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DA Releases Reviews of Three Officer-Involved Shootings, One In-Custody Death

Suspect Wielding a Crowbar Advances on Officer

On the evening of April 21, 2021, the Escondido Police Department received a call reporting a person hitting parked vehicles with a metal pole in the parking lot of a business. An officer contacted Steven Olson, 59, the subject of the call, in the parking lot. The officer recognized Olson from prior police contacts. A witness at the scene explained he saw Olson tampering with a vehicle and hitting a pole while speaking incoherently.

Olson was holding a squeegee and a 25-inch metal crowbar in his hand. The officer told Olson multiple times to put the crowbar down. Olson held the squeegee and crowbar down to his side and did not raise the crowbar in a threatening manner. Olson did not comply with the officer's commands to drop the crowbar and jogged away from the officer. The officer advised over police radio that Olson was running away and the officer was not in pursuit.

About five minutes later, a second officer was driving to an unrelated burglary alarm call when he observed Olson standing in the middle of the street at 100 South Broadway in Escondido. The officer had been monitoring the radio call regarding Olson potentially vandalizing vehicles and was also familiar with Olson from previous contacts. He used the public address system in his patrol vehicle to warn Olson to leave the area or he may go to jail. Olson did not comply with the officer's commands.

The officer exited his patrol vehicle and Olson walked directly toward him. Olson dropped the squeegee but was still holding the crowbar in his right hand. The officer unholstered his firearm and backed up as Olson walked quickly towards him. The officer pointed his firearm at Olson and gave him multiple commands to drop the crowbar. Olson continued to advance towards the officer with the crowbar held up to his side with his elbow bent in a 45-degree angle. The officer continued backing up while telling Olson several times to drop the crowbar or he was going to shoot him. Olson continued advancing towards the officer, who had stepped up onto a sidewalk and was backing up against a wall. Olson came within striking distance and the officer feared Olson would strike him with the crowbar, so he fired his weapon striking Olson several times. Olson fell back into the roadway, dropping the crowbar onto the sidewalk.

Additional officers arrived within seconds and immediately provided medical aid until paramedics arrived. Olson was transported to Palomar Medical Center where he was pronounced dead. Toxicology testing detected amphetamine and methamphetamine in Olson's system.

The District Attorney's review determined the officer would have reason to believe that he was in imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death, viewing the situation as an objectively reasonable officer would. While the officer was equipped with less lethal options, the use of any of these less lethal options was not feasible given the immediacy of the perceived threat. Under the totality of circumstances, the officer was justified in his actions and bears no state criminal liability.

Read the DA's detailed review [here](#). Video of this incident has been released previously by the Escondido Police Department.

Man Threatening to Jump from a Second Story is Detained

On March 12, 2020 just before midnight, Chula Vista Police received a call from a woman who said her father was attempting to jump out of a two-story window. The woman's boyfriend was restraining the male. Two officers were dispatched separately to the scene. The woman led the first officer to arrive upstairs where Oral Nunis, 56, was seated on the floor in a doorway to one of the bedrooms with the woman's boyfriend positioned next to him. The officer attempted to handcuff and detain Nunis by grabbing onto his arm. Nunis pulled his arm away and told him he did not want to be handcuffed. The officer backed off to de-escalate the situation and called for assistance.

The officer continued to speak with the woman about what occurred earlier. Nunis stood up and tried to walk past the officer, who grabbed Nunis' arm to handcuff him, but Nunis pulled away and ran down the stairs. Nunis ran out the front door and onto the street. The first officer tackled Nunis and a struggle ensued. The second officer arrived to assist. Nunis actively resisted both officers. The officers were ultimately able to place Nunis' hands behind his back and handcuff him.

Additional officers arrived on scene and Nunis was placed in a WRAP restraint device. A mesh "spit sock" was placed over Nunis' head after he began spitting onto the ground. Paramedics arrived on scene and loaded Nunis into an ambulance. While in the ambulance, Nunis stopped breathing and went into cardiac arrest. The WRAP device was removed, and paramedics began CPR. Nunis was transported to Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

An autopsy determined the cause of death was sudden cardiorespiratory arrest while restrained in police custody. The medical examiner was unable to identify why Nunis went into cardiorespiratory arrest, but opined it was likely an excited delirium-type scenario.

The District Attorney's review of the incident determined the officers' use of physical restraint techniques and application of the WRAP device were reasonable under the circumstances. After the various applications of force were made during the incident, Nunis was breathing and still able to talk. There were no obvious signs of distress until he was being prepared for transport to the hospital inside the ambulance.

Based on the totality of circumstances and the Medical Examiner's report where the cause of death was 'undetermined,' there is insufficient evidence to show that the death of Mr. Nunis resulted from any unreasonable application of restraint by the officers. After the various applications of force were made during the incident, Nunis was breathing and still able to talk. There were no obvious signs of distress until he was being prepared for transport to the hospital inside the ambulance.

Therefore, the law enforcement personnel involved in his restraint acted reasonably under the circumstances and bear no state criminal liability for their actions

Read the DA's detailed review [here](#). The Chula Vista Police Department previously released body-worn camera video evidence of this incident.

Suspect Points Loaded Gun at Sheriff's Deputy

On June 18, 2021, two San Diego Sheriff's Department Deputies were dispatched to a radio call of a person sleeping under a tree in a vacant lot in Encinitas. Both deputies arrived at about 8:00 a.m. and contacted Eric Anderson, 40. Anderson seemed unsettled and started packing his belongings. He told them he was just traveling through the area and had rested there for the night. Anderson claimed he had never been arrested and was not on probation or parole.

One of the deputies conducted a records check and found prior arrest records and a photo of Anderson. Anderson denied the arrest record and began to stand up. He was told to sit down but he ignored the deputy's order, and as he stood up, he hid something behind his back. Anderson yelled, "Get the fuck back, get back!" He pointed an object wrapped in a green bandana at the deputies and held it as if it was a gun.

One of the deputies realized Anderson was in fact holding a gun. Anderson ran down the hill and the deputies pursued him. One of the deputies chasing Anderson began closing the distance between them. When the deputy was seven to ten yards away, Anderson began slowing to a stop. Anderson turned his body to the left towards the deputy and extended out his left arm, holding a black semi-automatic handgun in his hand. Both deputies fired at Anderson, who dropped the gun and fell to the ground. The deputies provided medical aid and Anderson was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

In reviewing the circumstances of this case, the deputies' actions were reasonable based on the circumstances known and perceived by them at the time of the shooting. Anderson created a deadly force situation by pointing a handgun at the deputy. Both deputies reasonably believed that Anderson posed an imminent threat and intended to cause serious bodily harm or death. The use of a less lethal option in this situation was not reasonably safe and feasible. Therefore, the deputies bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

Read the DA's detailed review [here](#).

Homeless Man Shot During Interaction with Officers

On February 25, 2021 at about 7:00 p.m., a pedestrian flagged down a San Diego Police officer regarding a man armed with a knife at Third Avenue and G Street in downtown San Diego. The man was creating a disturbance and causing pedestrians to walk in the street to avoid him. The subject, described as an older male who was possibly homeless, was later identified as Stephen Wilson, 69. The officer arrived on the scene and saw Wilson speaking to occupants of a red vehicle. There was a shopping cart nearby with trash scattered around it. As the officer exited his patrol vehicle, Wilson walked away from the red vehicle. The officer identified himself and informed Wilson he was there because someone reported a person with a knife acting strangely.

Wilson denied having a knife and the officer did not see a knife on him at that time. Wilson told the officer the knife was possibly in the shopping cart.

Two additional officers arrived to provide cover. The first officer on the scene planned to detain and handcuff Wilson in order to investigate whether he had a knife. As the officer stepped towards him, Wilson said, “Back off,” and moved away from the officer and towards the shopping cart. Wilson turned to his right and the officer saw a knife sticking out of Wilson's left rear shorts pocket. Wilson was armed with a Santoku-style knife that was about 10 inches long. The officer told Wilson not to reach for the knife. Wilson removed the knife from his pocket as the officer simultaneously drew his weapon from his holster. Wilson dropped the knife to the ground as the officer fired three rounds at him. Wilson was struck and fell to the ground. Officers provided first aid and Wilson was transported to UCSD Hospital for treatment and Wilson survived the shooting.

The District Attorney’s review determined that the evidence showed Wilson reached for and removed the knife from his pocket while standing within feet of the officers, including his fellow officer who was not prepared to defend himself if Wilson planned to use the knife to assault them. The officer who fired was reasonable in his belief at that moment, that Wilson presented an imminent threat of death or serious bodily harm. The officer therefore bears no state criminal liability for his actions. The officer stated he did not feel there was time to revert to less lethal options in what he perceived to be a lethal situation.

Read the DA’s detailed analysis [here](#). The San Diego Police Department previously released body-worn camera video evidence of this incident.

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About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office

The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.