



Office of the New York State Attorney General Letitia James

Office of Special Investigation

September 30, 2026

Report on the Investigation Of the Death of Ali Ali

OVERVIEW

New York Executive Law Section 70-b (Section 70-b) directs the Attorney General's Office of Special Investigation (OSI) to investigate and, if warranted, to prosecute offenses arising from any incident in which the death of a person is caused by a police officer. When, as in this case, OSI does not seek charges against the officer, Section 70-b requires OSI to issue a public report describing its investigation. This is the public report of OSI's investigation of the death of Ali Ali, who was shot and killed on September 18, 2024, by New York State Police (NYSP) Trooper Thomas Raymond.

On September 18, 2024, at 5:35 a.m., Mr. Ali was traveling northbound on the New York State Thruway in a 2021 Chevy Equinox. NYSP was alerted by OnStar that the car had been stolen four hours earlier in Staten Island. The New York City Police Department (NYPD) notified NYSP that there was probable cause to arrest Mr. Ali for the knife-point robbery of the Chevy Equinox and for a stabbing that took place on September 16, 2024.

At 5:48 a.m. NYSP troopers saw Mr. Ali on the New York State Thruway near the Town of Ramapo and followed the car. OnStar remotely disabled the car near mile marker 49 in the Town of Woodbury, Orange County. As the disabled Chevy Equinox slowed down, it collided with a tractor trailer, struck a guardrail, and caught fire. Mr. Ali fled from the car on foot into a heavily wooded area adjacent to the highway.

An NYSP Special Operation Response Team (SORT) began a grid search of the woods just after 10:00 a.m. Body-worn camera (BWC) videos of SORT members showed they found Mr. Ali at 1:47 p.m. in the woods holding a knife, and they followed him at a distance. Troopers ordered Mr. Ali to drop the knife numerous times, but he did not. At 1:52 p.m. Trooper Joseph Colby deployed a Taser, causing Mr. Ali to briefly fall to the ground. Mr. Ali quickly got up and walked toward Trooper Colby holding the knife in his hand, despite orders to stop. Trooper Raymond discharged four rounds from his rifle, striking Mr. Ali in the torso. Mr. Ali was declared dead at the scene. Troopers recovered an open folding knife from the ground near Mr. Ali.

Mr. Ali was 28 years old when he died.

Having thoroughly investigated the matter and analyzed the law, OSI concludes that a prosecutor would not be able to disprove beyond a reasonable doubt at trial that Trooper Raymond was justified when he shot Mr. Ali and, therefore, will not seek charges against him and closes the matter with this report.

FACTS

Events prior to the shooting

Stabbing incident at Hi-Tech Laundry, 2061 Bath Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

As detailed below, on September 16, 2024, Mr. Ali was at a laundromat at 2061 Bath Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. At 1:45 p.m. Mr. Ali had a verbal argument with a laundromat clerk, took out a knife, reached over the counter, and repeatedly stabbed the employee in the face, neck, and head.

NYPD interviewed the laundromat clerk (OSI does not release names of civilians), who said that earlier in the day on September 16, 2024, a man she knew as a regular customer (now known to be Mr. Ali) came into her store with an older man and dropped clothing off to be cleaned and pressed. Mr. Ali came back to the laundromat at 1:45 p.m. and asked for the clothing, but she informed him the clothes were in the dryer and would not be ready before closing at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Ali briefly left the store. When he returned, he attacked the clerk with a knife, stabbing her multiple times in the face, head, neck, and back. The clerk gave the laundry ticket and credit card receipt for the clothing, bearing the name and phone number of Mr. Ali's father, to NYPD investigators.

Security video from inside the store recorded the stabbing. Security video from Mr. Ali's residence showed Mr. Ali wearing the same clothing on September 16, 2024, that the assailant was wearing inside the laundromat during the stabbing. According to NYPD case paperwork, a still image from the laundromat security video of the assailant was shown to family of Mr. Ali, who identified Mr. Ali.

According to NYPD arrest and case paperwork, on September 16, 2024, at 4:30 p.m., the laundromat clerk identified Mr. Ali in a photographic lineup array. The NYPD issued a probable-cause-to-arrest I-card for Mr. Ali (an I-card is a document placed in law enforcement systems that notifies others that a person is wanted for arrest and contains related information).

Attempted car thefts in Brooklyn, New York

According to NYPD witness interviews, on September 16, 2024, at 2:10 p.m., less than one mile from Hi-Tech Laundry, Mr. Ali walked up to a 55-year-old woman seated in her car in a driveway on Bay 43rd Street. Mr. Ali entered the car and attempted to reverse it out of the driveway, striking the woman with the car door in the process. Bystanders intervened and pulled Mr. Ali out of the car. After a brief struggle, Mr. Ali fled on foot.

According to NYPD witness interviews, on September 16, 2024, at 2:40 p.m., a 35-year-old woman parked her car in front of a home to deliver Door Dash, and Mr. Ali attempted to enter her car through the driver's side door. The woman grabbed Mr. Ali and tried to pull him away from the car. Mr. Ali began hitting the woman but was unable to get into the car and fled the area on foot.

OSI reviewed security videos from the area of both attempted car thefts and compared them to the videos of the stabbing at Hi-Tech Laundry and from Mr. Ali's home. Mr. Ali was wearing the same clothes in each video recording. According to NYPD arrest and investigation paperwork, on September 17, 2024, NYPD investigators showed the 55-year-old female driver a photographic lineup array, and she identified Mr. Ali as the person who attempted to take her car from the driveway. The NYPD issued an I-card to arrest Mr. Ali for the two attempted car thefts.

Theft of the 2021 Chevy Equinox

According to NYPD witness statements, on September 18, 2024, at about 1:20 a.m., J.G. was sitting in a friend's 2021 Chevy Equinox parked near the intersection of Bradley Avenue and Ramsey Lane in Staten Island. The passenger door swung open and J.G. saw a man, wearing an olive shirt and dark pants, holding a knife. The man said, "Give me," and pointed the knife at J.G. J.G. said he got out of the car, and the man got into the car and sped away. J.G. flagged down NYPD officers and reported the incident. The owner of the 2021 Chevy Equinox notified OnStar customer service of the theft at 3:30 a.m., seeking their assistance to find the car. According to OnStar records, OnStar's GPS system showed the car travelling northbound in the Bronx at the time. NYPD issued an electronic "be on the lookout" (BOLO) alert for the 2021 Chevy Equinox, including its plate and VIN numbers.

State Police Radio Communications

According to the NYSP radio dispatch logs, at 5:35:33 a.m. on September 18, 2024, OnStar notified NYSP dispatch that the 2021 Chevy Equinox was traveling northbound on the New York State Thruway near the Ramapo trailer area, in the Town of Ramapo (Rockland County). According to the logs, OnStar customer service remained in communication with NYSP dispatchers and provided up-to-date information of the mile markers the car was passing and the speed of the car. The logs showed that Trooper Brian Huyghe was on patrol on the Thruway at 5:45 a.m. when he found the Chevy Equinox and began to follow it. Based on the logs, the Chevy Equinox sped up to 118 mph. According to the radio dispatch logs, Trooper Huyghe followed the Chevy Equinox but did not attempt to stop it for several miles until the car cleared a construction zone. The logs showed that, at 5:48:49 a.m., when they passed mile marker 49 and the road conditions were light, Trooper Huyghe asked dispatch to request that OnStar remotely disable the car. At 5:49:10 a.m. the Chevy Equinox's taillights started flashing and

the car began to slow, as the car was shut down by OnStar. The logs showed that at 5:49:19 a.m. Trooper Huyghe radioed, “Just crashed, just crashed.” According to the logs, at 5:50:01 a.m. Trooper Huyghe notified dispatch that the car had crashed and was on fire, and he requested EMS, saying, “One male on foot going into the woods, Indian Male, black shirt, black pants, no shoes.”



Google Streetview photograph showing The New York State Thruway near mile marker 49.2. The red arrow shows where the Chevy Equinox collided with the guardrail. The yellow arrow shows the area where Mr. Ali entered the woods.

The Chevy Equinox collision near mile marker 49.2 of the New York State Thruway

OSI reviewed Trooper Huyghe’s BWC video, which began at 5:47:17 a.m. with Trooper Huyghe behind the wheel, driving. The video showed that Trooper Huyghe activated his emergency lights at 5:47:46 a.m. Trooper Huyghe radioed dispatch and said they were passing mile marker 48, entering the construction area, that there were light road conditions, and that the Equinox’s speed was 115 mph. Trooper Huyghe requested that dispatch notify OnStar. The dispatch operator asked, “Can we shut them down?” and Trooper Huyghe said yes. (Trooper Huyghe’s BWC footage is [here](#)).

Trooper Huyghe's BWC video showed that at 5:49:19 a.m. Trooper Huyghe radioed, "Just crashed, just crashed, car's on fire." Trooper Huyghe requested EMS and said, "One male on foot going into the woods, Indian male, black shirt, black pants, no shoes." BWC showed that Trooper Huyghe got out of his patrol car and went to the side of the highway, which was dark, heavily wooded, and steeply inclined. Trooper Huyghe scanned the wooded area with a flashlight from the roadway. The BWC video captured Trooper Huyghe saying, "He's right there, he is right there," and "Watch him" to another trooper. The BWC image of the woods was dark and did not visually capture Mr. Ali at that time. BWC showed that Trooper Huyghe turned away from the wooded area and went to check on the Chevy Equinox, which was on fire.

Trooper Huyghe's BWC video showed that additional troopers arrived at 5:56:25 a.m., and Trooper Huyghe went back into the wooded area and climbed the incline. Based on the video, the area was dark, dense with brush, and difficult to navigate. Trooper Huyghe attempted to climb the incline while searching with his flashlight, but after ten minutes Trooper Huyghe returned to the Thruway. Trooper Huyghe conveyed an updated description of Mr. Ali to dispatchers and requested a canine unit and the assistance of the local police department.

OSI reviewed the BWC video of Trooper Katelynn Robillard (Trooper Robillard's BWC is [here](#)). which began at 5:51:20 a.m. Trooper Robillard's BWC video showed there was a stopped flatbed tractor trailer in the Thruway roadway and an SUV on fire in the center median. Trooper Huyghe and another trooper were using flashlights to scan the wooded area on the northbound side of the highway. The BWC video showed that the Equinox was engulfed in flames, and the fire was producing small explosions. At 6:00 a.m. the Woodbury Fire Department arrived.

According to her BWC video, Trooper Robillard spoke to the driver of the flatbed tractor trailer who said that the SUV had struck him on the front passenger side. The driver showed Trooper Robillard some minor damage to the front passenger side of his tractor trailer. The driver declined medical attention.

According to NYSP radio communications, at 7:36 a.m. NYPD informed NYSP that the Chevy Equinox had been stolen at knife point at about 1:30 a.m. in Staten Island. According to witness statements, the description of the robbery suspect was similar to the description Trooper Huyghe provided of the man he saw fleeing into the woods.

Radio logs and electronic communications showed that a BOLO was sent by NYPD at 11:56 a.m., alerting NYSP that there was probable cause to arrest Mr. Ali for the knife-point robbery of the 2021 Chevy Equinox. The communication included Mr. Ali's photograph and pedigree information. The BOLO included that there was also probable cause to arrest Mr. Ali for Robbery in the First Degree and Attempted Murder in the Second Degree related to the

September 16, 2024, stabbing inside the Hi-Tech Laundromat and the two attempted car thefts in Brooklyn. Upon receiving the BOLO and learning that Mr. Ali was likely armed with a knife, NYSP and the Town of Woodbury Police Department (WPD) issued a shelter in place order and alerted local media.

In response to media reports requesting assistance, a Highland Mills (Orange County) homeowner notified WPD that their private trail camera had captured someone who met the description of the person in the alert at 12:35 p.m. in a heavily wooded area north of Trout Brook Road. The trail camera was in a wooded area adjacent to the New York State Thruway and just north of where the Chevy Equinox had crashed. The homeowner supplied still images from the trail camera and the camera's location to WPD.

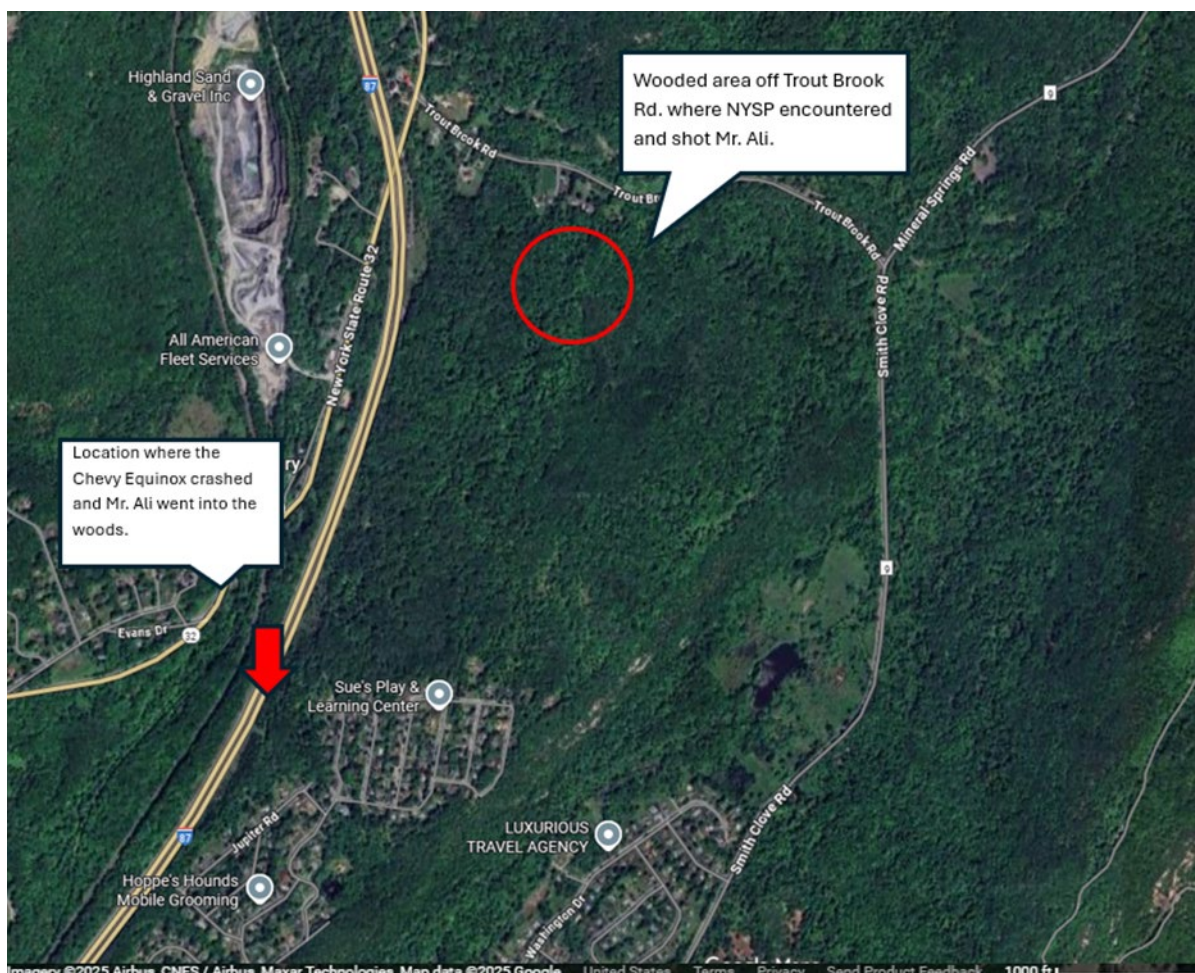


Still image from a Highland Mills homeowner's private trail camera shared with NYSP showing Mr. Ali.

Local law enforcement mobilized a large presence in the area east of the Thruway between Skyline Drive and Trout Brook Road in the Town of Woodbury (Orange County). According to NYSP and local law enforcement records, NYSP special response units, tactical response units from the Orange County Sheriff Department (OCSO), and WPD units responded to search the area with the aid of aerial units.

According to NYSP incident logs, crime scene photographs, and corresponding BWC footage, Troopers Thomas Raymond, Christopher Sierra, and Eric Abruzese, assigned to SORT, began searching the woods around 10:00 a.m. The SORT troopers were equipped with tactical gear

including long rifles, flashbangs (which produce a bright flash and loud sound), and enhanced imaging equipment. Trooper Colby assisted the search by handling a canine unit. Trooper Colby was equipped with a pistol and Taser. The troopers were equipped with BWCs.



Map of search area, showing the crash site and the place where SORT Troopers encountered Mr. Ali.

Special Operation Response Team BWCs

The BWCs of Troopers Abruzese, Sierra, and Raymond each began recording at 10:50 a.m. The BWC footage showed the SORT troopers conducting a search through the heavily wooded area on foot for nearly three hours. According to the BWC videos, Trooper Colby led the team with a canine for most of the search.

Trooper Abruzese's and Trooper Raymond's BWC videos showed that at 12:51 p.m. SORT was notified of the trail camera sighting by the homeowner near Trout Bridge Road, and that they received the trail camera images. According to the BWC videos, the troopers recognized the area in the images as a section of woods they previously searched and where the canine had alerted them to a possible scent. The SORT members then went back to the area off Trout

Brook Road. (SORT Troopers' body camera footage can be found here: [Trooper Colby](#), [Trooper Abruzese](#), [Trooper Raymond](#), and [Trooper Sierra](#)).

Trooper Raymond's BWC video showed he spotted a man walking in the woods at 1:47 p.m., and the troopers began to follow him. Trooper Raymond called out, "Ali, don't move. Ali, State Police, stop," and, "Ali, do not move." Mr. Ali did not stop and continued through the woods on foot for nearly two minutes while the troopers followed at a distance and shouted orders for him to stop.

Trooper Raymond's BWC video showed that Mr. Ali stopped at 1:49 p.m. and turned to face the troopers. Trooper Raymond and others ordered Mr. Ali to drop the knife five to six times. Mr. Ali walked toward Trooper Raymond waving the knife in his right hand. The BWC showed that the troopers backed up and deployed a flashbang, which detonated near Mr. Ali's feet. Mr. Ali turned and walked away from the troopers.



Still image from Trooper Raymond's BWC video at 1:49:13 p.m. when Mr. Ali first stopped and displayed the knife in his right hand.

Based on his BWC video, Trooper Raymond told Trooper Colby that Mr. Ali had a knife and advised Trooper Colby not to release the canine. Trooper Raymond followed Mr. Ali at a distance for three minutes until 1:51 p.m., when he deployed another flashbang. Mr. Ali continued walking away from the troopers. Trooper Raymond said, "We can resolve this peacefully, just stop, we really don't want to hurt you, just stop man. Ali please just stop man we don't have to do this."

Trooper's Colby's BWC video showed that Trooper Abruzese asked for a Taser and told Trooper Colby to bring the Taser to the front. Trooper Colby handed off the canine to Trooper Abruzese and walked toward the front of the group with the Taser drawn in his right hand.



Still image from Trooper Colby's BWC video at 1:51:49 p.m. when Mr. Ali turned to run toward Trooper Colby. A Taser is in the trooper's right hand.



Still image from Trooper Colby's BWC video at 1:51:50 p.m. as he fired the Taser.

Trooper Colby yelled, “Drop the knife” and then fired the Taser. The BWC video captured a puff of white smoke and an electrical buzzing sound as the Taser struck Mr. Ali in the back. Trooper Colby yelled, “Taser, Taser.” Trooper Colby’s BWC video showed that Mr. Ali turned around with the knife in his hand and fell to the ground. Based on the BWC video, Mr. Ali immediately got up and came toward Trooper Colby, holding the knife in his right hand. The BWC video captured the sound of three to four gunshots, and Mr. Ali fell to the ground within arm’s reach of Trooper Colby.



Still image from Trooper Colby’s BWC video at 1:51:52 p.m. before Trooper Raymond discharged his weapon.



Still image from Trooper Colby's BWC video at 1:51:52 p.m. after Trooper Raymond discharged his weapon, with the knife circled in red.

Trooper Raymond's BWC video showed that, before the shooting, Trooper Colby walked toward Mr. Ali with a Taser out. Mr. Ali turned toward the troopers with the knife in his right hand. Trooper Raymond's BWC video captured the sound of the Taser deploying and showed Mr. Ali falling to the ground but getting up one second later with the knife still in his hand. Trooper Raymond's BWC video showed him yelling, "Stay back, stay back," as Mr. Ali went toward Trooper Colby, and Trooper Raymond discharged four shots from his rifle. The shots struck Mr. Ali in the chest, and Mr. Ali fell to the ground. The troopers then rendered medical aid.



Still image from Trooper Raymond's BWC video at 1:51:55 p.m. before he discharged his weapon; Mr. Ali's knife is circled in red.

Knife and Ballistics Recovered

The BWC videos of Troopers Raymond and Abruzese showed a knife on the ground near Mr. Ali. After the incident, the NYSP evidence collection team recovered the knife, four discharged shell casings, and one bullet.



Evidence collection unit's photograph of knife on the ground.

Orange County Medical Examiner's Office

Investigator Patty DeStefano from the Medical Examiner's Office of Orange County went to the scene and examined the body of Mr. Ali. According to her report, Investigator DeStefano saw Mr. Ali in a heavily wooded area, lying on his back with a plastic seal bandage covering a wound or wounds to his chest, and a plastic bandage covering a wound to the right upper ribcage. Mr. Ali had scratches and abrasions to his arms and torso and was not wearing shoes. In her report, Investigator DeStefano noted a knife next to Mr. Ali's left shoulder.

On September 18, 2024, Dr. Lauren Mecca performed the autopsy of Mr. Ali and concluded that the cause of Mr. Ali's death was gunshot wounds of torso with injury of spinal cord, lungs, liver, inferior vena cava and right kidney. The autopsy report said Mr. Ali was shot three times in the torso with a possible graze wound to the left upper arm. Each gunshot wound was a perforating wound with observable entrance and exit wounds; no ballistic evidence was recovered from the body.

Requested Interviews of the State Police Troopers

OSI requested to interview Troopers Raymond and Colby, but they refused through their attorney.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Article 35 of the New York Penal Law defines the circumstances under which a person may be justified in using deadly force against another. Justification is a defense, not an affirmative defense, Penal Law Section (PL) 35.00. To obtain a conviction at trial, a prosecutor must disprove a defense beyond a reasonable doubt, PL 25.00(1). As detailed below, based on the evidence in this investigation, OSI concludes that a prosecutor would be unable to disprove beyond a reasonable doubt that the use of deadly physical force by the troopers was justified.

In this case, the officers used deadly physical force. Under PL 10.00(1) deadly physical force is "physical force which, under the circumstances in which it is used, is readily capable of causing death or other serious physical injury." Under PL 10.00(10) serious physical injury is:

"physical injury which creates a substantial risk of death, or which causes death or serious and protracted disfigurement, protracted impairment of health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ."

PL 35.30 is the provision defining justification when a police officer or peace officer uses force to effect or attempt to effect an arrest.

PL 35.30(1) provides:

“A police officer or a peace officer, in the course of effecting or attempting to effect an arrest ... of a person whom he or she reasonably believes to have committed an offense, may use physical force when and to the extent he or she reasonably believes such to be necessary to effect the arrest ... or in self-defense or to defend a third person from what he or she reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of physical force; except that deadly physical force may be used for such purposes only when he or she reasonably believes that... (c) regardless of the particular offense which is the subject of the arrest ... the use of deadly physical force is necessary to defend the police officer or peace officer or another person from what the officer reasonably believes to be the use or imminent use of deadly physical force.”

Under the law, therefore, deadly physical force by a police officer is justified when the officer reasonably believes deadly force is necessary to defend the officer or another against the imminent use of deadly physical force. Police officers using deadly force pursuant to PL 35.30(1) are under no duty to retreat when threatened with deadly physical force, according to PL 35.15(2)(a)(ii).

In *People v Jairo Castillo*, 42 NY3d 628, 631 (2024), the New York Court of Appeals stated:

“The defense of justification provides that a person may use physical force to defend himself against an assailant’s ‘imminent use of unlawful physical force,’ but does not authorize the use of ‘deadly physical force . . . unless . . . [the person] reasonably believes that [the assailant] . . . is using or about to use deadly physical force’ (Penal Law § 35.15). When considering a request for a justification charge, courts examine the evidence in the light most favorable to the defendant, and must provide the instruction if there is any reasonable view of the evidence that defendant was justified in his actions (see *People v Heiserman*, 39 NY3d 988, 990 [2022]). Justification has both a subjective requirement, that ‘defendant . . . actually believed . . . he [was] . . . threatened with the imminent use of deadly physical force,’ and an objective requirement, that defendant’s ‘reactions were . . . those of a reasonable man acting in self-defense’ (*People v Collice*, 41 NY2d 906, 907 [1977]).” (Ellipses and square brackets in original.)

Here, Trooper Raymond responded to the wooded area after receiving information that Mr. Ali was possibly armed with a knife and that there was probable cause to arrest Mr. Ali for

attempted murder, attempted robberies, and a knife-point robbery of a car. Trooper Raymond saw Mr. Ali in the wooded area with a knife in his hands, followed him at a distance, and repeatedly (along with the other troopers) ordered him to stop and drop the knife. Trooper Colby approached him and deployed a Taser, but the Taser did not cause Mr. Ali to drop the knife. Mr. Ali came toward Trooper Colby with the knife in his hand. Trooper Raymond fired when Mr. Ali was a few feet away from Trooper Colby.

Based on the law and the evidence, OSI concludes a prosecutor would not be able to disprove beyond a reasonable doubt that Trooper Raymond's use of deadly force against Mr. Ali was justified under New York law. As a result, OSI will not seek charges and closes the matter with this report.

Dated: September 28, 2026