

Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Wilver Blanco
Los Angeles Police Department

Officer Dominique Billew, #45301

Officer Stefan Carutasu, #45128

J.S.I.D. File #24-0170



NATHAN J. HOCHMAN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

February 27, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAPTAIN OMAR BAZULTO
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: Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Wilver Blanco
J.S.I.D. File #24-0170
F.I.D. File #F027-24

DATE: February 27, 2026

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the May 19, 2024, fatal shooting of Wilver Blanco by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officers Dominique Billew and Stefan Carutasu. We conclude the officers acted in lawful self-defense when they fired their weapons, reasonably believing based on the totality of circumstances deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent deadly threat.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of the shooting on May 19, 2024, at approximately 8:00 p.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded to the location. They were given a briefing and walk-through by LAPD personnel.

The following analysis is based on residential surveillance camera video, body worn camera video (BWV), patrol car Digital in-Car Video (DICVS), photographs, and investigative reports submitted to this office by the LAPD Force Investigation Division on July 2, 2025. The involved officers did not provide voluntary statements, and their compelled statements were not considered in this analysis.

INTRODUCTION

On May 19, 2024, LAPD Southeast Patrol Division Officers Dominique Billew and Stefan Carutasu were on patrol, in uniform and driving a marked patrol car. They responded to a report of a man armed with a knife in a residential neighborhood. When they arrived at the reported location, at 6:43 p.m., Blanco ran toward Billew while holding a knife. Billew fired six rounds from her service weapon and Carutasu five rounds from his service weapon, striking Blanco, and resulting in several fatal gunshot wounds. Blanco was transported to a hospital, where he was pronounced deceased at 7:17 p.m.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

Dispatch Recordings

Billew and Carutasu were dispatched to a call reporting, “ADW suspect there now Suspect is a male Hispanic armed with a knife.”

Video Footage

Video footage from a resident’s surveillance camera, without audio, shows Blanco running erratically back and forth on a residential street and sidewalk while shirtless and holding a knife. Blanco hides behind parked cars, crouches beneath them, and turns his head back and forth as though looking for something.

After ten minutes, a black and white police vehicle drives into view. It stops in the roadway approximately 30 feet from Blanco. Billew and Carutasu respectively exit the passenger and driver side of the police car. They draw their service weapons and take position behind the open car doors. For approximately 20 seconds, the officers stand with weapons pointed as Blanco climbs onto the rear bumper of an SUV and appears to repeatedly swing the knife in a stabbing motion near the bumper. Blanco suddenly hops off the bumper, crouches down, and runs toward Billew, holding the knife pointed up and toward Billew. Billew and Carutasu open fire, striking Blanco repeatedly from a distance of approximately two car lengths. Blanco runs several more steps after appearing to be struck by gunfire, then collapses and falls onto his back.

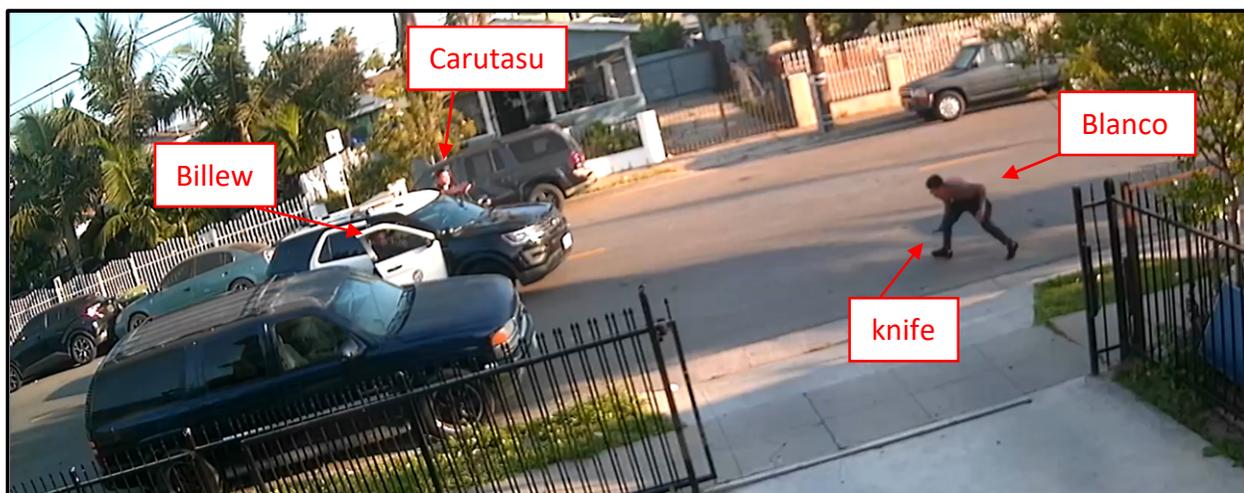


Figure 1: Blanco runs toward Billew as she opens fire.

MVARS and BWV footage recorded the same sequence of events with audio. Heard on the footage, the officers repeatedly shout, “Drop the Knife!” as Blanco stands on the bumper. When Blanco ignores the officers and runs toward Billew while holding the knife, Billew and Carutasu rapidly fire several rounds at Blanco, until he falls to the ground. The officers’ volley lasts approximately two seconds.

After backup officers arrive, they approach Blanco to arrest him and render medical aid. Blanco lies supine and motionless in the street. Next to him is the knife, which an officer kicks away from Blanco's reach.



Figure 2: Carutasu BWV; Blanco runs toward Billew as Carutasu fires first round.

Physical Evidence

From the scene of the shooting investigators recovered Blanco's knife and 11 casings discharged from the officers' service weapons.



Figure 3: Blanco's knife recovered from the scene.

Injuries

On May 22, 2024, Los Angeles County Deputy Medical Examiner Abubakr Marzouk, M.D., performed a post-mortem examination of Blanco's remains. Marzouk ascribed the cause of death to multiple gunshot wounds. Blanco suffered seven wounds, including wounds to the right upper back, penetrating both lungs, and right upper abdominal quadrant, penetrating the small intestines and pancreas. Toxicology testing revealed the presence of methamphetamine in Blanco's blood.

THE LAW

A peace officer is justified in using deadly force when the officer reasonably believes, based on the totality of the circumstances, that such force is necessary for either of the following reasons: (1) to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the officer or to another person; or (2) to apprehend a fleeing person for any felony that threatened or resulted in death or serious bodily injury, if the officer reasonably believes that the person will cause death or serious bodily injury to another unless immediately apprehended. Penal Code section 835a(c)(1)(A) & (B).

Deadly force shall be used "only when necessary in defense of human life," and officers "shall use other available resources and techniques if reasonably safe and feasible to an objectively reasonable officer." Penal Code section 835a(a)(2).

"A threat of death or serious bodily injury is 'imminent' when, based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer in the same situation would believe that a person has the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury to the peace officer or another person. Imminent harm is not merely a fear of future harm, no matter how great the fear and no matter how great the likelihood of the harm, but is one that, from appearances, must be instantly confronted and addressed." Penal Code section 835a(e)(2).

When considering the totality of the circumstances, all facts known to or perceived by the peace officer at the time, including the conduct of the officer and the subject leading up to the use of deadly force, are taken into consideration. Penal Code section 835a(a)(4) & (e)(3). The peace officer's decision to use force is not evaluated with the benefit of hindsight and shall account for occasions when officers may be forced to make quick judgments about using force. Penal Code section 835a(a)(4).

LEGAL ANALYSIS

After receiving a call reporting a man armed with a knife, Billew and Carutasu arrived at the scene, a residential neighborhood, where they encountered Blanco holding a knife and behaving erratically. The officers repeatedly shouted commands for Blanco to drop his knife. Blanco ignored those commands and instead took a crouched position and ran directly toward Billew while holding the knife pointed upward in Billew's direction. When Blanco ran to within approximately two car lengths of Billew's position, Billew and Carutasu fired a volley of shots lasting approximately two seconds, causing Blanco to fall to the ground and drop his knife.

Based on the available evidence, including multiple videos, Blanco had the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause violent injury to Billew. The officers could therefore reasonably believe deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent deadly threat when they fired their weapons.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, we find Officers Billew and Carutasu acted lawfully in self-defense and defense of a third-party when they used deadly force against Wilver Blanco.