

STATEMENT REGARDING SELF-DEFENSE IN KNIGHTDALE
September 28, 2017 – Damon Chetson, Attorney for Connie Wells

It is a tragedy any time a person is seriously injured.

While Connie Wells and her family understand the Branch family's concern, the events of September 18, 2017 in Knightdale are entirely a consequence of Deondrea Branch's own actions that day.

North Carolina recognizes a right of self-defense, enshrined in part in common law that dates back hundreds of years and in the Castle Doctrine which allows a person to defend themselves from attack in a person's home or business.

54-year-old Connie Wells, 5 feet 2 inches tall, alone and cowering in her closed, locked, and secured office, was in fear for her life as Branch broke into the office. Branch repeatedly slammed against a 150-lb solid core door, bent the deadbolt securing it, and stormed into Ms. Wells' office suite.

He rushed at her as she was trapped in her personal office within the office suite. Branch ignored Ms. Wells when she screamed at him to "STOP!"

Ms. Wells had no idea at the time of the incident that Branch had allegedly stolen items from a nearby Wal-Mart or that he was fleeing from police. Nor did she know that Branch has a criminal record, an extensive arrest record, and is on probation for a prior drug conviction.

Surveillance footage is clear. The incident referred to in press reports occurred just 11 feet from Ms. Wells. She lawfully exercised her right to self-defense with her legally-possessed firearm. Ms. Wells fired a single shot because she feared Branch would assault, kill, or do her other harm. Another step and Branch would have been on top of her.

From the start, Ms. Wells has cooperated fully with authorities. She and her family appreciate the quick response from the Knightdale Police Department and understand, as is true any time a person exercises the right of self-defense, that responsible authorities must conduct a thorough investigation.

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