



For Immediate Release:

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December 30, 2025

## **Decision Letter:**

Attached is the decision letter issued by District Attorney Brian Mason related to a use of force incident involving the Brighton Police Department on October 28, 2024.

# # #

*District Attorney Mason assumed the oath of office on January 12, 2021. The 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office endeavors to seek justice on behalf of the citizens of Adams and Broomfield counties in felony and misdemeanor cases. DA Mason and his staff are dedicated to transforming the criminal justice system to better serve the citizens of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.*

*[AdamsBroomfieldDA.org](http://AdamsBroomfieldDA.org), Facebook: [@da17colorado](https://www.facebook.com/da17colorado) Twitter: [@da17colorado](https://twitter.com/da17colorado)  
Instagram: [@da17colorado](https://www.instagram.com/da17colorado) YouTube: [ColoradoDA17](https://www.youtube.com/ColoradoDA17)*



December 29, 2025

Matt Domenico  
Chief of Police  
Brighton Police Department  
3401 East Bromley Lane  
Brighton, CO 80601

RE: Review of incident involving Officer Christopher Barfield

Dear Chief Domenico,

This letter is a review of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) investigation into the use of force by Officer Christopher Barfield on October 28, 2024. The 17th Judicial CIRT conducted the investigation, led by Westminster Police Detectives Troy Gordanier and Adam Lanning. The Office of the District Attorney concludes that the investigation was thorough and complete. This letter includes a summary of the facts and materials that the CIRT presented for review, along with my pertinent legal conclusions.

The circumstances surrounding this incident resulted in criminal charges against Mr. Adam Huerta, which have since been resolved. Until that time, the matter remained pending in Adams County District Court. Based on the limitations set forth in the Colorado Criminal Rules as well as the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct restricting pretrial publicity, we delayed public disclosure of all the facts pertinent to this aspect of the investigation to preserve the integrity of the criminal case.

This independent investigation and review is not intended to take place of an internal affairs investigation by your agency. As such, my review does not evaluate compliance with departmental policies, standards, or procedures.

### **Summary of Incident**

On October 28, 2024, at approximately 10:41 a.m., Brighton Police Department was dispatched to a domestic disturbance in progress at Brighton Japanese American Association Park, located at 1220 East Longs Peak Street, Brighton, CO. Multiple callers contacted 911 reporting that a male, later identified as Mr. Adam Huerta, was slapping, pushing, and grabbing a female around her neck outside of the restrooms at the park.

Officer Barfield was the first officer to arrive on scene. Officer Barfield was outfitted with standard issue Brighton Police Department uniform and was clearly identifiable as a law enforcement officer. As Officer Barfield arrived at the park and began to approach the restroom area, he observed Mr. Huerta and directed him to come towards him. Mr. Huerta acknowledged Officer Barfield and then retreated

into the restroom with a backpack. Officer Barfield observed the female party and requested she stand by his patrol vehicle. The female, however, walked away from the scene.

Officer Barfield attempted to open the restroom door, which was locked. Officer Barfield kicked open the door to contact Mr. Huerta. Officer Barfield smelled a strong odor of burnt fentanyl in the restroom. Officer Barfield entered the bathroom and observed the sink on the left with a privacy barrier between the sink and the bathroom stall. Initially, Officer Barfield's view of Mr. Huerta was obstructed by the privacy barrier. Given this obstruction, Officer Barfield drew his duty weapon to protect himself and prevent an ambush, as he was unsure if Mr. Huerta was armed

As Officer Barfield rounded the corner of the privacy barrier, as seen on the body worn camera (BWC), he observed Mr. Huerta standing against the barrier with a bag across his chest. Officer Barfield gave commands stating "show me your hands, come out from back there." Officer Barfield approached, grabbing Mr. Huerta, pulling him towards him and against the wall by controlling Mr. Huerta's left arm. Officer Barfield observed a metal tin in the toilet near Mr. Huerta, which was later found to contain fentanyl pills.

Officer Barfield holstered his weapon to maintain control of Mr. Huerta, who continued to resist arrest. Mr. Huerta broke away from Officer Barfield's control, trying to get to the door. Mr. Huerta made it to the exit and Officer Barfield again sought to restrain him, this time by bear-hugging Mr. Huerta. Mr. Huerta then fell to the ground outside the restroom while Officer Barfield tried to get control of him. Officer Barfield gave repeated commands for Mr. Huerta to put his hands behind his back. Officer Barfield did not know if Mr. Huerta had any weapons on him or if Mr. Huerta would try to take control of his weapons.

Mr. Huerta ignored the commands, continuing to wrestle with Officer Barfield on the ground. As shown by Officer Barfield's BWC, Mr. Huerta was able to crawl through the officer's legs, attempting to stand up and overtake the officer. At one point, Mr. Huerta grabbed Officer Barfield's pant leg. Officer Barfield worked to disrupt the foundation that Mr. Huerta was creating to upend him, but was unable to gain control of Mr. Huerta. Officer Barfield then picked up Mr. Huerta and forcibly dropped him onto the ground on his back. In that moment, Officer Barfield thought the most reasonable way to gain control of Mr. Huerta was to get him on the ground, as other control techniques had proven unsuccessful. Mr. Huerta landed on his back and neck area.

Once on the ground, Mr. Huerta was placed into handcuffs with the assistance of Officer Bojorquez who had just arrived on scene. Officer Barfield inquired if Mr. Huerta needed medical attention and Officer Barfield requested a medical response. Mr. Huerta was then transported to Platte Valley Medical Center for treatment for a brain bleed and abrasions, which medical professionals classified as serious bodily injury. Mr. Huerta was also administered two doses of Narcan while at the hospital due to the use of narcotics.

The factual circumstances surrounding this incident resulted in charges filed against Mr. Huerta for Possession with Intent to Manufacture or Distribute Fentanyl, Tampering with Physical Evidence, Assault in the Third Degree, Possession of Burglary Tools, Resisting Arrest and Second-Degree Criminal Trespass.



## LEGAL ANALYSIS

The decision to file criminal charges involves an assessment of all known facts and circumstances as well as an evaluation of whether there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction at trial under the applicable law. Criminal liability is established when the evidence is sufficient to prove all the elements of a crime beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition to proving the elements of any crime, the prosecution must also *disprove* any statutorily recognized justification or defense beyond a reasonable doubt. Consequently, in order to file any criminal charges, the District Attorney's Office must be able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the involved law enforcement officer's actions were *not* justified under the circumstances surrounding the incident and the applicable law.

Generally, the elements of the crime of assault require that the prosecution prove a person caused injury to another, and that the person acted with the requisite state of mind to cause the injury. There are varying degrees of assault, each dependent on the person's state of mind and the seriousness of the victim's injury. Here, there is no dispute that Officer Barfield engaged in conduct that caused the victim to suffer a brain bleed, which was classified as serious bodily injury. However, the evaluation of whether a crime was committed does not end there.

When a peace officer uses physical force against a person resulting in injury, the analysis must also include consideration of whether the force was justified as necessary and reasonable under the circumstances as applied to Colorado law. Therefore, the critical legal question presented by the facts of this case is Officer Barfield's state of mind at the time and whether the use of physical force was justified under the circumstances. The Colorado Legislature has made clear that peace officers, when possible, shall apply nonviolent means in carrying out their duties. "A peace officer may use physical force only if nonviolent means would be ineffective in effecting an arrest, preventing an escape, or preventing an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the peace officer or another person." C.R.S. §18-1-707 (2025).

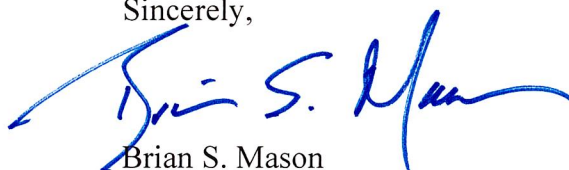
The legal question here is whether Officer Barfield acted with the intent to cause injury or the knowledge that his conduct would cause injury to the suspect, which the prosecution must prove in order to file charges. Here, Officer Barfield was responding to a domestic violence call and was met with resistance by the suspect at the very beginning of the encounter. Officer Barfield gave repeated commands to gain compliance, which the suspect ignored and, instead, continued to fight with the officer. When other techniques to gain compliance failed, Officer Barfield employed a forceful technique to get Mr. Huerta to the ground. Officer Barfield explained that he used what he believed to be the reasonable and necessary force to gain control of Mr. Huerta and effect his arrest.

It is abundantly clear that Officer Barfield used physical force in this encounter and one can reasonably question whether the force used was indeed appropriate or necessary under these circumstances. That said, I conclude that the prosecution cannot prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Officer Barfield acted with the intent or knowledge to cause Mr. Huerta's injuries. Officer Barfield explained he used the reasonable and necessary force to gain control over Mr. Huerta and effect his arrest and his state of mind is a critical element in proving – or charging – a crime. Applying the statutory factors relevant to the use of physical force by a peace officer, Officer Barfield did not use deadly force, and he ensured medical aid was rendered immediately. Based on a full review of the evidence presented, therefore, there is no reasonable likelihood of proving the elements of any crime beyond a reasonable doubt against

Officer Barfield and so no criminal charges will be filed against the officer involved in this incident.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you believe that further investigation is warranted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian S. Mason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brian S. Mason  
District Attorney