



# Ft. Pierce Police Department News Release



10.07.07

**R. Sean Baldwin**

*Chief of Police*

920 S. U.S. #1

Ft. Pierce, FL 34950

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Chief R. Sean Baldwin has issued the following statement concerning the use of force incident involving a 15-year-old female:

“The vivid depiction in various local and national news reports of a police officer’s use of force against a 15-year-old is indeed disturbing. It is always disturbing to see a police officer apply force to a juvenile, even when it is legal and justified. Likewise, it is disturbing to see a juvenile biting an officer. With the prevalence of HIV and other communicable diseases, our officers are acutely aware of the fact that the human bite is a viscous and potentially deadly assault. While the video is disturbing, I trust that the members of our community understand that officers have a right, and even an obligation, to protect themselves from violent attacks.”

“My initial review of the incident concluded that the police officer acted legally and within the bounds our use of force policies, and I have not seen any evidence that has changed this opinion. However, I have learned that there may be additional evidence that needs to be collected, preserved, and considered in this incident. I have reached out to the juvenile’s family members in an attempt to hear any complaints that they have directly, but there has been no response. Nevertheless, I have directed our Office of Professional Standards to initiate an investigation into this matter.”

“Pursuant to our protocols, public comment about the incident must be limited until this additional investigation is completed. As always, the police department has been completely open and responsive to local media inquires, so that the situation can be accurately reported to the community we serve. Over the last few days, this situation has generated widespread attention, and we are now receiving requests for interviews from several national media outlets. I would like to help the nation explore and understand this incident, but I need to limit further interviews until our investigation is complete. This will be done as quickly as possible.”

“I want to assure our community that this investigation will include a complete and thorough examination of the facts and provide full disclosure of the results when the investigation is concluded. This obligation is inherent in our sworn duty to protect those that we serve.”

Media outlets that are interested in receiving notice when this investigation is completed, should notify Public Information Officer Audria Moore at 772-370-1848.

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