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For Immediate Release

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## DA Releases Review of Suspect Who Advanced on SDPD Officer While Swinging Heavy Chain

The District Attorney's office has completed [its review](#) of a violent incident last year in which a suspect swinging a heavy metal chain advanced toward a San Diego Police officer for a block and a half, refusing to comply with the officer's repeated commands to drop the weapon and get on the ground.

The incident began when San Diego Police received a 911 call reporting an assault. Witnesses reported seeing Vaughn Denham, 48, attack another man in the head and torso with a machete, causing serious injuries. A San Diego Police officer responded to the call and as the officer was getting out of his patrol car, Denham ran up to the car and swung a four-foot long metal chain, striking the car.

The officer got out of the car and ordered Denham to drop the chain. Denham refused and began walking towards the officer while aggressively swinging the chain. The officer deployed his Taser, which was ineffective. The officer continued to retreat from Denham for a block and a half to avoid being struck by the chain. For more than one minute, the officer continued to give commands to drop the weapon, get on the ground and warned he would be forced to shoot. As Denham ignored the officer's commands and continued to close the distance between the two men, the officer fired two rounds, striking Denham. Denham was transported to the hospital where he later died.

Toxicology results showed Phencyclidine (PCP), Cannabinoids, and Methamphetamine in Denham's system.

After a thorough review, the District Attorney's Office determined the officer fired at Denham in his own defense and therefore bears no state criminal liability for his actions. As part of its finding, the DA's Office released 1 minute, 45 seconds of body-worn camera video evidence of the incident, as well as a detailed letter of its review.

The DA's detailed analysis [can be found here](#).

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