

Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Edtwon Stamps
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Deputy Michael Lee, #551896
Deputy Quang Huynh, #527400

J.S.I.D. File #19-0255



GEORGE GASCÓN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

November 8, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAPTAIN JOE MENDOZA
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Homicide Bureau
1 Cupania Circle
Monterey Park, California 91755

FROM: JUSTICE SYSTEM INTEGRITY DIVISION
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

SUBJECT: Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Edtwon Stamps
J.S.I.D. File #19-0255
L.A.S.D. File #019-04852-0399-013

DATE: November 8, 2021

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the June 6, 2019, non-fatal shooting of Edtwon Stamps by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputies Michael Lee and Quang Huynh. We have determined that Deputy Lee and Huynh acted in lawful self-defense and defense of each other when they fired their duty weapons, and Stamps succumbed to injuries from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on June 7, 2019, at approximately 12:01 a.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the scene and was given a briefing and walk-through by Lieutenant Charles Calderaro.

The following analysis is based on reports and other materials, including recorded interviews, photographs, video surveillance recordings, and radio communications submitted to this office by LASD Homicide Bureau. No compelled statements were considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

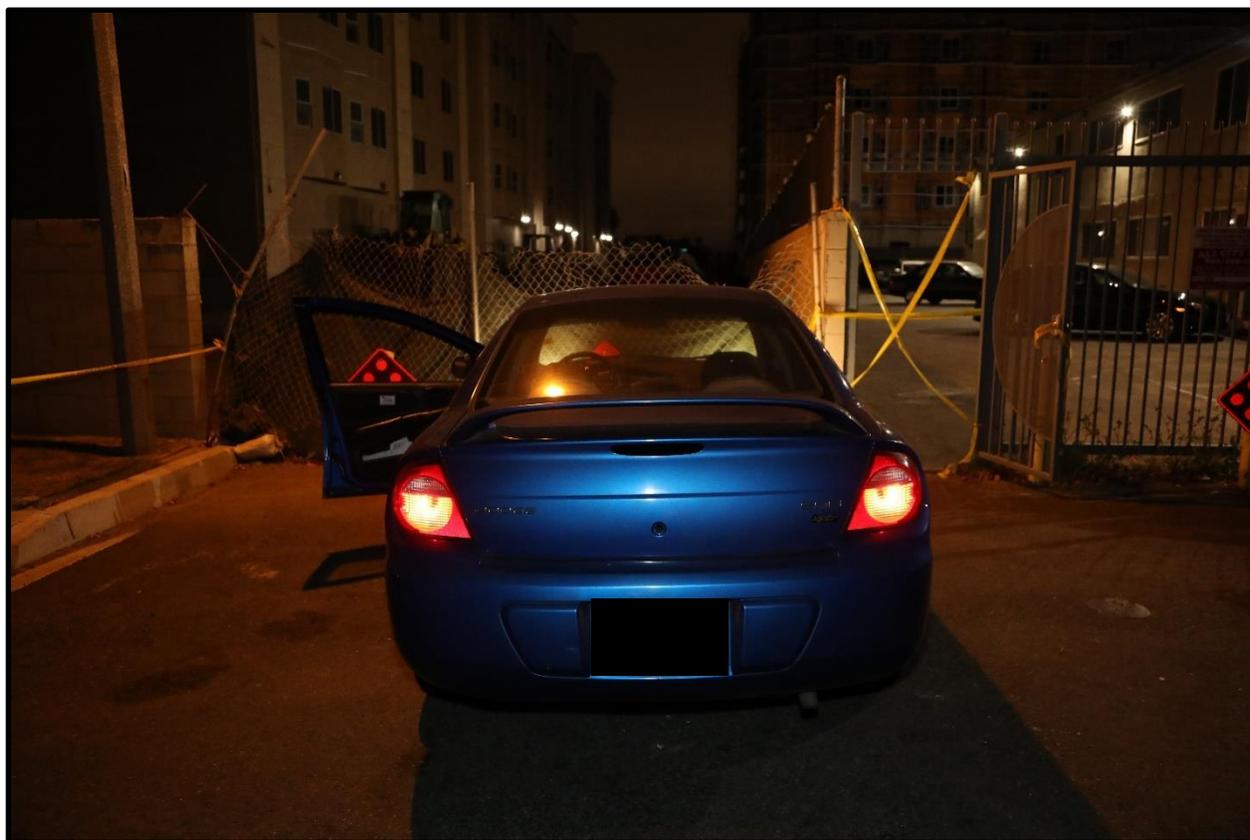
On the evening of June 6, 2019, Lee and Huynh were on-duty and working a uniformed patrol assignment. Lee and Huynh were partnered, and Lee was driving a marked patrol car. At approximately 10:18 p.m., the deputies were stopped at the intersection of Imperial Highway and Crenshaw Boulevard, and Huynh ran the license plate of another car, a Dodge Neon, stopped at the intersection. The registration of the Neon was expired.

The deputies conducted a traffic stop, and the driver of the Neon, Stamps, immediately pulled over to the north curb of Imperial Highway. Lee verbally contacted Stamps, who was the sole occupant, through Stamps' driver side window.¹ Huynh approached the passenger side of the

¹ Stamps was the registered owner of the Neon.

Neon and asked Stamps to turn the engine off, and Stamps complied. Lee asked Stamps for his driver's license. Stamps replied that he did not have a valid driver's license. Lee asked Stamps to exit the car. Stamps refused, and Lee attempted to open the driver side door by pulling on the handle. The car door was locked. Stamps started the ignition and drove westbound on Imperial Highway.

The deputies returned to their patrol car and followed Stamps, but lost sight of the Neon shortly after Stamps made a northbound turn. Lee made a few turns in the vicinity and then saw the Neon driving southbound on Yukon Avenue, north of Imperial Highway. Stamps turned west on Imperial Highway and Lee followed. Stamps made a wide U-turn and proceeded eastbound on Imperial Highway. Lee followed and saw the Neon turn and travel south on Yukon Avenue.² By the time Lee turned south on Yukon Avenue, the Neon was out of sight. When the deputies reached 115th Street, the next street south of Imperial Highway, they observed the Neon's brake lights to the west. The Neon was stopped at the end of the street resting against a metal barrier.



Stamps' Neon at the cul-de-sac on the west end of 115th Street.

The deputies saw Stamps exit the car and run in a northwest direction from the cul-de-sac over a wall and into a construction site toward Imperial Highway. Stamps left the key in the ignition with the engine running. Lee drove back to Imperial Highway to locate Stamps. As Lee drove west on Imperial Highway, the deputies saw Stamps on the south sidewalk adjoining the same

² Stamps' U-turn in the Neon followed by Lee's U-turn in the patrol car were captured by a southwest pointing surveillance camera located on the north sidewalk of Imperial Highway.

construction site he had entered on 115th Street. The construction site was surrounded by a dirt lot enclosed by a chain link fence. Lee turned and stopped the patrol car to the south curb and Huynh exited to contact Stamps.³ Stamps ran westbound, away from Huynh, on Imperial Highway. Lee continued to drive westbound past Stamps and turned his patrol car in a southwest direction near a residential driveway. Positioned between Lee and Huynh, Stamps proceeded to walk south into the driveway and parking area in front of the residence as he produced a semiautomatic handgun. Video recordings from a surveillance camera affixed to a business on the north side of the street pointing in a southwest direction captured silhouettes of the deputies and Stamps, including some of their movements, and some muzzle flashes. Huynh was mostly outside the frame of this recording after the gunfight began as he moved further east. The recordings were not accompanied by any audio.



Lee parked the patrol car near the driveway of a residence on Imperial Highway. Stamps (circled) moved south in the parking area before the officer involved shooting.

LASD investigators interviewed both Lee and Huynh regarding the traffic stop and the circumstances leading up to the involved shooting. Lee told investigators that when he exited the patrol car, near the apron of the driveway, Stamps stopped and walked into the parking area away from Lee. Stamps made a motion to his waistband and drew a black semiautomatic handgun. Stamps took cover behind a car in the back of the driveway and pointed his gun at Lee. Lee fired his service weapon as he moved west for cover behind other cars parked west in the driveway. Lee was not sure who fired first, but believed Stamps fired two times at Lee. Once Lee took cover, he broadcasted over the radio that deputies were involved in a gunfight.

³ The same surveillance camera that had capture the U-turns approximately two minutes earlier, captured Lee turning into the south sidewalk and Huynh exiting the patrol car to contact Stamps.

Lee saw Stamps point his gun and fire a round at Huynh, who was east of the driveway. Lee fired more rounds at Stamps until his gun malfunctioned. As he was reloading behind cover, he heard rounds being fired at him. Lee fired more rounds at Stamps and then his gun malfunctioned again. As he cleared the malfunction, Lee saw Stamps with a handgun in his hand walking to the patrol car, which was located between the deputies. Stamps entered the patrol car and sat in the driver seat. Stamps pointed his pistol at Lee through the front windshield. Lee fired at Stamps and heard the engine revving.⁴ Lee fired more rounds at Stamps through the windshield.⁵ Lee saw that Stamps had stopped moving and was slumped over. Additional deputies arrived shortly thereafter.

Huynh told investigators that after he exited the police car on Imperial Highway, he followed Stamps along the south sidewalk. Lee parked and exited the patrol while Huynh ran toward Stamps, who was standing in driveway. Huynh ordered Stamps to get on the ground. Stamps reached toward his waistband and produced a handgun. Stamps pointed the handgun at Huynh and fired. Simultaneously, Huynh also fired at Stamps. Huynh saw the muzzle flash from Stamps' gunfire. Huynh fired three to five rounds before his handgun malfunctioned. While Huynh took cover to clear his weapon, Huynh saw Stamps shooting in the direction of Lee, and Huynh fired more rounds at Stamps. Stamps then turned and fired at Huynh again. Huynh took cover and returned fire. Huynh fired all the rounds in his magazine. As Huynh reloaded, he saw Stamps in the parking area. He believed Stamps was repositioning himself to shoot at him again. In response, Huynh took cover behind a nearby telephone pole and saw Stamps enter the driver seat of the patrol car. Huynh saw Stamps shooting in Lee's direction by pointing his gun out the car door. He saw two muzzle flashes. In response, Huynh fired eight to 12 rounds at Stamps as he took cover behind the telephone pole east of the driveway. Huynh fired his service weapon until he saw Stamps slump over.⁶

⁴ Lee did not turn off the engine when he exited the patrol car to contact Stamps.

⁵ The physical evidence at the scene and an examination of Lee's service weapon and magazines indicated that Lee fired a total of 16 rounds from his .45 caliber semiautomatic handgun.

⁶ The physical evidence at the scene and an examination of Huynh's service weapon and magazines indicated that Huynh fired a total of 29 rounds from his 9mm semiautomatic handgun.



Stamps walked to and entered the patrol car.

LASD personnel arrived at the scene shortly after the deputies involved in the shooting determined that Stamps was hunched over in the driver seat of the patrol car. Deputies observed Stamps seated in the driver seat with a handgun under Stamps' hand. A deputy moved Stamps' left hand, retrieved the handgun from Stamps' lap, and placed it on the dashboard. Deputies then removed Stamps from the patrol car and began to administer first-aid before the fire department arrived and continued treatment. Stamps was transported to a hospital and later pronounced dead.

Investigators photographed and retrieved Stamps' pistol, a .40 caliber semiautomatic handgun.⁷ The 15-round capacity magazine was not fully seated in the well of the gun, the chamber was empty, and the slide was slightly pushed back. The magazine was loaded with five unfired .40 caliber cartridges. Upon further laboratory examination, the handgun was determined to be functional and a bullet impact was observed on the front strap of the pistol's grip with corresponding damage to the magazine. Also, ten fired .40 caliber cartridge cases were collected from the scene indicating that Stamps fired a total of ten rounds from his handgun.

Among several bullet holes to the windshield, one bullet hole in the windshield and above the steering wheel had a trajectory consistent with the round being fired from inside the car and exiting through the windshield.

⁷ In 2015, the handgun had been reported stolen in a residential burglary in Arizona. Also, Stamps' criminal record barred him from legally possessing any firearms.



Stamps' .40 caliber semiautomatic handgun photographed on the patrol car's dashboard.

Investigators observed and photographed a blood trail between the rear of the parking area where Stamps was shooting and the patrol car.

On June 8, 2019, an autopsy was conducted, and the medical examiner determined that the cause of Stamps' death was a single gunshot wound to his head, which was immediately fatal. The medical examiner noted a muzzle imprint and conditions consistent with a contact wound to Stamps' right temple indicating that the muzzle was placed in direct skin contact at the time it was fired. The medical examiner determined that the gunshot wound was self-inflicted and the manner of death a suicide. Stamps' four other gunshot wounds were non-fatal.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

California law permits any person to use deadly force in self-defense or in the defense of others if he actually and reasonably believed that he or others were in imminent danger of great bodily injury or death. CALCRIM No. 3470. In protecting himself or another, a person may use that amount of force which he believes reasonably necessary and which would appear to a reasonable person, in the same or similar circumstances, to be necessary to prevent imminent injury. *Id.*

In California, the evaluation of the reasonableness of a police officer's use of deadly force employs a reasonable person acting as a police officer standard, which enables the jury to

evaluate the conduct of a reasonable person functioning as a police officer in a stressful situation. *People v. Mehserle* (2012) 206 Cal.App.4th 1125, 1146.

In evaluating whether a police officer's use of deadly force was reasonable in a specific situation, it is helpful to draw guidance from the objective standard of reasonableness adopted in civil actions alleging Fourth Amendment violations. "The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene, rather than with the 20/20 vision of hindsight... The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments—in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving—about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation." *Graham v. Connor* (1989) 490 U.S. 386, 396-397.

Here, the deputies lawfully detained Stamps for a relatively minor traffic violation, expired registration. Initially, Stamps stopped his car and told deputies that he did not have a valid driver's license. When Lee ordered Stamps out of the car, Stamps refused and fled. The deputies pursued Stamps, losing sight of his car two times. Stamps ultimately drove into a cul-de-sac as the deputies approached in their patrol car. Stamps fled on foot armed with a loaded and operable semiautomatic handgun, which he unlawfully possessed. The deputies located Stamps again on Imperial Highway. With Lee and Huynh on either side of him, Stamps did not surrender. Stamps fired several rounds from his semiautomatic handgun at both Lee and Huynh in a lengthy gunfight. In response to the imminent and deadly threat Stamps posed throughout the incident, the deputies returned fire.

Despite being struck by gunfire, Stamps did not surrender. Approximately one minute after the gunfight began, Stamps entered the driver seat of the patrol car and continued to fire his handgun at Lee. In response, both deputies continued to fire their service weapons at Stamps. Ultimately, Stamps committed suicide by placing the barrel of his handgun to his head and shooting himself.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that the deadly force utilized by Deputy Michael Lee and Quang Huynh was legally justified in self-defense and the defense of each other.