

**Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Urias Saucedo
Los Angeles Police Department**

Officer Gloria Velez, #41385

J.S.I.D. File #23-0278



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District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

May 9, 2025

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: Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Urias Saucedo
J.S.I.D. File #23-0278
L.A.P.D. File #F040-23

DATE: May 9, 2025

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) has completed its review of the August 18, 2023, non-fatal shooting of Urias Saucedo by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Officer Gloria Velez. We have determined Officer Velez acted in lawful self-defense and defense of a third party when she fired her service weapon. We further conclude, based on the totality of the circumstances, that Velez reasonably believed the use of lethal force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to herself and another person.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of the shooting on August 18, 2023, at 7:45 a.m. The District Attorney Response Team responded and was given a briefing and walk-through of the scene at 10:45 a.m. by LAPD Force Investigation Division (FID) Lieutenant David Smith.

The following analysis is based on body worn camera video (BWV), digital in car video system (DICVS), investigative reports, forensic reports, audio recordings, surveillance video, photographs, and medical reports submitted to this office by LAPD FID Detective Jeremy Lee on November 12, 2024. Velez's compelled statement was not considered as part of this analysis.

INTRODUCTION

On August 18, 2023, LAPD received a 9-1-1 call reporting an armed male, later identified as Urias Saucedo, waving a handgun in the alley behind the caller's home. LAPD Officers Velez and Karen Chavez responded to the area together in the same patrol vehicle and soon located Saucedo. As the patrol vehicle stopped, Saucedo produced what appeared to be a firearm. Both officers issued numerous commands for Saucedo to drop the weapon and get on the ground. Saucedo ignored all commands. Saucedo eventually pointed what appeared to be a firearm in the direction of the officers. Velez fired two rounds from her service weapon, striking Saucedo.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

The factual analysis was derived from BWV and DICVS which captured the incident, as well as statements by Officer Chavez provided on August 18, 2023 and January 18, 2024. On August 18, 2023, at 6:38 a.m., a resident called 9-1-1 and reported seeing Urias Saucedo waving a gun in an east/west alley behind residences on East 103rd Street in the County of Los Angeles. At approximately 6:43 a.m., the LAPD communications division broadcast that a possible ADW¹ suspect was in the alley behind [REDACTED] Street. The broadcast described Saucedo as a mid-20's male Hispanic, with no shirt and gray pants, waving a gun. Velez [driver] and Chavez [passenger] drove in a marked patrol vehicle to the area where Saucedo was standing at the end of an east/west alley, south of East 103rd Street. On the patrol vehicle's DICVS, Velez tells Chavez, "We're proning him out."²



DICV depicting Saucedo in east/west valley prior to initial contact.

Saucedo can be seen wearing a red t-shirt and gray shorts. At 7:04 a.m., as Velez stops the patrol vehicle approximately 15 feet from Saucedo, he sits down on a mattress and simultaneously removes what appears to be a handgun from his rear waistband. As the officers exit the vehicle, both draw their service weapons, stand behind their respective doors of the vehicle for cover, and simultaneously and repeatedly order Saucedo to, "Let me see your hands! Put it down! Drop it!" Saucedo continually manipulates the gun in his hand, pointing it in various directions including in Velez's direction. Both officers continue to repeatedly order Saucedo to get on the ground and drop the gun. Velez radios for backup officers. Saucedo replies to the officers, but the response is inaudible on the DICVS. Chavez later told investigators Saucedo responded to the officers' commands by stating, "It's fake." On The DICVS, Chavez replies, "I know, that's fine then fucking drop it! Drop it! Put it on the ground! Put it on the ground! Let go of it! Let go of it!" Chavez told investigators that she believed the gun was a semi-automatic based on its appearance. Investigators asked Chavez if she believed Saucedo when he said the gun was fake, and she replied, "No, because suspects tend to lie."

¹ Assault with a deadly weapon.

² "Proning out" is a phrase describing officers placing a suspect on the ground in the prone (face down) position.



DICVS depicting Saucedo manipulating and pointing the weapon.

The DICVS shows Saucedo place his left hand on the mattress and push himself to his feet, still holding the weapon in his right hand with his palm around the grip in a conventional firing position. As Saucedo begins to stand, he extends his arm outward. Velez states again, “Drop it! Get on the ground! Get on the ground!” As Saucedo stands and begins to extend his arms, Velez fires one round, striking Saucedo at 7:04 a.m. Saucedo falls, landing partially on the ground and partially onto the mattress, on his left side while still holding the weapon.



DICVS: Saucedo about to stand with the weapon.



DICVS: Saucedo immediately before first shot is fired.

Both officers continue to order Saucedo to, “Drop the gun!” Instead, Saucedo moves the weapon rapidly from side to side, pointing the gun in the direction of both officers. In response, Velez fires a second round, also striking Saucedo. Saucedo tosses the weapon approximately one to two feet in front of him, still within arm’s reach. Approximately 16 seconds elapsed from the moment Velez stopped the patrol vehicle to the time Velez fired the second round. Approximately two seconds elapsed between the first and second shots.



DICVS: Saucedo pointing the weapon at officers immediately before Velez fires a second round.

After Saucedo drops the weapon, he stands and walks away from officers down the alley. Both officers order Saucedo to place his hands on his head and get on the ground, but he disregards their commands. Saucedo walks to the end of the alley at the intersection of Lou Dillon Avenue and collapses onto the sidewalk. As both officers follow Saucedo, Velez picks up Saucedo's discarded weapon and places it in her rear pants pocket. Both officers wrestle with Saucedo for approximately 70 seconds while he refuses to cooperate and pulls his arms away from officers until he is finally handcuffed.



Image from Officer Chavez's BWV as Saucedo walks away from officers.

Immediately after the shooting, backup officers rendered aid to Saucedo until Los Angeles Fire Department ("LAFD") personnel arrived. LAFD personnel transported Saucedo to Saint Francis Medical Center where medical staff treated him for two gunshot injuries to his right posterior chest and right groin/hip. Saucedo had numerous pieces of bullet shrapnel in his right upper arm and right chest wall. Medical staff removed one fired bullet which was partially protruding from

Saucedo's back. Saucedo was discharged directly from the emergency room. A blood sample taken from Saucedo at the hospital contained the presence of amphetamines, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, and fentanyl.

Investigators determined Velez fired two rounds from her service weapon based on the video evidence, crime scene analysis, and an ammunition count of Velez's firearm. Investigators determined Saucedo was armed with a .177 caliber BB gun pistol with the interior barrel removed. The interior barrel was retrieved from Saucedo's front shorts pocket. The weapon did not have any obvious characteristics distinguishing it from a real semi-automatic pistol, such as an orange tipped barrel. In fact, the BB gun was intended to resemble a real semi-automatic pistol with taped grips and realistically designed frame, trigger, and trigger guard.



DICVS: Officer Velez collects Saucedo's BB gun.



Saucedo's recovered BB gun.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

A peace officer is justified in using deadly force upon another person only 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 § 835a(b), (c)(1)(A), and (c)(1)(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 the objectively reasonable officer." Penal Code § 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. An 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 § 835a(e)(2).

"Totality of the circumstances" means 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.

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 § 835a(a)(4) and (e)(3).

Velez and Chavez responded to a call identifying Saucedo as having pointed a firearm at multiple residences while in an alley. As soon as their patrol vehicle turned into this alley, they observed Saucedo sitting down on a mattress. When the patrol vehicle stopped and the officers began to exit, Saucedo removed what appeared to be a semi-automatic handgun from his waistband. As the officers took defensive positions, Saucedo grinned and manipulated the gun while waving it in various directions, including in the direction of the officers.

The succeeding events unfolded quickly, as only 14 seconds elapsed from the time Velez stopped the patrol vehicle until the first shot was fired. Despite the speed with which the events took place, both Velez and Chavez issued multiple clear and continuous verbal commands to Saucedo, ordering him to drop the gun and raise his hands. Saucedo disregarded every instruction. Instead, he waved the gun in numerous directions (including toward Velez), held the gun by the grip in a conventional firing position, and began to rise from a seated position with the weapon in his hand. Velez did not fire her service weapon until Saucedo pointed his weapon at her and began to rise to a potentially more dangerous standing position with the firearm in his hand. After the first shot, Saucedo continued to grip the weapon and again pointed the gun in the direction of both officers, necessitating Velez to fire a second time.

Based on the totality of the circumstances known to Velez at the time of the incident and the preceding moments, it was reasonable for her to believe that the use of deadly force was necessary to defend against an imminent threat to herself and her partner. These conclusions are not altered in hindsight either by the subsequent discovery the item possessed by the subject was in fact a realistic replica of a handgun or by Saucedo telling the officers the weapon was fake. It was reasonable for Chavez (and by extension Velez) not to believe Saucedo when he said the gun was fake because the gun looked real and Saucedo could have been untruthful. Under the totality of the circumstances, the weapon was indistinguishable from a real semi-automatic pistol, and Velez was not legally required to treat the gun as if it were a fake based on Saucedo's statement.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, we find that Officer Velez acted lawfully in self-defense and defense of a third party when she fired her service weapon.