

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Lawsuit Seeks Justice for Fatal Shooting
of Unarmed Man by Baltimore County Police Officer**

Today, the family and estate of Eric Sopp filed a lawsuit in federal court against the Baltimore County Police Department (“BCPD”) officer who shot and killed Mr. Sopp shortly before Thanksgiving 2019. The lawsuit also names Baltimore County, which operates the BCPD, as a defendant.

On the evening of November 26, 2019, Officer Gregory Page responded to a call to check on a suicidal subject. Mr. Sopp’s mother, Catherine Sopp, had called 911 to report that Mr. Sopp had been drinking heavily and threatened to stab himself with an ice pick. Ms. Sopp explained that Mr. Sopp left the ice pick at her home before driving away. Officer Page and a backup officer spotted Mr. Sopp driving near Mr. Carmel Road and I-83 and followed his car onto the highway. Before pulling Mr. Sopp over, Officer Page communicated with the 911 dispatcher, who confirmed that there was no indication that Mr. Sopp was armed with the ice pick (or anything else). Notwithstanding this information, and knowing that Mr. Sopp was in mental distress, Officer Page got out of his squad car with his gun drawn and pointed at Mr. Sopp. Officer Page tapped loudly on Mr. Sopp’s passenger window and yelled multiple, conflicting commands. When Mr. Sopp said that he was getting out of his car, Officer Page moved to the driver’s side of Mr. Sopp’s car – improperly closing the distance between them – and immediately fired eight rounds at Mr. Sopp. Mr. Sopp died from his injuries.

Mr. Sopp’s mother, two children, and estate are seeking damages against Officer Page for violations of Mr. Sopp’s civil rights and federal laws prohibiting disability discrimination. The lawsuit also claims that the BCPD has a pattern and practice of using excessive deadly force against individuals with mental health disabilities and

those experiencing mental health crises. In recent years, BCPD officers have killed several people experiencing mental health distress, including Scott Robertson, Emmanuel Oates, and Korryn Gaines.

Ms. Sopp hopes that this lawsuit will lead to better training of BCPD officers regarding how to respond to individuals in mental health distress. She described the loss of her son and only surviving child as “tremendous.” Ms. Sopp explained that “Eric was a very caring person, and his two children no longer have a father, and I no longer have my son who would have been my future caretaker. When I called 911 that evening, I was seeking assistance to protect both Eric and other drivers. I never dreamed that a police officer would kill my unarmed son.”

Chelsea Crawford, an attorney at Brown, Goldstein & Levy representing Mr. Sopp’s family, remarked that Officer Page’s behavior was particularly egregious under the circumstances. “There was no justification for Officer Page’s use of lethal force. The officer knew that Mr. Sopp was suicidal and in need of help. Rather than attempting to de-escalate the situation, Officer Page acted aggressively and escalated the encounter from the outset by shouting and pointing his gun at Mr. Sopp, with his finger on the trigger. This is yet another in a line of preventable tragedies, another instance of police officers shooting unarmed men who are in psychological distress.”

For more information, media are invited to call Mr. Freeman at 410-404-4888 and Ms. Crawford at 410-949-6636.