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Travis County District Attorney Rosemary Lehmburg issued the following statement:

A Travis County Grand Jury has cleared an Austin Police Department (APD) officer of criminal wrongdoing in the shooting death of Maurice Pierce last year.

The case against Officer Frank Wilson was not billed after the Grand Jury heard testimony about the events that led up to Pierce's death in a Northwest Austin neighborhood on December 23, 2010.

On that date, APD officers Frank Wilson and Brad Smith were parked near the intersection of Melrose Trail and Heinemann just before 11:00 p.m. watching for traffic violations. They saw a dark colored SUV roll through the stop sign and make a right hand turn. The SUV drove past their patrol car and the officers made a U-turn and began to follow the vehicle.

When Officer Smith turned on his overhead lights, the driver, later identified as Maurice Pierce, abruptly stopped his car, jumped from the vehicle and began running away from the police.

The suspect climbed over a fence into a backyard and Officer Wilson returned to the patrol car and began driving around the neighborhood to try and locate him. A short time later Wilson saw the man running near some houses and left his patrol car and began chasing him on foot.

After a brief pursuit, Wilson caught up with the suspect in the backyard of a residence, and the two men fought before Pierce got loose and began running from the officer. Wilson fired his taser, but it was ineffective and the foot chase began again.

Officer Wilson caught up with the suspect and tackled him in the front yard of the residence where he tried to take Pierce into custody. As the two men struggled on the ground, Pierce took a knife from Wilson's belt and cut the officer's throat. Wilson then pulled his gun and shot Pierce once in the abdomen.

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Pierce then ran from the scene and the officer radioed for medical assistance and additional officers for back up.

When EMS arrived, they found that Wilson had suffered a potentially fatal cut to his throat and was bleeding profusely. As EMS attended to the wounded officer, other police officers began a search for the suspect. They found him two houses away, slumped against the front of a house.

Pierce was pronounced dead at the scene. An autopsy later revealed that Pierce died from a single gunshot to his abdomen. Toxicology results showed Pierce had a blood alcohol content of 0.14.

Officer Wilson's knife and handcuffs were located in the front yard of the residence at 13006 Campos along with one fired shell casing. The bullet removed from Pierce during the autopsy was positively identified as having been fired from Officer Wilson's weapon.

The Grand Jury heard from 14 witnesses over the course of three morning sessions, including Officers Wilson and Smith. Maurice Pierce's daughter, Marissa, also testified, accompanied by her mother.

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