

For Immediate Release
March 31, 2021

Springfield, Oregon

Independent Review Calling for Systemic Change in Springfield Police Protocols Coincides with Anniversary of Shooting Death of Stacy (Patrick) Kenny

Today marks the 2nd Anniversary of the shooting death of Stacy (Patrick) Kenny¹ at the hands of Springfield Police Sgt. R.A. Lewis, after he and three other Springfield police officers beat and repeatedly tased the unarmed Kenny while Kenny was seat-belted in her car and on the phone with 911. The case drew community outrage and resulted in the largest settlement for a police use of force case in Oregon history.

As part of the \$4.55 million settlement agreement finalized on July 9, 2020, the City of Springfield agreed to a comprehensive review of their police department's use of force accountability process as a measure of justice for the family and for future public safety.

The detailed report was completed by the OIR Group and submitted to the City of Springfield and to the Kenny family's attorney earlier this month, laying out a critical review of the circumstances surrounding the death of Kenny. It offers 33 long-overdue reform recommendations for the Springfield Police Department, urging a revamp of their use of "focused" blows and taser deployment, and improving the transparency of their administrative and force review board processes. The review also notes the SPD's failure to access Kenny's prior mental health information, which her family provided directly to the department 8 months prior to her death, and failure to consider de-escalation prior to initiating use of force.

One of the most critical components of the OIR report highlights the lack of sufficient documentation by the Use of Force Review Board, who merely produced a one-page memo of the incident, which was subsequently followed by Chief of Police Lewis issuing his own memo, that he found use of deadly force "appropriate and justified" per SPD policy. The OIR report states that this conclusion "is not supported by facts or analysis and is accordingly not helpful in explaining – or justifying – the decision that was reached."

"The findings in the OIR report offer a complete vindication of what we were fighting for all along in Stacy's case," says Kenny family attorney David Park, "If this marks the beginning of a movement away from the toxic warrior culture within the Springfield police department from the top down, Stacy's life and tragic death will have a real, lasting, and positive impact on the community."

The OIR report also pointed out the impropriety of District Attorney Patty Perlow holding a press conference with SPD Chief Lewis at her side as she announced her opinion that she found no criminality with Sergeant Lewis' deadly actions. The report soundly states: "The optics of the Chief of Police at the table of the District Attorney when she closed the case significantly undercut any belief that the investigation and review was independent."

The report also addresses several other inadequacies with the criminal investigation of the police use of force against Stacy conducted by the Lane County Interagency Deadly Force Investigations Team (IDFIT). These inadequacies went unnoticed and unremedied by Chief Lewis.

Michael Gennaco, on behalf of OIR, will present the key findings of his review to the Springfield City Council at their regular public meeting on April 19, 2021. A Use of Force Presentation required by the terms of the Kenny family settlement is also currently set on the Agenda to be discussed sometime between 5:30-7:00pm.

The family of Stacy Kenny still feels the inescapable pain of loss every day since their loved one was senselessly taken from them. They are still shocked by the inordinate amount of violence she suffered and that the officers involved in Stacy's death never received any formal disciplinary or corrective action for her avoidable and unnecessary death.

They are, however, hopeful that the City of Springfield is courageous enough to hold the department accountable and make the 33 recommended changes in the OIR report.

“My hope is for an accountable police department with a culture that truly values and strives for de-escalation over brute force; for continuous improvement over stagnation and cronyism,” says mother Barbara Kenny, “We have offered the city a path forward through the policy changes required by our settlement and through the independent review and recommendations provided by the OIR Report. I call on our City and police department to use these requirements and recommendations to make the systemic changes necessary so that no other family will feel our lifelong loss.”

###

Supportive Links: The March 2021 full OIR report:
<https://kenny-family.com/2021/03/31/independent-critical-incident-review-and-analysis-of-the-officer-involved-shooting-death-of-stacy-w-kenny/>

The amended complaint filed by Barbara and Christopher Kenny on June 3, 2020 (<https://kenny-family.com/2019/10/21/complaint/>) describes the events, and the culture of the Department, in detail.

Stacy was more than her schizophrenia. Attached is a video honoring Stacy's life (<https://kenny-family.com/2020/07/15/who-was-stacy-kenny/>).

###

For further information, contact: David D. Park, Elliott & Park, P.C, office: 503-227-1690, cell/text: 503-706-5317, e-mail: dave@elliott-park.com

¹ The victim in this incident requested to be known as “Patrick” and “him” by his immediate family. When operating in the rest of society, Kenny wanted to be referred to as “Stacy” and “her”. In honor of Kenny's wishes, the family will continue to refer to Kenny as “Patrick” but request the media and all others refer to Kenny as “Stacy”.