



David A. Clarke Jr.
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NEWS RELEASE

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Jail Corrections Officer Uses Taser to Prevent Assault

Milwaukee, WI – A 27-year-old Milwaukee County jail corrections officer with three years of service, recently trained and equipped with a Taser device as a defensive tool, stopped an inmate Friday who charged at him while he was breaking up a fight between inmates. The criminal inmate had ignored orders to stop fighting and lock in. The device immediately stopped the inmate, who fell to the ground and offered no further resistance. He was handcuffed and medically cleared.

The inmate, Shontrevious Harmon, age 19, is in custody for felony 1st Degree Intentional Homicide and is being held on \$100,000 bail. His extremely violent criminal history includes arrests for multiple burglaries, possession of THC and cocaine, and possession of a firearm by an adjudicated juvenile. After being tasered, the inmate stated to the officer, “Man, that (expletive deleted) hurt, I won’t never do that again. I’m sorry, I should never ran up on you like that.”

On September 14, Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. announced at a news conference that he was equipping every corrections officer with the Taser device as a result of a series of serious assaults by jail inmates who he felt did so with impunity. “We can’t rely on certain prosecution and we definitely cannot rely on our lenient court system to adequately punish criminals who assault officers,” said Clarke. “I said at the time I made this decision that I had had enough of these creeps physically assaulting my officers and that we were going to a different type of response. I have reviewed the use of force here, and not only was it reasonable, it was appropriate and necessary. It won’t prevent every assault, but the inmates now know what to expect in response.”

Sheriff Clarke planned to use a federal grant to pay for the additional Tasers. County Executive Chris Abele nixed the idea, choosing instead to use the grant to pay for two additional prosecutors, instead of a self-defense device for corrections officers. “Had I gone along with that misguided decision, we would be looking at an injured officer, medical bills, lost time from work and wasted money on a criminal investigation that wasn’t going anywhere in court. The county executive never asked me about what’s entailed in being a corrections officer. That was an easy decision for him to make because he doesn’t have to work in the dangerous environment of a jail. He ought to take the time to learn what law enforcement work is really like before making decisions without experience or knowledge.” Clarke said.

To date, 108 corrections officers have been trained and equipped with the Taser device since the sheriff’s decision to equip them in September. All 471 corrections officers in the agency will be trained and equipped by the end of the year under the Sheriff’s initiative.

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