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PRESS RELEASE: Officer-Involved Critical Incident on June 17, 2026

SUMMARY

On June 17, 2026, an officer-involved incident occurred in the Town of Lake Tomahawk. The incident involved the decedent, John A. Krga, Deputy Justin Orth and Deputy Alyssa Knabenbauer from the Oneida County Sheriff's Office. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 175.47, an investigation into a law enforcement officer-involved death must be conducted by an agency independent from the agency that employs the law enforcement officer(s) involved. As a result, the Oneida County Sheriff's Office requested the assistance of the Wisconsin Department of Justice – Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI). In response, DCI conducted a comprehensive investigation. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 175.47(5)(a), all of the investigative materials have been provided by DCI to the Oneida County District Attorney's Office for review. Upon review of said materials, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 175.47(5)(b), the district attorney for the county in which the officer-involved death occurred is to determine whether there is a basis to prosecute the law enforcement officers involved.

I have reviewed all of the investigative materials provided by DCI and, based upon my review, I have concluded that Deputy Orth was justified in using lethal force during the incident on June 17, 2026. The basis for my conclusion is set forth below.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

As a part of the investigation, DCI Special Agents performed a thorough investigation and provided the following materials for review: DCI reports, interviews of responding law enforcement officers and emergency responders present at the scene, interviews of possible citizen witnesses, dispatch audio recordings, dispatch records, law enforcement reports from law enforcement agencies assisting on the day of the incident, documentation of the scene including photographs and forensic mapping, and medical records. DCI also gathered and processed evidence collected at the scene and provided materials from Marathon County Medical Examiner, NMS Laboratories, Department of Justice – Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives National Tracing Center.

I have reviewed all of the materials provided by DCI. The following is a summary of that information.

FACTUAL SUMMARY

On June 17, 2026, at approximately 10:30 a.m., Deputy Orth and Deputy Knabenbauer arrived at 5620 Lumen Lake Drive to arrest John Krga for allegations of sexual assault of a child. While the deputies approached the residence, Deputy Knabenbauer observed a sign hanging on Krga's residence that depicted a figure with the illustration of bullet holes in the head and heart of the figure, leading Knabenbauer to believe Krga had firearms in the residence. Deputy Knabenbauer informed Deputy Orth of said sign and her belief that Krga may have firearms in the residence.

Once at the front door of Krga's residence, Deputy Orth knocked in an effort to make contact with Krga. Krga responded by opening the interior door of the residence. Speaking through the exterior storm door, Deputy Orth asked Krga if he was John, to which Krga responded yes. Deputy Orth then requested Krga step outside to speak with the deputies. In response, Krga asked if Krga was going to be arrested. Deputy Orth responded in the affirmative.

As Krga began opening the storm door, Deputy Knabenbauer observed that Krga appeared to be 'uneasy', at which time Krga began to step back into the residence. In response to what appeared to be Krga retreating back into the residence, both deputies stepped towards Krga. Deputy Orth grabbed Krga's right wrist and Deputy Knabenbauer grabbed Krga's left wrist while simultaneously asking Krga to step outside and to stop resisting. This ultimately resulted in all three individuals standing on the front porch.

Once on the front porch, Krga continued to actively resist, which resulted in the deputies attempt to get Krga off the front porch and onto the ground in an effort to get Krga under control and into custody. During said attempt, Deputy Orth observed Krga holding a black firearm in his right hand and immediately yelled 'gun', at which time Deputy Knabenbauer also observed Krga holding a firearm. While still attempting to get Krga under control, Deputy Orth yelled repeated commands for Krga to drop the firearm as Deputy Knabenbauer attempted to remove Krga's firearm from Krga's control. During the struggle, Knabenbauer fell off the front porch and onto the ground. At the same time, Deputy Orth and Krga were now standing on the ground next to the porch as Deputy Orth tried to immobilize Krga's arm that was holding the firearm by trying to trap Krga's arm between Krga's body and the exterior wall of the residence, which resulted in Krga being pinned up against the exterior wall of the residence by Deputy Orth.

Deputy Knabenbauer, now standing on the ground near the front porch, drew her department-issued firearm but did not discharge her firearm due to concerns about potentially striking Deputy Orth as a result of his close proximity to Krga, who was holding onto Krga's left arm while holding his department-issued firearm in his right hand. During this time, Krga fired his firearm in an undetermined direction. In direct response, Deputy Orth fired his department-issued firearm multiple times at Krga while backing away from Krga.

After Deputy Orth fired multiple rounds, Deputy Knabenbauer observed Krga drop the firearm and fall to the ground. Deputy Knabenbauer immediately radioed dispatch that shots had been fired and requested emergency medical services to respond to aid Krga. Deputy Knabenbauer then retrieved Krga's handgun and moved it out of reach from Krga, and both Deputy Orth and Deputy Knabenbauer retreated to a position of cover.

Unsure of the injuries Krga sustained, the deputies gave multiple commands for Krga to show law enforcement his hands. The deputies received no response from Krga but due to safety protocols, the deputies remained behind cover until additional law enforcement arrived on scene.

Shortly thereafter, additional law enforcement arrived on scene. The scene was secured and Krga was declared deceased on scene. An autopsy was performed which indicated the cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

After review and careful consideration of all the information, I believe the evidence establishes that Deputy Orth was justified in using lethal force on June 17, 2026.

On the morning of June 17, 2025, in response to Deputy Orth and Deputy Knabenbauer attempting to arrest Krga for sexual assault of a child, Krga resisted arrest. While the deputies were attempting to gain control of Krga, Krga pulled out a semi-automatic firearm. Despite multiple commands to stop resisting and to drop the firearm, Krga refused, and discharged his firearm. In immediate response, Deputy Orth responded by firing multiple rounds at Krga, causing Krga to drop the firearm and ultimately resulted in Krga's death.

Based on law enforcements multiple commands for Krga to stop resisting, as well repeated commands to drop the firearm, Krga's continued refusal to comply with law enforcement's commands and ultimately Krga's decision to discharge his firearm, under the totality of the circumstances, Deputy Orth was justified in using lethal force against Krga.

The Department of Justice - Division of Criminal Investigation is commended for their diligent and thorough investigation into this matter. The review of the information from their investigation resulted in my clear conclusion that Deputy Orth was justified in using lethal force on June 17, 2026.

Jillian Pfeifer
District Attorney
Oneida County, WI