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DA Releases Reviews of Six Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents

The San Diego County District Attorney has completed reviews of six officer-involved shooting incidents. The incidents stem from calls to police about domestic violence, sexual assault, physical elder abuse and a fatal stabbing:

Domestic Violence Call Turns into Standoff

On Sunday, June 14, 2020, at approximately 8:30 p.m., San Diego County Sheriff's deputies responded to a 911 call at a Lakeside residence. The caller said her children's father, 40-year-old Dustin Banzhof, threatened to kill her. Deputies arrived at the residence and safely removed the woman and her children from the house. As deputies were speaking with the victim, Banzhof drove away. Deputies pursued Banzhof, who failed to yield and eventually led deputies back to the residence. Banzhof armed himself with a rifle and fired multiple rounds in the air and toward deputies. Banzhof got into a pickup truck with his rifle and drove down his driveway toward the deputies. Banzhof made a quick movement inside the truck and one of the deputies fired two rifle rounds at Banzhof. Banzhof drove back to the garage and re-entered the house. Banzhof continued to fire his rifle throughout the night. Negotiators from the Sheriff's Crisis Negotiations Team spoke with Banzhof by phone but he refused to surrender. Later that evening at approximately 2:30 a.m. Banzhof stepped out of the house. A less-lethal projectile was fired at him, striking his right upper leg. Banzhof was taken into custody with the assistance of a canine and transported to the hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries and was later booked into county jail. He pleaded guilty to two counts of assaulting a peace officer with a semi-automatic firearm and one count of threatening a peace officer, all felony crimes. He was sentenced to nine years in state prison. Release of the DA's review was withheld during the pendency of the criminal case. The District Attorney's review found that the officer reasonably believed that Banzhof posed an imminent threat when he fired shots toward the officers and drove his pickup truck toward the officers while armed with the rifle. Therefore, the officer bears no state criminal liability for his actions.

Sexual Assault Leads to Arrest of Man Brandishing a Knife

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On the evening of July 7, 2022, 43-year-old Maurice Littlejohn entered the apartment of a female acquaintance. Littlejohn began making sexually suggestive comments and groped her. Littlejohn eventually left. At about 7:20 p.m., two San Diego Police Officers responded to a call of an assault in progress. Police contacted Littlejohn and ordered him to drop a stick he was holding. Littlejohn eventually threw the stick on the ground. Police told Littlejohn he was being detained and Littlejohn stopped, took a fighting stance, reached into his waistband area, and pulled out a black folding knife. Littlejohn opened the knife, exposing the blade, and waved it toward the officers. Littlejohn told the officers, "Shoot me. Shoot me." One officer fired his Taser at Littlejohn and he fell to the ground, dropping the knife. Littlejohn pulled the Taser barbs from his body, got up and started running from the officers. An officer yelled at Littlejohn several times to stop. Littlejohn slowed, turned, and pointed an object with his right hand and yelled, "Boom, boom." One of the officers thought Littlejohn was pointing a gun at him and fired two shots at Littlejohn, missing both times. Littlejohn continued running and then stopped in the middle of the parking lot, turned towards officers, and stood as if pointing a gun. Littlejohn then screamed and threw a cellphone down on the ground. Littlejohn walked out onto South Meadowbrook Drive and officers told him to stop and get on the ground. One of the officers fired his Taser at Littlejohn, but it was ineffective. A second officer fired his Taser at Littlejohn, but Littlejohn again pulled out the Taser barbs and was not affected. As officers approached, Littlejohn attempted to punch an officer and fought with them before being taken into custody. Toxicology testing of Littlejohn's blood revealed the presence of methamphetamine, amphetamine, PCP, THC, midazolam, and ketamine. Charges were filed against Littlejohn and he pleaded guilty to nine felonies and three misdemeanors, including assault, burglary, sexual battery, and sexual assault on a child 14 or 15 years old. He was sentenced to 14 years-to-life in state prison. The District Attorney's review found that when the officer fired two rounds from his handgun toward Littlejohn, he reasonably believed that Littlejohn posed an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury and that the use of such force was necessary to defend against the threat and the officer, therefore, bears no criminal liability for his actions.

Elder Abuse Suspect Threatens Officer with Metal Rod

On August 23, 2022, the San Diego Police Department received a call from a person requesting police respond to their home in the 1500 block of Bridgeview Drive. The caller reported being assaulted by their family member, 48-year-old Scholar Wang. Officers arrived and found two elderly individuals who were injured and bleeding as a result of Wang having beaten them with a wooden stick. Wang had barricaded himself in a bathroom of the residence. Through an exterior window to the bathroom, officers saw Wang was in possession of a hedge trimmer and a knife. Officers attempted to negotiate with Wang to come out of the bathroom. The officers deployed pepper spray into the bathroom, but it did not appear to significantly affect Wang. After an hour of ineffective efforts to convince Wang to surrender, officers forced open the bathroom door and an officer deployed his police dog which bit Wang. The officer entered the bathroom to find Wang hitting the police dog with a metal rod. As the officer approached Wang to get control of his police dog, Wang raised the metal rod over his head in a striking motion. Believing Wang was going to strike him with the metal rod as well, the officer fired three shots at Wang from his pistol. Wang was struck and died of his injuries. The District Attorney's review found that a reasonable officer in the same situation would believe that Wang had the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury to himself and others. Therefore, given the totality of the circumstances, the officer bears no state criminal liability for his actions.

After Fatal Stabbing, Suspect Brandishes Shotgun

San Diego Police received a 911 call of a violent disturbance occurring inside a business. The responding officers located a female victim with multiple stab wounds. The officers provided her aid until paramedics arrived and transported her to a nearby hospital, where she was pronounced dead. An employee at the business identified the suspect as 77-year-old Frank Brower and reported Brower had fled the scene. Officers identified the location of his home address in an unincorporated area of the county near El Cajon. SDPD officers along with deputies from San Diego Sheriff's Department responded to Brower's home address. Law enforcement officers devised a tactical plan to contact Brower. Using a patrol vehicle as cover, they approached Brower as he was reaching into the rear driver side door of his vehicle. The uniformed officers identified themselves as police, but Brower ignored commands to stop reaching into the vehicle and to show officers his hands. One officer fired four bean bag rounds, striking Brower, but it was not effective in gaining Brower's compliance. Brower removed a shotgun from his vehicle and held it at a high ready position. He began turning toward officers and two of them fired at Brower. Brower was struck and fell to the ground. Officers provided Brower with medical aid, however, he subsequently died from his injuries. The District Attorney's review found that when they discharged their firearms at Brower, the officers 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 posed by Brower. As a result, they bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

Man Fires Handgun at Officers

On January 20, 2023, at approximately 11:30 p.m., two San Diego Police Department Officers saw a red pickup truck slow and stop in an area known for illegal drug use. A male exited the vehicle and walked out of their view. Approximately five minutes later, the male returned to the truck and drove away. Officers followed, noticed that the truck had a center brake light out and conducted a traffic stop. A patrol sergeant arrived moments later and positioned himself behind the vehicle. Officers contacted the driver, 37-year-old Christopher De Arman, from the open passenger window and told him that he was being stopped for an inoperable center brake light. Officers ran a record check on De Arman and learned that he was previously arrested as a felon in possession of a firearm. An officer asked De Arman to exit the car so they could conduct a safety search, but De Arman refused. Another officer approached the driver side door, unlocked it, and opened it. De Arman started the truck and the officer told De Arman to step out. The officer took out his OC (oleoresin capsicum) spray and pointed it at De Arman. De Arman placed the gear selector in drive and the patrol sergeant immediately deployed his OC spray at De Arman's face. De Arman accelerated away from the three officers. Two officers got into their patrol vehicle and followed De Arman's vehicle southeast on Logan Avenue. The patrol sergeant followed behind in his vehicle. De Arman stopped his vehicle and officers immediately exited their patrol vehicle and drew their service weapons. An officer yelled at De Arman to show his hands. De Arman exited his truck, turned towards the officers, and pointed a handgun in their direction. Two officers fired their handguns at De Arman who also fired his handgun toward the officers, striking the patrol vehicle. De Arman attempted to run but was struck by the gunfire and fell, dropping the handgun in the middle of the street. De Arman was handcuffed, assessed for gunshot wounds and placed in a recovery position. De Arman was transported to UCSD hospital where he ultimately died. Toxicology testing of De Arman's blood revealed the presence of cocaine, methadone, THC, and fentanyl. The District Attorney's review found that a reasonable officer in the same situation would believe that De Arman had the present ability, opportunity,

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and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury when he exited his vehicle and began firing a firearm. As a result, the officers bear no state liability for their actions.

All of the DA's review letters for the above incidents, and the non-fatal officer-involved shooting of Brenton Kinzebaw, can be found on the District Attorney's [public website 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.

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