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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4603

April 14, 2021

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland,

I am writing to request federal investigations of two recent events in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia involving citizens and the police.

On March 26, 2021, 25 year-old Donovan Lynch was killed by police in Virginia Beach; however, the officer said his body worn camera was not activated for "unknown reasons" according to the police chief. The press has reported divergent accounts from eyewitnesses and the Virginia Beach Police Department of the circumstances surrounding Mr. Lynch's death, including allegations that Mr. Lynch's body was moved by police, disputes as to whether or not he was brandishing his registered firearm, and the police department's alleged failure to interview key eyewitnesses.¹

Additionally, recently released footage of a traffic stop by two Windsor, Virginia police officers of Army Second Lieutenant Caron Nazario shows a disturbing but unfortunately all too familiar scene encountered by people of color. These two officers observed a Black man driving a new vehicle, and allegedly pulled him over for failure to display a license plate; however, the video shows the temporary new car plate was in fact displayed. The officers approached 2nd Lieut. Nazario's vehicle with their weapons pointed at him, refused to answer reasonable and simple questions, threatened him with a slang term for execution, pepper sprayed him, forced him to

¹ Reese, Brian, and Kayla Gaskins. "Family Attorney Claims Donovan Lynch's Body Moved during Investigation, Another Man Was Shot at Scene by VB Police." WAVY.com. WAVY.com, April 13, 2021.
<https://www.wavy.com/news/local-news/virginia-beach/donovan-lynchs-family-holding-press-conference-after-calling-for-federal-probe-into-fatal-police-shooting/>.

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kneel, handcuffed him, and threatened to ruin his military career if he reported their behavior. The video evidence of this encounter speaks for itself, but this brazen behavior by these officers demonstrated a total disregard of 2nd Lieut. Nazario's humanity and constitutional rights.

The residents of Hampton Roads deserve transparency, accountability, and most of all, they deserve the truth about these incidents. I have long supported evidence-based reforms for local police and the criminal justice system; however, I do not believe an internal review of these events by local police departments will provide the answers our community deserves. It is imperative that the U.S. Department of Justice open federal criminal and civil rights investigations into the March 2021 death of Donovan Lynch and the December 2020 stop and detention of 2nd Lieut. Nazario.

These incidents are part of an alarming series of videotaped interactions between law enforcement and individuals of color. I urge the Department of Justice to bring the full resources and transparency of the federal government to conduct these investigations. The truth must come to light and change is imperative so every resident in Hampton Roads can have confidence that police are acting within the bounds of the law and loved ones can make it home safely to their families.

Very truly yours,



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress