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DA Releases Reviews and Video of Officer-Involved Shooting, In-Custody Deaths

The District Attorney's Office today released its detailed reviews of a non-fatal officer-involved shooting incident as well as two in-custody death incidents. Relevant portions of body-worn camera video evidence and police helicopter video connected to the incidents was also released. Methamphetamine intoxication was found to be a factor in both in-custody deaths, which were both ruled accidental by the San Diego County Medical Examiner.

Murder and Kidnapping Suspect Shot During Police Pursuit

On January 11, 2017, Luke Lampers, 35, shot and killed a man in Anaheim, CA. The homicide was captured on video tape. Lampers then kidnapped his girlfriend. The Anaheim Police Department developed information that Lampers had taken his girlfriend to San Diego. Officers from Anaheim went to San Diego to locate the kidnapped woman and Lampers. The officers sought assistance from the San Diego Police Department. Officers had been told by a witness that Lampers was armed with a gun and would "shoot it out with police."

Lampers was located in Old Town when a stolen car he was known to drive was found in a Caltrans parking lot. When spotted, Lampers ran from police. While climbing a fence onto a Caltrans property, a loaded gun fell out of his clothing. Lampers tried to retrieve it, but it had fallen on the other side of the fence from him and he could not reach it. He ran through the Caltrans property. An Anaheim Police Department Investigator drove onto the Caltrans property and pursued Lampers.

When he got out of his car to run after Lampers, the investigator gave commands to Lampers to stop. Lampers would not stop and continued to run away with his arms outstretched. At one point, Lampers reached to the front of his body. Fearing Lampers was retrieving a gun, the investigator shot Lampers. Lampers was treated for his injuries and criminal charges were filed against him in Orange County. He

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was convicted of first-degree murder on September 26, 2019 with the special circumstance that the murder was committed while the defendant was engaged in the commission of a kidnapping.

After a thorough review, the District Attorney's Office determined the investigator does not bear any criminal liability for his actions because they were legally justified under the facts, the evidence, and the law. The DA's detailed analysis, which was signed by former DA Bonnie Dumanis in 2017, [can be found here](#). The letter and related video have been withheld for public release pending the conclusion of criminal proceedings against Lampers.

Police Respond to Man Reported to be Drunk in an Alley

On January 20, the San Diego Police Department received a 911 call regarding a man who was possibly drunk in an alley near 4300 Estrella Avenue holding his stomach and calling for help. An SDPD officer arrived on the scene and found Harold Leonard Daniels, Jr., 52, lying on the ground in the alley. Daniels told the officer he had consumed a beer. A records check revealed Daniels was on probation with alcohol conditions. Frias contacted Daniels' probation officer, who issued a hold on Daniels for violating the terms of his probation. The officer placed Daniels under arrest and handcuffed him without incident.

Daniels was transported to SDPD headquarters in the back seat of the patrol vehicle for processing. At headquarters, the officer checked on Daniels, who showed no sign of distress. Before leaving headquarters, the officer again checked on Daniels, who appeared to be sleeping. The officer noted Daniels' chest rise and fall, indicating he was breathing. Upon arrival at the jail, the officer opened the patrol car door and discovered Daniels was unconscious. The officer removed Daniels from the back seat and sought assistance from the jail's nurse. An ambulance was called and CPR was initiated. The jail nurse and paramedics continued CPR until medics transported Daniels to UCSD Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

An autopsy determined the cause of death to be hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease with contributing factors of acute methamphetamine intoxication and pulmonary emphysema. The Deputy Medical Examiner determined the manner of death to be accidental.

Based upon the DA's review of the facts and circumstances surrounding Daniels' death, the law enforcement personnel involved acted reasonably under the circumstances and bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

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

Officers Respond to Store Clerk Threatened at a 7-Eleven

October 12, 2018, Chula Vista Police Officers were dispatched to a 7-Eleven store in response to a 911 call by a Jason Watts, 29, claiming there were people in the back freezer and outside of the store who were going to shoot him. The dispatcher spoke with a store employee, who refuted Watts' claims. The employee requested a patrol unit respond because Watts was lingering in the store and had entered the area behind the cash register. Two officers arrived on scene and attempted to have a conversation with Watts, but Watts quickly entered the store.

Watts hurriedly moved past the store clerk and behind the employee counter area. One officer drew his firearm and the other officer aimed a taser toward Watts. The officers made numerous commands to Watts to place his hands behind his back and attempted to de-escalate the situation. Watts refused. One officer holstered his firearm and calmly spoke to Watts. Watts remained noncompliant as the officers continued to give commands.

A third officer arrived and asked Watts to come out from behind the counter. Watts responded, “No,” and immediately punched the register screen, picked up the register from the counter and raising it with both hands. An officer discharged a taser at Watts but it was ineffective. The other two officers also fired their tasers. Watts dropped the register and fell to the ground. Watts pulled out the taser barbs as the officers commanded him to roll onto his stomach. Watts again refused to comply. He grabbed the register and tried to break it free from its cables.

An officer pepper-sprayed Watts, who then dove over the counter and fell to the floor. The officers repeatedly ordered Watts to roll over onto his stomach, but he refused. Watts made his way to the doors and grabbed both handles. After multiple warnings, a fourth officer discharged her taser and Watts fell to the floor. The officers attempted to take hold of Watts who was physically resisting. During a brief struggle, Watts began to vomit and officers radioed for medics. Watts continued to physically resist. The officers handcuffed Watts and positioned him on his side. Medics arrived and Watts was placed in a restraint WRAP device in the presence of the paramedics.

Watts was transported by medics to Paradise Valley Hospital. At the hospital, the WRAP was removed and Watts was evaluated by staff. Watts was medically cleared by hospital staff to be transported to the Central Jail in San Diego. Watts became combative as officers were preparing to transport him so officers reapplied the WRAP in the presence of medical personnel. Watts was transported by officers to Central Jail, where medical intake staff rejected him for having an “altered mental status.”

Officers requested an ambulance transport Watts to the hospital. An ambulance responded and medics took Watts to UCSD Hospital. While under medical care at UCSD Hospital, Watts became unresponsive and went into cardiac arrest. Watts was pronounced dead on October 13. The Medical Examiner conducted an autopsy. The manner of death was classified as an accident. The cause of death was determined to be methamphetamine intoxication and [excited delirium](#). Physical exertion and restraint were contributing factors.

Based upon our review of the facts and circumstances surrounding Watts’ death, the law enforcement personnel named in this review who were involved in his arrest and restraint acted reasonably under the circumstances and bear no state criminal liability for their actions.

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

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