the vehicle and Miller stated, *"absolutely."* Miller stated he could not tell if McNeil was reaching for the knife, however, he stated McNeil's hands were *"all over the place."* Miller further stated, *"It was like he was either trying to conceal either evidence or possibly a weapon, but I still can't confirm."* Miller stated he and Bowers had to go to the hospital after the incident to have their hands checked for injuries.

On August 6, 2025, at 1:01 p.m., Internal Affairs obtained a sworn, recorded statement from Police Officer Darvin Ruise #77650. Detective R.L. Green #61280 was present for the interview. FOP Attorney Phil Vogelsang was also present for the interview.

Investigative Note: Due to a possible weapons policy violation observed during the Internal Affairs review of Ruise's BWC, in which Ruise potentially did not have his weapon pointed in a safe direction as McNeil was being removed from the vehicle and potentially *"lasering"* several officers, Ruise was interviewed as a principal officer. Following the administrative interview, Ruise was removed as a principal officer in the administrative investigation.

Ruise stated he was working in patrol District Five (5) on February 19, 2025. Ruise recalled hearing Bowers ask for additional units for an *"uncooperative driver"* and he immediately began driving to Bowers' location with his emergency equipment activated on his marked patrol vehicle, including lights and sirens. Ruise also recalled that it was raining all day on February 19, 2025.

Ruise recalled his observations upon arriving at the location of the traffic stop, stating, *"When I initially got to the scene, my patrol car was kind of in the back. Exiting my vehicle, I could observe one police officer had his car positioned in the front of what I assume was a suspect's vehicle. I also saw I believe, two officers, one was almost kind*

of at the a-pillar, the other one right behind him, giving verbal commands to the suspect that was seated in the driver's seat of the vehicle." Ruise also recalled his thought process as he arrived at the scene, stating, *"When you when you get a call like that, an officer puts over the radio, 'hey, this guy's uncooperative. He's sitting in a car. He's locked the door.' Obviously, all the red flags go up because we don't know exactly what's going on. We don't know if he's, you know, scared. We don't know if he's making a bomb. We don't know. There could be a plethora of things that's going through his mind at that point in time. So obviously, it heightens the situation for any officers that are arriving at the scene."*

Ruise stated upon approaching the vehicle occupied by McNeil he withdrew his issued firearm and pointed it at McNeil through the windshield of the vehicle. Ruise stated, *"So, when you have a situation like this, obviously you want to be tactically advantaged. You want to have the tactical advantage. Like I said, I didn't know what he was doing inside the car. Obviously, I couldn't see his hands. When I get out of the car, I hear officers verbally telling him, 'Hey, let me see your hands.' They're breaking the window to, I guess, in an attempt to, distract him out of the car. With all that in play, I didn't know exactly what was going on. I didn't know if he was going to produce a firearm. I didn't know if he was going to produce a weapon that was going to harm me or the other officers. So, I took a tactical position, and I drew my firearm to make sure that the citizens were safe and so were we."*

Ruise stated that after McNeil was removed from the vehicle, he pointed the muzzle of his weapon at a forty-five (45) degree angle towards the ground before ultimately holstering the weapon. Ruise stated he observed McNeil continue to actively resist by tensing his body and raising his arms to avoid being detained. Ruise stated he did not observe any actions taken by the officers at the scene that he felt were outside of JSO policy.

On August 16, 2025, at 3:06 p.m., Internal Affairs obtained a sworn, recorded statement from Police Officer Donald Bowers #69914. Detective R.L. Green #61280

was present for the interview. Steve Zona from the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) was also present for the interview.

Bowers stated he has been employed with the JSO for approximately fifteen (15) years and has worked in various units within the agency including the Narcotics Unit and the Overdose Unit. Bowers stated that on February 19, 2025, he was assigned to the Patrol District Five (5) Task Force. Bowers explained that the Task Force saturates areas that have high numbers of violent crimes and narcotics complaints in addition to locating suspects with outstanding warrants. Bowers stated that on February 19, 2025, he was patrolling an area known for narcotics and prostitution traffic and was monitoring a specific residence known for being involved in narcotics related sales. Bowers stated as he was monitoring the residence, he observed McNeil leave in a vehicle from the residence.

Bowers recalled driving westbound on Columbus Avenue and observing the vehicle driven by McNeil traveling northbound on West Palm Avenue. Bowers stated that he observed that the vehicle's headlights were not illuminated and recalled that it was raining outside. Bowers further stated that McNeil did not have his seatbelt on. Bowers stated that because of the two violations, he conducted a traffic stop. Bowers recalled that McNeil stopped the vehicle in the middle of West Palm Avenue. Bowers stated that as he approached the vehicle, McNeil *"slung the door open"* which *"raised [his] awareness."* Bowers recalled that as he spoke to McNeil, McNeil *"immediately became verbally combative."* Bowers stated he asked for McNeil's driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance and McNeil stated, *"No."* Bowers stated McNeil then questioned the legality of the traffic stop and requested a supervisor. Bowers explained that he called for back-up and continued to monitor the situation. Bowers stated, *"The biggest concern is trying to keep visual of his hands. I immediately told him, you know, 'you need to exit the vehicle.' He refused. I then advised him he was under arrest for resisting, and he needed to exit the vehicle, at which point, I couldn't see his hands. He was moving around a lot. So being that he was moving around, I couldn't see his hands, I kind of backed up. Placed myself behind the a-pillar, as a little bit more of a defense against to anything that might happen. At that time, I ordered him to keep his hands where I could see him. He did momentarily, then went back to dropping his hands below, below where I could see*

and then moving around a lot, and then I continued to tell him that he needed to exit the vehicle." Bowers stated he did not observe McNeil fasten his seatbelt but stated that he must have done so at some point after the traffic stop because he observed McNeil without his seatbelt fastened prior to the traffic stop. Bowers further recalled McNeil was filming the interaction on a cell phone.

Bowers stated that once additional units arrived he made the decision to break the window and remove McNeil from the vehicle. Bowers explained his decision stating, "So, at that point, the vehicle was, had been blocked. It was, you know, as safe as it's going to be at the time. I had already had a conversation with him, so I knew he understood what I was saying. I had advised him he was under arrest. I had told him numerous times more than I can count, that he was under arrest. He needed to exit the vehicle. Officer Miller had made contact with him, told him, you know, told him he needed to exit vehicle. He refused to comply with him, his continuing refusal to comply with at least keeping his hands where I could see him. At that point, I had enough officers on scene along with the PIC, the vehicle was secured, and he just, he was escalating. He had already escalated a simple traffic stop into an arrest, and then I didn't want him to escalate any further and put anybody else, anybody in danger that was unnecessary." Bowers indicated he did not believe there was any other action he could have taken to gain McNeil's cooperation.

Bowers described his actions after he broke the window stating that he cleared the glass and tried to maintain visual contact with McNeil's hands. Bowers stated, "The initial idea was to deliver distraction or strike, unlock the door, open, breach in, take him out of the seat belt and remove him from the vehicle." Bowers stated he struck McNeil with his open non-dominant hand. Bowers stated his intention was not to harm McNeil and he did not cause any injuries with his initial strike. Bowers stated that the strike was effective because immediately upon striking McNeil he was "momentarily cooperative." Bowers stated that he had trouble unlocking the door but was eventually able to unlock the door and he and Miller removed McNeil from the vehicle.

Bowers described removing McNeil from the vehicle stating, "Officer Miller began to pull him out of the vehicle. He immediately became uncooperative, and actively physically resisting, trying to kind of pull away, walk away, and, you know, pulling his arms

away. At one point, we told him, 'Get on the ground, get on the ground.' And he said, 'No, no, no' and actively, just like trying to stand up, brace himself against other officers. I attempted to take him from behind the head and pull him to the ground, and he was able to defeat that, at which point he stood straight up, bracing his arms, pulling away and pushed, you know, almost like braced against officers to maintain where he was at. At that point, I delivered a close fist to his face, which was a, which was actually successful in getting him to go to the ground. At that point, I grabbed, grabbed his head to maintain control of his head, to stop him from either biting or spitting on officers that were trying to take him into custody. Bowers stated at no point did he "slam" McNeil's face on the ground. Bowers stated he believed that the injury to McNeil's face occurred when he delivered the closed fist strike to McNeil's face after removing him from the vehicle.

Internal Affairs asked Bowers why he felt McNeil was moving his hands inside the vehicle when it appeared on the video taken by McNeil that he was not moving his hands. Bowers stated, "So I mean, his video doesn't show what his hands are doing. His video shows his upper torso. I mean, from my memory of what I saw, like he was actively moving his hands. I mean, whether he was reaching for the knife that was eventually found or not, I don't know. At the time, I didn't know what was there. I didn't know if there was a firearm. I just saw him reaching away from where his hands were supposed to be, which was up."

Bowers stated he did not include the strike to McNeil's face while McNeil was inside of the vehicle on his RTR report because it did not cause injury. Bowers further stated, "I also felt that the distractionary [strike] was more of a tool, not, you know, it wasn't a use of force or pain compliance or to, you know, make him incapacitated. It was just to redirect his attention."

On August 20, 2025, at 10:46 a.m., Internal Affairs obtained a sworn, recorded statement from Police Officer Brian Kremler #64398. Detective R.L. Green #61280 was present for the interview.

Kremler stated that he is the lead defensive tactics instructor at the JSO Police Academy and is a Subject Matter Expert (SME) on Response to Resistance. Kremler

stated he has been a defensive tactics instructor for approximately six (6) years and has been certified by the Force Science Institute and the Florida Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in use of force investigations and instruction.

Kremler stated he reviewed the traffic stop that took place on February 19, 2025. Kremler stated his initial concerns were with where McNeil stopped the car. Kremler stated, *"When he pulled that vehicle over and it didn't actually pull over, it just stopped in the middle of the road. That's alarming."* Kremler stated that it was also unusual for someone to open their vehicle door without being told to do so on a traffic stop and it was unusual for a subject to shut and lock the door during a traffic stop.

Kremler addressed Bowers not calling for a supervisor immediately upon McNeil's request stating, *"The request for a supervisor should be honored, but it doesn't pause anything. There's still an investigation to be conducted, a subject or citizen, whatever, doesn't dictate the timeline of whatever that officer is doing."*

Kremler addressed Bowers' initial strike to McNeil's face while McNeil was still in the vehicle stating, *"The officer described that as a push or a slap, and he calls it a 'diversionary tool or technique', and at the time he went to the academy, that's exactly what it had would have been phrased. Now it's called a 'diversionary strike.' It's the same mission."* Kremler stated that because Bowers had multiple tasks he needed to accomplish quickly, a diversionary technique would help him accomplish that. Kremler further stated that the technique worked stating, *"So, you could actually see he gets a response which is the subject kind of turning away, and then the officer gives him commands to lift it, to raise his hands, or show him his hands."* Kremler stated that after the diversionary strike, McNeil responded to Bowers' commands when before he had been *"non-compliant."* Kremler stated that he felt that the initial strike by Bowers was within JSO policy.

Kremler addressed the second strike by Bowers stating in all available video, McNeil could be seen bracing his body, locking his arms, and *"voicing his intent not to comply."* Kremler stated that in *"modern curriculum,"* it's taught that diversionary strikes

may be necessary to accomplish a take-down of a non-compliant subject. Kremler stated, *"A diversionary strike was a totally reasonable thing."*

Kremler addressed Bowers placing his hands on McNeil's head while McNeil was on the ground stating it was a technique called *"segmenting."* Kremler stated that *"segmenting"* is a way to stop the suspect from *"biting or spinning."* Kremler stated, *"holding body weight on his head, not doing damage, but just putting weight on him so he can't actually move, helps affect the actual arrest."*

Kremler stated that all of Bowers' actions were in his opinion, within policy and likely assisted in taking McNeil into custody in the safest manner. Kremler testified that using force is sometimes the safest tool for taking someone into custody stating, *"We preach that when it's appropriate, because it generally said less officer injury, less suspect injury, less bystander injury, because things don't spin out of control if you are appropriately aggressive with a person."*

Kremler testified that he did not see an issue with Bowers not including the initial distractionary strike that occurred while McNeil was still in the vehicle in the RTR report. Kremler stated, *"RTRs generally, we're talking about documenting either intermediate weapon use, like a taser or baton or suspect or officer injury."* Kremler stated that while he would likely have included the initial strike by Bowers in his own RTR report, he did not feel like it changed the nature of the force used and he did not feel that Bowers was being deceptive. Kremler stated, *"You know, you'd like a report to be a complete story, right, with no holes in it whatsoever, but it, you know, again, maybe he didn't remember it. Didn't see it on the camera, on his camera, he didn't realize it even happened until the viral video came out."*

Kremler reviewed the actions taken by all the officers at the scene including the two strikes delivered by Bowers and the strikes to McNeil's legs delivered by Miller, as well as Ruise withdrawing his firearm and providing lethal cover as McNeil was removed from the vehicle. Kremler stated that he did not observe any violations of the orders of the JSO in his review of the actions taken by the officers.

CONCLUSION

On July 20, 2025, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) Internal Affairs Unit initiated an administrative investigation after being made aware of a video captured by citizen William Anthony McNeil Jr. The video captured a portion of events leading up to McNeil's arrest on February 19, 2025, documented under JSO Central Communications Record (CCR) 2025-0101868. The video showed Police Officer Donald Bowers #69914 breaking McNeil's window and striking McNeil in the face. The video was made available on multiple local news outlets and forwarded to JSO, and the Internal Affairs Unit received multiple phone and online complaints in reference to the video. Additionally, McNeil participated in several press conferences in which attorney's speaking on McNeil's behalf alleged Bowers made an *"unlawful traffic stop"* and used *"excessive force."*

Investigative Note: Internal Affairs reviewed the allegation made during the news conferences on July 21, 2025, and July 23, 2025, that the traffic stop conducted on McNeil by Bowers was *"unlawful."* Bowers conducted a traffic stop on McNeil for operating a motor vehicle without headlights during inclement weather and for McNeil not wearing his seatbelt. Florida State Statute (FSS) 316.640(2)(a) states, *"The sheriff's office of each of the several counties of this state shall enforce all of the traffic laws of this state on all the streets and highways thereof and elsewhere throughout the county wherever the public has the right to travel by motor vehicle."* FSS 316.217(1)(b) states, *"(1) Every vehicle operated upon a highway within this state shall display lighted lamps and illuminating devices as herein respectively required for different classes of vehicles, subject to exceptions with respect to parked vehicles, under the following conditions: (b) during any rain, smoke, or fog."* Bowers stated he observed McNeil operating a motor vehicle without its *"headlights or taillights illuminated."* Internal Affairs observed multiple BWC videos in which raindrops could be seen on McNeil's vehicle, indicating that it was or had been raining. Additionally, weather reports from February 19, 2025, indicated that it was raining throughout the day. Throughout his encounter with

Bowers on February 19, 2025, McNeil never denied driving without his headlights illuminated, only arguing that it was not illegal to do so stating, *"It's daylight, I don't need the lights, and it's not weather, it's not raining. It's not raining."* This information, together with Bowers' observation that McNeil was driving without a seatbelt, demonstrates that the traffic stop conducted by Bowers was lawful.

Investigative Note: FSS 316.217(4)(d) provides exception for law enforcement officers when operating their vehicles in times when lighted lamps are required stating that it is not required when the *"operation without the display of lighted lamps may be safely accomplished."* All responding officers had their emergency lights activated making the use of headlamps unnecessary for visibility.

Unnecessary Force

Internal Affairs reviewed the incident that occurred on February 19, 2025, to include the BWC recorded footage on February 19, 2025, and all available reports submitted on February 19, 2025. Internal Affairs also reviewed the video recorded by McNeil that was posted on social media outlets on July 20, 2025. It is important to note that the administrative investigation began when an edited version of events recorded by McNeil was posted to social media five (5) months after the incident. The video taken by McNeil did not capture the initial interaction between Bowers and McNeil or the multiple verbal lawful orders that were given by Bowers and Police Officer Devan Miller #80696. This is further highlighted by the fact that the video taken by McNeil began in the middle of a conversation between Miller and Bowers, immediately after Miller told McNeil to comply and step out of the vehicle three (3) times. McNeil's recording captured only a limited portion of the incident, and the editing of the video failed to accurately reflect the entirety of events. The alterations appeared to create a misleading impression of officer misconduct. Despite repeated requests, McNeil did not provide a statement to Internal Affairs or the Integrity Unit, and the reason for the selective editing remains unknown. Internal Affairs, however, conducted a full review of the body-worn camera (BWC) recordings, which provided a complete and reliable account of the incident.

Internal Affairs finds that on February 19, 2025, at 4:17:50 pm, Bowers conducted a lawful traffic stop and provided McNeil with the reason he was being stopped and lawful commands to provide his license, registration, and proof of insurance. McNeil responded by stating, *"No, no. Call your supervisor. Why?"* Bowers then ordered McNeil to step out of the vehicle and McNeil responded, *"No"* and closed and locked his vehicle door. The Supreme Court ruled in *Pennsylvania vs. Mimms* 434 U.S. 106 (1977) that an order given by an officer for a person to get out of car, after the person has been lawfully detained, is reasonable and thus permissible under the Fourth Amendment. Once Bowers initiated the lawful traffic stop, McNeil was lawfully detained until the traffic stop concluded. By refusing to comply with Bowers commands, he was refusing to obey lawful orders given by a law enforcement officer. JSO Order 551 (Response to Resistance) defines *"passive resistance"* as *"a subject's refusal to comply with or respond to verbal commands."* Internal Affairs finds that by refusing to provide Bowers the requested documents, and closing and locking the door of the vehicle, McNeil was displaying *"passive resistance."* Bowers testified that it was at this time that he decided McNeil would be arrested for resisting an officer without violence to his or her person. Bowers and Miller continued to provide McNeil with lawful orders to exit the vehicle. Bowers informed McNeil that he was *"under arrest for resisting"* six (6) times and McNeil continued to passively resist Bowers' lawful commands.

During his administrative interview, Bowers explained his decision to break the window of the vehicle, stating, *"So, at that point, the vehicle had been blocked. It was, you know, as safe as it's going to be at the time. I had already had a conversation with him, so I knew he understood what I was saying. I had advised him he was under arrest. I had told him numerous times more than I can count, that he was under arrest. He needed to exit the vehicle. Officer Miller had made contact with him, told him, you know, told him he needed to exit vehicle. He refused to comply with him, his continuing refusal to comply with at least keeping his hands where I could see him. At that point, I had enough officers on scene along with the PIC, the vehicle was secured, and he just, he was escalating. He had already escalated a simple traffic stop into an arrest, and then I didn't want him to escalate any further and put anybody else, anybody in danger that was unnecessary."* BWC footage supports the statements made by Bowers.

Internal Affairs reviewed the initial strike delivered by Bowers. Order 551 (Response to Resistance) states, that *"less-lethal force may be used against a person who is passively resisting a lawful command that may affect the safety of members."* When discussing the factors for determining *"reasonableness"* as it applies to force, JSO Order 551 (Response to Resistance) refers to the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Graham v. Conner* U.S. 386 (1989). JSO Order 551 (Response to Resistance) cites *Graham v. Conner* stating, *"Factors for determining when an officer's use of force is objectively reasonable to include: 'the severity of the crime at issue,' 'whether the suspect poses an immediate threat to the safety of the officers or others,' and 'whether he is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight.'"* McNeil continuously failed to keep his hands in an area where they could be seen by Bowers after he struck the window of the vehicle. Bowers stated that McNeil was *"actively moving his hands"* and *"reaching away from where his hands were supposed to be."* Bowers stated that the strike was intended to be a *"distraction."* Bowers further stated that the strike was effective and caused McNeil to be *"momentarily cooperative"* allowing Bowers and Miller to safely unlock the vehicle and remove McNeil's seatbelt. It is important to note that while McNeil was inside the vehicle, a large knife was on the floorboard of the vehicle and within reach of McNeil. At times, as depicted in Screenshot Two (2), McNeil's left hand was within inches of the knife. JSO Subject Matter Expert Officer Brian Kremler #64398 addressed Bowers' initial strike to McNeil's face while McNeil was still in the vehicle stating, *"The officer described that as a push or a slap, and he calls it a 'diversionary tool or technique', and at the time he went to the academy, that's exactly what it had would have been phrased. Now it's called a 'diversionary strike.' It's the same mission."* Kremler stated that because Bowers had multiple tasks he needed to accomplish quickly, a diversionary technique would help him accomplish that. Kremler further stated that the technique worked stating, *"So, you could actually see he gets a response which is the subject kind of turning away, and then the officer gives him commands to lift it, to raise his hands, or show him his hands."* Kremler stated that after the diversionary strike, McNeil responded to Bowers' commands where before he had been *"non-compliant."* Kremler stated that he felt that the initial strike by Bowers was within JSO policy.

Internal Affairs reviewed the second strike delivered by Bowers. In both the BWC footage and the footage from the video taken by McNeil, McNeil could be seen actively pulling away from Bowers and Miller. McNeil could be seen bracing himself and spreading his legs in an attempt to keep from being taken to the ground despite commands by officers to get onto the ground. It was not until Bowers delivered the close-fisted strike to McNeil's chin that Bowers, Miller, and Belgard were able to get McNeil onto the ground. Kremler addressed the second strike by Bowers stating in all available video, McNeil could be seen bracing his body, locking his arms, and "*voicing his intent not to comply.*" Kremler stated that in "*modern curriculum,*" it's taught that diversionary strikes may be necessary to accomplish a take-down of a non-compliant subject. Kremler stated, "*A diversionary strike was a totally reasonable thing.*"

Internal Affairs finds that Bowers conducted a lawful traffic stop and provided clear direction to McNeil. McNeil was immediately uncooperative, refusing to obey Bowers' lawful commands to provide his license, registration, and proof of insurance. McNeil then escalated the situation by locking himself inside his vehicle and refusing to exit. Bowers and Miller both had difficulty seeing McNeil's hands and McNeil was not obeying orders to keep his hands visible. Both Bowers and Miller testified that McNeil was moving around inside the vehicle.

Internal Affairs finds that Bowers' actions during the incident that occurred on February 19, 2025, were appropriate and within policy.

Accordingly, Internal Affairs recommends the charge of **Unnecessary Force** against **Police Officer Donald Bowers #69914** be classified as **EXONERATED**.

Failure to Conform to Work Standards

JSO Order 551 states that members are required to complete an RTR report when "*physical force was used on a subject and the force resulted, or was alleged to have*

resulted, in any injury, regardless of the severity” and when an *“injury was observed on a subject following the use of any RTR.”* Bowers did not include the first strike in his RTR report. Bowers informed the Integrity Unit that he did not put the first strike in his RTR report because he went to the hospital after the incident and when reviewing his BWC to accurately complete his RTR report, the first strike could not be seen due to the angle of his BWC. Additionally, Bowers informed the Integrity Unit that he did not think of the strike as a *“use of force”* but rather thought of it as a *“tool”* to distract McNeil and the strike did not cause injury. During his administrative interview, Bowers reiterated that he did not feel that the strike was a *“use of force”* and he considered it a tool to distract. Bowers stated he felt the purpose of the RTR report was to document injuries sustained as a result of using force and because the initial strike did not cause injury, he did not feel it needed to be in the RTR report.

In his administrative interview Kremler stated that while he would likely have included the initial strike by Bowers in his own RTR report, he did not feel like it changed the nature of the force used and he did not feel that Bowers was being deceptive. Kremler stated, *“You know, you'd like a report to be a complete story, right, with no holes in it whatsoever, but it, you know, again, maybe he didn't remember it. Didn't see it on the camera, on his camera, and it didn't he didn't realize it even happened until the viral video came out.”* There is no evidence to suggest that Bowers intentionally left the first strike out of the RTR report.

Internal Affairs finds that while the initial strike did not appear to cause injury, an injury was caused to McNeil while he was being taken into custody making an RTR report necessary. While an RTR report is not meant to capture all the information from an incident, Order 551 (Response to Resistance) states that the report should contain *“details specifically related to a member's RTR.”* Internal Affairs recognizes that Bowers' interpretation of Order 551 (Response to Resistance) led to him not including the first strike in his RTR report. While Bowers did not view the strike as a *“use of force”*, Internal Affairs finds that a strike to the face, no matter the intention, should be considered *“force.”* Order 551 (Response to Resistance), identifies *“distracting”* as a *“counter move.”* On its own, the initial strike by Bowers would not have required an RTR report, however, Internal Affairs finds that since the report was documenting a use of force incident that resulted in

an injury, all actions taken to overcome resistance should have been included in the RTR report.

As such, Internal Affairs finds a preponderance of evidence to prove that Bowers violated **Order 551 (Response to Resistance) II.P.1.b.(7) and (8)**, and therefore **Order 501 (Code of Conduct) II.F.2.** to wit:

Order 551 Response to Resistance

II. Procedures

P. Reporting Requirements for RTR incidents

1. RTR Reports

b. Members are required to complete RTR Reports after engaging in any of the following RTRs:

(7) Physical Force was used on a subject and the force resulted or was alleged to have resulted, in any injury, regardless of the severity

(8) An injury was observed on a subject following the use of any RTR, to include the loss of consciousness.

And therefore,

Order 501 (Code of Conduct)

II. Procedures

F. Performance of Official Duties

2. Members shall perform all required duties and adhere to all applicable work standards established for their position and rank.

Accordingly, Internal Affairs recommends the charge of **FAILURE TO CONFORM TO WORK STANDARDS** against **Police Officer Donald Bowers #69914** be classified as **SUSTAINED**.

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have read the foregoing and that the facts stated in it are true based upon my personal knowledge, information and belief."

"I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the subject of the investigation of any rights contained in ss. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes."

Respectfully Submitted,



Detective R.L. Green #61820

September 10, 2025

Internal Affairs Unit Review		
	Signature	Date
Sergeant	Sgt. B.H. Johnson	9/10/2025
Lieutenant	LT. R.E. Lauer	9/10/25
Commander	Cmdr. M.R. 69748	9/10/25