



POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON

MEDIA RELEASE

On October 6th, 2018, at 2:27 AM, in the vicinity of 199 Main Street, multiple officers arrested Mohamed Luhizo, 21, and his brother Luhizo Luhizo, 23. Attorneys litigating two suits against the BPD have recently requested the footage as a public record, and the Burlington Police Department is releasing the body camera footage of the arrest. The incident was reviewed by the police department and the Burlington Police Commission, and officer conduct was found to be within guidelines. No further action was taken.

During the incident, Mohamed Luhizo and his brother, Luhizo Luhizo, were fighting with a group of people after bar closing. Multiple officers, including Sergeant J. Bellavance and Officers C. Campbell, J. Cousins, B. Kirby, D. Hodges, and V. Montalvo, approached to attempt to break up the fight and make arrests. As the sergeant and another officer attempted to handcuff Luhizo Luhizo, Mohamed Luhizo shoved both of them as they were attempting to handcuff his brother. Luhizo Luhizo kicked the sergeant in the chest and chin, injuring him. Mohamed Luhizo then attempted to flee the scene on foot.

At the time, officers knew Mohamed Luhizo as a person with a felony conviction for a trespass charged as a home invasion robbery, two additional arrests for robbery, two for attempted assault and robbery, one for first degree aggravated assault, and one for sexual assault. As Mohamed Luhizo fled across South Winooski Street and encountered the curb, he slowed down, bent over, and became unsteady. He and one of the officers pursuing him collided and both fell to the ground. Mohamed Luhizo claimed injury to his mouth and was removed to the hospital for treatment.

As a result of the incident, Luhizo Luhizo pled guilty to disorderly conduct, serving a 30-60 day jail sentence. Mohamed Luhizo's prosecution for this incident was combined with those for subsequent arrests on charges of burglary and sexual assault, and driving under the influence. He pled guilty to lewd and lascivious conduct, driving under the influence, and providing false information to a police officer. He served 180 days of a 1-2 year prison sentence, and is presently on probation.

The Burlington Police Department does not currently have formal policies addressing when bodycam footage is to be publicly released. This is one of the issues that was referred to the Committee to Review Policing Policies for recommendation. Until such policies exist the Department will continue to make decisions about the release of footage on an ad hoc basis. In this case, the Department is proactively releasing this video and facts related to it because it is, apparently, a matter of potential legal interest.

Links to the relevant videos: <https://youtu.be/FpJSQpLheLs> and <https://youtu.be/PnQ4HY3vsWU>

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Information is preliminary and subject to change.

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