

No-Hit Officer Involved Shooting involving Tyler Honeycutt

Los Angeles Police Department

Officer Cameron Gobble, #38321

J.S.I.D. File #18-0286



GEORGE GASCÓN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

February 16, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: COMMANDER TIMOTHY NORDQUIST
Los Angeles Police Department
Force Investigation Division
100 West First Street, Suite 431
Los Angeles, California 90012

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

SUBJECT: No-Hit Officer Involved Shooting involving Tyler Honeycutt
J.S.I.D. File #18-0286
F.I.D. File #F043-18

DATE: February 16, 2021

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the July 6, 2018, no-hit officer involved shooting by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officer Cameron Gobble. We have determined that Officer Gobble acted in lawful self-defense when he fired his duty weapon, and Tyler Honeycutt succumbed to injuries from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on July 6, 2018, at approximately 8:10 p.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the scene and was given a briefing and walk-through by Detective Anthony Rheault.

The following analysis is based on reports and other materials, including 9-1-1 calls, radio transmissions, body-worn video (BWV) recordings, photographs, and interviews of witnesses submitted by LAPD Force Investigation Division. The compelled statement of Officer Gobble was considered in this analysis.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

On July 6, 2018, at approximately 5:00 p.m., Honeycutt's mother called 9-1-1 three times to report that Honeycutt was having hallucinations and acting erratically inside his house on Tyrone Avenue in Sherman Oaks. She was concerned that Honeycutt would hurt himself as he had access to a shotgun and pistol inside the house. After her first 9-1-1 call, Honeycutt's mother left the house and locked an exterior entry gate. In her last 9-1-1 call, she told the operator that Honeycutt was sitting on his bed and armed with a handgun.

At approximately 5:25 p.m., uniformed LAPD officers arrived and contacted Honeycutt's mother near the house. Soon thereafter, officers approached a walkway leading to an exterior courtyard of the house. From this position, the officers intermittently saw Honeycutt through various

windows moving within the house. The officers spoke with Honeycutt several times and asked him to exit the house for his safety. At approximately 5:39 p.m., officers observed Honeycutt behind a window holding a pistol in his hand pointed in a downward direction. The officers continued speaking with Honeycutt as he appeared through the curtains of various windows, and they also talked with him using cellphones.

At approximately 7:00 p.m., Gobble was positioned in the walkway leading into the courtyard looking toward the house. On BWV, Gobble is heard yelling, "Gun!" Gobble confirmed with another officer that Honeycutt pointed a pistol in his direction. Almost immediately thereafter, Honeycutt fired a round at Gobble from his handgun through a window, and a bullet struck the exterior of the structure a few inches away from where Gobble was taking cover.

Gobble believed Honeycutt was trying to kill him and immediately fired a round from his service rifle in Honeycutt's direction. The round entered through a window and struck "the west interior wall" of Honeycutt's bedroom and did not strike Honeycutt. Gobble and the other officers retreated from their position and LAPD's Special Weapons and Tactics team were notified and responded. Several hours later, after no further communications or sightings of Honeycutt, officers located Honeycutt lying motionless face down in his bedroom. The upper half of his body was inside a closet on the east side of his bedroom and a pistol registered to him was sticking out from under his left rib cage area. Honeycutt was pronounced dead at the scene.

On July 13, 2018, an autopsy was conducted, and the medical examiner determined that the cause of Honeycutt's death was a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. The manner of death was determined to be suicide. The gunshot wound was "intraoral" and "of close range." The bullet entered the back of the throat and exited the "posterior superior neck."

LAPD criminalists conducted a forensic analysis of Honeycutt's pistol and bullet path analysis at the scene. Honeycutt succumbed to his injuries east of the pathways of rounds initially exchanged between Honeycutt and Gobble. A third "impact, located on the ceiling" of Honeycutt's bedroom was "consistent with a bullet traveling upward." The bullet impact on the ceiling was located just outside the closet where Honeycutt succumbed to his injuries and near a discharged cartridge case fired from Honeycutt's pistol.¹

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

¹ The bullet fired at Gobble did not penetrate the structure and was collected from the courtyard. The bullets that penetrated the west wall and ceiling near the east closet inside Honeycutt's room were not collected.

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.

Honeycutt pointed a pistol and fired a round at Gobble. In response, Gobble fired a round from his service rifle because he believed Honeycutt was trying to kill him. Based on Honeycutt's actions, Gobble's belief was reasonable. Also, Gobble's use of deadly force in response to Honeycutt's use of deadly force was reasonable to counter an imminent deadly threat.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that Officer Gobble was legally justified and acted in self-defense when he fired his service rifle. We further conclude that the round Gobble fired did not strike Honeycutt. Honeycutt's death was a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. We are closing our file and will take no further action in this matter.