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Use of deadly force justified, prosecutor says

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Article Text:

Three deputies were justified when they shot and killed a driver who ran over one of their colleagues on Interstate 5 last fall, the Pierce County prosecutor has decided.

In a statement issued Wednesday, Prosecutor Gerry Horne said, "This shooting and the use of deadly force was justifiable."

"There are no facts, evidence or statements in dispute," Horne's statement says. "The deputies involved acted in strict conformity with state law."

Dr. John Howard, the Pierce County medical examiner, also announced Wednesday that his office would not call a coroner's inquest in the case.

The incident occurred in the early morning hours of Nov. 1.

A woman who once dated Christopher Allen Jenkins called authorities to report that he was drunk and banging on the door of her apartment in the 500 block of 100th Street Court East, prosecutors said.

Witnesses later told deputies that Jenkins was drunk and angry and had twice pulled the apartment complex's fire alarm.

Deputies responding to the complex spotted Jenkins' gold Cadillac near 112th Street East and Pacific Avenue. They tried to stop the car but it fled, leading them on a chase down Highway 512 and eventually onto northbound Interstate 5.

Officers finally stopped the car near the 84th Street exit. It was then that Sgt. Curtis Beaupre got out of his car and approached the Cadillac, which then accelerated and struck his patrol car. Beaupre jumped out of the way but was inadvertently struck from behind and knocked down by another deputy's car, prosecutors said.

He was still down when the Cadillac rolled over him, breaking his pelvis and damaging several muscles. He is expected to be out of work until at least April.

"Three deputies exited their vehicles and saw their sergeant lying on the ground and being run over by the gold Cadillac as it accelerated south in the north lanes of I-5, toward oncoming traffic," Horne's statement says. "These three deputies fired their pistols at Jenkins after he drove over the sergeant."

An autopsy revealed that Jenkins was hit five times, the fatal bullet striking him in the head.

Tests later showed that Jenkins' blood-alcohol level was .22 at the time of the shooting, nearly

three times the legal limit.

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