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No Charges to Issue Against Jameson Williams

Factual Summary

On Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at approximately 1:02 a.m., two Detroit police officers in a fully marked scout car observed a black sedan with an obscured license plate allegedly driving over the speed limit, and in an unsafe manner. The officers activated their lights and sirens for a traffic stop.

Officer 1 approached the driver side of the car and spoke to a male driver and explained the reason for the traffic stop. The driver advised the officer that weapons were in the car and provided the officer with his valid Concealed Pistol License (CPL), along with a valid Michigan driver's license, proof of insurance, and registration. The officer was advised by the driver that two weapons were in the car. The police retrieved one weapon registered to the passenger, Jameson Williams* from the front passenger floorboard. Mr. Williams said that it was his weapon.

The driver, who is the brother of Mr. Williams, advised Officer 1 of a second weapon, that was then taken from the rear passenger floorboard behind the driver. Mr. Williams and his brother attributed the driving in question to the fact that they were making sure they were not being followed because Mr. Williams is a member of the Detroit Lions. Jameson Williams was placed under arrest for carrying a concealed weapon but was later released at the scene when a DPD supervisor arrived. The brother who was driving the car was issued traffic citations.

The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office received the warrant request in this matter on October 25, 2024.

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Analysis of Issues

- Was Mr. Williams brother in possession of the gun in the car as the operator of the vehicle, and as such is it lawful for him to do so based upon his valid CPL?

WCPO has not found specific case law relating to whether one person's CPL can "extend" to another person's weapon to spare the passenger from criminal liability under the Carrying a Concealed Weapon statute, MCL 750.227,

- To the extent case law is silent on the above issue, does legislative intent guide the charging decision?

The legislative intent of the statute is discussed in MCL 28.422, **License to purchase, carry, possess, or transport pistol or to purchase a firearm; issuance; qualifications; application.** It explicitly states that its purpose is "to create a standardized system for issuing concealed pistol licenses to prevent criminals and other violent individuals from obtaining a license to carry a concealed pistol...." Under subsection (3) of MCL 28.422, Mr. Williams would be qualified to obtain a license to carry a concealed pistol and transport the same. MCL 28.422(3)(a) – (h). There are no facts in this case that would support a finding that Mr. Williams is a criminal or dangerous individual.

In researching prior cases charged by WCPO under the MCL 750.227 there were no cases found or recalled where the specific facts included:

- The driver has a valid CPL.
- The driver /CPL holder advises the police at the scene he is carrying both guns in the car.
- The defendant admits ownership but does not admit to putting the gun in the car.
- The gun is not on the person of the defendant .
- The defendant is eligible for a CPL.

Conclusion

Because the case law is silent regarding the specific issue, and the legislative intent of the CPL statute does not support charges under these facts, no charges will issue in this matter, and the warrant is denied.

Statement of Prosecutor Kym Worthy

"We have looked at this case thoroughly and objectively. We did not consider that Mr. Williams is a Detroit professional athlete in our decision making. We have charged Detroit area athletes before and would not have hesitated to do so again if the facts of this case could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. When it comes to charging decisions, we do not take into consideration who the potential defendant is, how much power and influence they have, or how beloved they may be. We deal with the facts and the law only.

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“While no case has identical facts, we can look at similar facts, if possible, to aid us in our decision making. We really could not recall any case that had facts that mirrored this case. Every case is fact specific. As always, we apply the alleged facts to the existing law. And the applicable law and its accompanying legislative history is far from clear.

“We had a team of experienced lawyers look at this case - as we often do - especially when the law is unclear or unsettled. We all agreed that this decision is the right and just one. And I am personally certain that the right decision has been made with these specific and unique set of facts.

“The CPL holder here was the driver and had care, custody, and control of the car. Guidance is needed for the future on how many weapons can a valid CPL say that they have control over? Despite all of this, if Mr. Williams had the gun on his person, he would have been charged,

“I urge the legislature to immediately look closely at this law so that the prosecutors in Michigan can have steady and meaningful guidance in the future,” said Prosecutor Kym Worthy.

*WCPO does not usually release the name of an uncharged person. Mr. Williams' was in the press related to this incident weeks before the warrant request was received by DPD.

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