

HALL OF JUSTICE  
330 WEST BROADWAY  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101  
(619) 531-4040  
SanDiegoDA.com

OFFICE OF  
**THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

DAVID P. GREENBERG  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

SUMMER STEPHAN  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

July 13, 2020  
For Immediate Release

Contact: [Steve Walker](#) (619) 531-3890  
[Tanya Sierra](#) (619) 531-3315  
*En Español* [Barbara Medina](#) (619) 531-3305

## District Attorney Files Criminal Charges in Fatal Officer-Involved Shooting Incident

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office has filed criminal charges stemming from an officer-involved shooting incident that occurred in San Diego on May 1, 2020.

Former San Diego County Sheriff's Deputy Aaron Russell, 23, is being charged with murder in the second-degree and the allegation a gun was used. Russell is accused of shooting and killing Nicholas Bills, 36, who escaped from a California State Park Officer's car just outside the San Diego Central Jail downtown and was running away from officers unarmed.

Russell is in custody on an arrest warrant executed on July 13 and is expected to be arraigned tomorrow, Tuesday, July 14 at 9:00 a.m. in Department 2002 of the San Diego Superior Court downtown. If convicted of all charges, Russell faces 15 years-to-life in prison. Bail has been set at one million dollars.

"We reached the decision to file criminal charges following a thorough review of all the objective facts and evidence in this case by specialized prosecutors and investigators in our Special Operations Division," said San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan. "When a life is taken, we must make decisions based in facts and law, and not ones that are influenced by the status of the accused as a peace officer nor the status of the victim. These decisions must be made solely in the interest of justice and not based on favoritism nor public opinion. Every person must be accountable under the law."

Since January 1, 2020, all officer-involved shooting incidents in California, including this incident, are reviewed under a revised standard for use of deadly force under Assembly Bill 392. The new law provides that deadly force is only justified when necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person.

While surveillance video exists of the incident, the District Attorney's Office will not be releasing it at this time, as the video is now evidence in a pending criminal case and releasing it publicly could jeopardize the defendant's right to a fair trial. Video is expected to be entered into evidence during open court proceedings.

###

Follow the District Attorney's Office on

