



U. S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

August 6, 2009

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Norton:

This responds to your letter dated July 28, 2009, to the Attorney General regarding the investigation of the June 8, 2009 fatal shooting of Trey Joyner by U.S. Park Police Officers. According to your letter, you believe that "new information passed to [you] casts doubt on whether there is an independent investigation underway by the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department."

As a preliminary matter, please be assured that the Department of Justice takes every investigation of law enforcement-related shootings very seriously and gives them the full and careful attention that they demand. Such is the standard whether the investigation is led by the Civil Rights Division of the Department or by a United States Attorney's Office. In this instance, the *Civil Rights Unit* of the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia (USAO) is leading this investigation in coordination with the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division, along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

We regret any confusion or misunderstanding of the distinction between the USAO's Civil Rights Unit and the Department's Civil Rights Division. We suspect that may have occurred because often persons confuse the two offices and/or refer to them interchangeably, an occurrence we believe unfortunately may have happened here. According to your letter, you were given assurances by the U.S. Park Police Chief that the "Civil Rights Division" would be conducting the investigation. In fact, it was a supervisor with the USAO who initially reached out to the U.S. Park Police (USPP) to offer the USAO's assistance and to advise the USPP that the USAO would be conducting the investigation along with the FBI.

On June 25, 2009, the USAO explained to the family of Trey Joyner and, separately, those in attendance at a community meeting hosted by the Fifth District's Citizen's Advisory Council, that its Civil Rights Unit would be conducting this investigation. Lastly, during that community meeting, the name and telephone number of the Assistant U.S. Attorney assigned to investigate this matter (who is an experienced prosecutor who previously worked in the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division at the Department), was provided to members of the audience by a representative of the USAO. It is my understanding that this information was provided at the community meeting prior to your arrival.

I hope this clarifies any misunderstanding or confusion regarding how this investigation is being conducted. Moreover, please know that the Attorney General has the utmost confidence in the USAO and the FBI, which are working with the Civil Rights Division of the Department, to conduct an independent, thorough, and exhaustive investigation into this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'm wil', is positioned above the printed name.

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General