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DA Releases Reviews of Four Officer-Involved Shootings, Two In-Custody Deaths

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office today released its detailed reviews of four officer-involved shootings and two in-custody deaths.

A peace officer's use of force is a serious responsibility that must be carried out legally and with a respect for the sanctity of every person's life. The law places the duty and responsibility on the District Attorney's Office to determine if there is criminal liability and to make a fair and just decision under the law. Our office takes great care to make sure our analysis follows the law, is independent, objective, and thorough. The loss of life in this context is always somber and serious, leaving an impact on many in the community.

Man Assaults Harbor Police Officers with Semi-Automatic Weapon

On April 10, 2022, Eric Jesus Medina, 29, parked his vehicle next to the front stairs of the San Diego Harbor Police Department on North Harbor Drive. Medina exited his vehicle and used the call box next to the front doors to request assistance. Medina walked away as the dispatcher tried to ask follow-up questions. Medina got into his vehicle, backed it out of the stall, and stopped in front of the stairs leading to the front entrance. A Harbor Police officer responded from inside the station to assist Medina. The officer walked outside, stood at the top of the stairs and asked Medina if he wanted to speak with someone. The officer could not hear Medina's response, so he began to walk toward Medina's vehicle. Medina raised his right hand revealing a semi-automatic handgun. The officer ran back and took cover behind a large pillar in front of the exterior lobby doors. The officer gave Medina verbal commands to drop the weapon but instead, Medina pointed the firearm at him. Believing Medina was going to shoot him, the officer fired his weapon at Medina. A second officer exited the station through the front lobby after hearing gun shots. He took cover behind another pillar and fired his weapon at Medina. From the lobby, a third officer could see Medina pointing a handgun at the officers and believed they were actively engaged in a gun battle. That officer fired at Medina through the glass lobby windows. Medina eventually dropped the handgun and put his hands in the air. He was taken into custody and transported UC San Diego Hospital for treatment. The DA's review concluded that the three officers fired believing they were defending themselves or the other officers from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death and given the totality of circumstances the officers bear no state criminal liability. Medina was convicted of assaulting a peace officer with a semi-automatic weapon and in June of 2023 was sentenced to nine years in state prison.

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

Man Fires at Officers Outside Taco Shop

Several citizens called the San Diego Police Department on October 18, 2022, to report a man with a gun in the area of South 43rd Street. At 5:43 p.m., two SDDPD officers were driving on S. 43rd Street toward Humberto's Taco Shop. 33-year-old Derrick Weatherspoon ran out of the taco shop into the street directly toward the officers' patrol vehicle. Weatherspoon pointed his handgun at the officers and began firing at them. Both officers exited the patrol vehicle and returned fire. Weatherspoon continued firing at the officers as he ran past the patrol vehicle. Weatherspoon was struck multiple times by gunfire and fell to the ground with the gun still in his hand. Weatherspoon was pronounced dead at the scene. Toxicological testing detected alcohol, amphetamine, methamphetamine, and a cocaine metabolite. When the officers shot Weatherspoon, they reasonably believed, based on the totality of circumstances, that such force was necessary to defend against the imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury. The DA's review found that the officers bear no state criminal liability for their actions in defending themselves and the civilians on South 43rd Street.

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

Man with a Knife Assaults His Mother, Advances on Officer

On December 18, 2022, the Chula Vista Police Department received multiple calls from people requesting police respond to the parking lot of a shopping center located at 1170 Broadway in Chula Vista. The callers reported a woman screaming for help and a man hitting her. While one of the callers was on the phone with the 911 dispatcher, a woman could be heard in the background telling the caller her son is mentally ill and was trying to save her from her car, which he believed was going to explode. A Chula Vista Police officer arrived at the location of the call and observed Bradley Munroe, 32, beating on a pickup truck with a metal object. The officer ordered Munroe to stop and get down on the ground. Munroe ignored the officer's order and climbed into the bed of the truck while holding a knife in his hand. The officer repeatedly ordered Munroe to put down the knife and get out of the truck bed. Munroe ignored the officer's orders and began pounding on the back window of the truck before eventually climbing out of the truck bed while still holding the knife in his hand. The officer ordered Munroe to get on the ground, but Munroe stepped down out of the truck bed with the knife in his hand and began walking toward the officer. The officer told Munroe to not walk toward him with the knife, but Munroe ignored him and began to quicken his advancement toward the officer. The officer fired his handgun, fatally wounding Munroe. Toxicological testing of Munroe's blood revealed the presence of amphetamine, methamphetamine, ephedrine, phencyclidine (PCP), and fentanyl. The DA's review found that the officer had given Munroe numerous commands and displayed a police dog at his side, a technique often employed to deter action or to gain compliance. Based on the facts known to the officer at the time, it was reasonable for him to believe that Munroe had the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury and that it was necessary to defend against that threat by use of deadly force. Based on the totality of circumstances, the officer bears no state criminal liability.

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

Man Armed with a Sword Advances on Officers

At about 4:00 a.m. on October 8, 2021, the National City Police Department received a 911 call from a citizen reporting a man armed with a sword on the property of a self-storage facility. The caller said the man tried to break into one of the buildings on the property. The caller provided a description of the man and said he left on foot. Two National City Police officers saw Umana, who matched the description given by the caller. Umana was standing on the sidewalk with a machete at his side. The officers began talking to Umana and ordered him to put down the machete. One officer had his canine with him and the other had a taser as less lethal force options. Umana refused to put down the machete and began walking away from the officers. Officers moved to within about 15 feet of Umana so an officer could be close enough to deploy the Taser. Another officer armed himself with a rifle and began moving toward Umana. An officer deployed his taser at Umana, but it was ineffective. Umana turned toward the officers and took a step toward them while raising the machete as though he was going to strike them. Two officers fired rounds from their handgun and rifle, striking Umana. Officers and paramedics attempted lifesaving measures, but Umana did not survive his wounds. A toxicology test determined the presence of methamphetamines and amphetamines. Based on the DA's review, one officer fired his weapon at Umana to stop the threat of being attacked with the machete by Umana while the second officer fired his weapon to protect the other officers from an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death. As a result, the officers bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

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

Man Dies of a Meth Overdose While in Police Custody

On Thursday, December 8, 2022, at about 4:30 p.m., the San Diego Police Department received a 911 call concerning a man later identified as 35-year-old Daniel Armenta. The caller reported Armenta had possibly gotten injured climbing over the fence onto a U-Haul property located at 43rd Street and El Cajon Blvd. The reporting party expressed concern that Armenta, who was walking in the roadway, might get struck by a vehicle. An SDPD officer responded to the call and found Armenta lying in the roadway of Fairmount Avenue. As the officer pulled up in her patrol car, Armenta got up and crossed to the opposite side of the street. The officer approached Armenta, who was crawling on his hands and knees on the sidewalk. The officer detained Armenta in handcuffs. Armenta was showing symptoms of being under the influence of a controlled substance and the officer quickly requested medics. Armenta was conscious but was mumbling unintelligibly. His fingers were moving as if playing the piano, his muscles were rigid, he had had a blank stare in his eyes, and his body was continuously moving. The officer tried to lift Armenta to his feet but could not. A second SDPD officer arrived and both officers hoisted Armenta to his feet and walked Armenta toward the patrol car. One officer instructed Armenta to sit, but Armenta instead threw his front torso forward and the officers had to prevent him from falling. The officers held Armenta's arms and guided him to the ground in front of the patrol car. Armenta lay down on his side. The officers asked Armenta for his identifying information, but Armenta gave only his first name and mumbled incoherent answers. One officer retrieved her computer from her vehicle to look up Armenta's identification. The other officer stayed with Armenta and continued to ask questions to ascertain his identity when Armenta suddenly stopped moving. The officer shook Armenta and said he did not know if Armenta was breathing. The officer rubbed Armenta's chest several times to wake him and got no response. Armenta's handcuffs were removed, and an officer began chest compressions. One of the officers

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administered a dose of Narcan to Armenta, but he did not respond. She administered a second dose of Narcan but he still did not respond. Officers continued chest compressions until San Diego Fire Department arrived. Armenta did not regain consciousness and was pronounced dead at the scene. A toxicological analysis of Armenta's blood revealed the presence of amphetamine and methamphetamine. The autopsy report identified the cause of death as the toxic effects of methamphetamine and listed the manner of death as accident. Based upon the DA's review of the facts and circumstances surrounding Armenta's death, the law enforcement personnel involved in his restraint acted reasonably and bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

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

Officers Respond to a Man Threatening Family

On October 9, 2022, at approximately 10:00 p.m., several San Diego Police officers were dispatched to a family disturbance where an intoxicated person was fighting and damaging property. The caller later said the subject was being restrained by family members. Prior to being restrained, the subject, Denny Jalate, 23, had set a fire in the backyard, argued with multiple family members, threatened to kill his stepfather, and had thrown bricks through a sliding glass door and a car window. At approximately 10:12 p.m., the first officer arrived at the residence and was directed to Jalate's location by Jalate's cousin. The officer saw Jalate lying face down on the ground with Jalate's mother standing over him and Jalate's stepfather holding his head area. Additional officers arrived. An officer identified herself and told Jalate that she was going to place handcuffs on him. Jalate did not respond. Jalate was handcuffed and was still unresponsive, so officers rolled him into a recovery position. Officers initially detected a weak pulse but were then unable to locate a pulse. Officers noticed Jalate lacked pupil dilation and his tongue was at the front of his mouth. Officers began chest compressions and called for paramedics. One of the officers administered Narcan to Jalate with no effect. The other officers continued chest compressions until paramedics arrived. Jalate was transported from the scene by medics to Scripps Mercy Hospital where he was pronounced dead. Toxicology testing detected alcohol in Jalate's system. The Medical Examiner listed acute ethanol toxicity, hypertensive cardiovascular disease, and obesity as significant contributing factors to Jalate's death. The DA's review found that as soon as the officers detected Jalate was possibly under physical distress, they began to evaluate him and provide medical attention. The officers placed Jalate in a recovery position, monitored his pulse, initiated CPR, called for paramedics, and administered Narcan. The evidence did not establish a causal substantial link between any actions by police officers and Jalate's death. Based upon the DA's review of the facts and circumstances surrounding Jalate's death, the law enforcement personnel involved acted reasonably and bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

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

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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.

