

**Non-Fatal Officer Involved Shooting of Jason Baker
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department**

Deputy Madison Lee, #652697

J.S.I.D. File #24-0200



NATHAN J. HOCHMAN

District Attorney

Justice System Integrity Division

August 5, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: ACTING CAPTAIN ARTURO R. SPENCER
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 Jason Baker
J.S.I.D. File #24-0200
L.A.S.D. File #024-09030-2608-038

DATE: August 5, 2025

The Justice System Integrity Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has completed its review of the June 17, 2024, non-fatal shooting of Jason Baker by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Deputy Madison Lee. We conclude, based on the totality of the circumstances, that there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Lee's use of deadly force was unreasonable.

The District Attorney's Command Center was notified of this shooting on June 17, 2024, at approximately 10:12 p.m. The District Attorney Response Team (DART) responded to the location. They were given a briefing and a walk-through of the scene by LASD Lieutenant Mike Modica.

The following analysis is based on body worn camera video (BWV), voluntary deputy statements, investigative reports, and photographs submitted to this office by the LASD Homicide Bureau on February 13, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

On June 17, 2024, at approximately 7:52 p.m., LASD Palmdale Station deputies received multiple reports of a man armed with two knives trying to force his way into occupied cars on a roadway. Deputy Lee and several other deputies responded to the location in uniform, driving marked patrol cars. They encountered Baker standing in front of an apartment building holding two knives. Deputies repeatedly ordered Baker to disarm and surrender. They fired dozens of less-lethal projectiles at him. Baker did not disarm but instead walked to within 20 feet of Lee while holding a knife in each hand. Lee fired two rounds from her service weapon at Baker, causing him to fall to the ground. He suffered a non-fatal gunshot wound to his abdomen. Baker later admitted he walked with knives toward Lee because he wanted to die.

Baker was charged for this incident in case 24AVCF00914. He pleaded no contest to a felony violation of Penal Code section 417.8, exhibiting a deadly weapon to law enforcement to prevent arrest, and was sentenced to the high term of four years in the state prison on October 24, 2024.

FACTUAL ANALYSIS

Incident History Report

At 7:52 p.m., LASD dispatch initiated an incident: “MW ... 2 Large Blades trying to force his way into cars.”

Body Worn Camera Video

The incident was captured by multiple deputies’ BWV. The following is a summary of the footage.

Several deputies arrive at the location ten minutes before Lee. Baker is standing in front of an apartment complex. He tells the deputies he has a gun. A deputy broadcasts this information. Lee arrives at 8:01 p.m. She positions her patrol car on the roadway facing Baker, in line with several other patrol cars. Lee and other deputies stand behind their open patrol car doors, some pointing firearms, others pointing less-lethal 40mm foam cannons. Deputies order Baker to drop the knives. They fire dozens of less-lethal foam projectiles. Baker does not surrender. He paces back and forth in front of the apartment building. Later, he hides behind a tree. Several times he yells, “Kill me!”

After a 30-minute standoff, Baker leaves the tree and walks at a quick pace toward Lee. Baker sporadically moves his hands up and down between his head and abdomen as he walks. The footage is not clear enough to see objects in his hands. Deputies fire three foam rounds. Baker flinches but continues walking toward Lee, who is standing behind her open patrol car door. The window is rolled up. Lee points her service weapon at Baker. Three times she yells, “Stop running!” Baker ignores Lee and walks to within approximately 20 feet of her. Lee fires two quick rounds from her service weapon at 8:30 p.m. Both of Baker’s hands are visible in front of his abdomen. He immediately falls to the ground on his back. Approximately 15 seconds elapse between the time Baker leaves the tree and the time Lee fires her weapon.

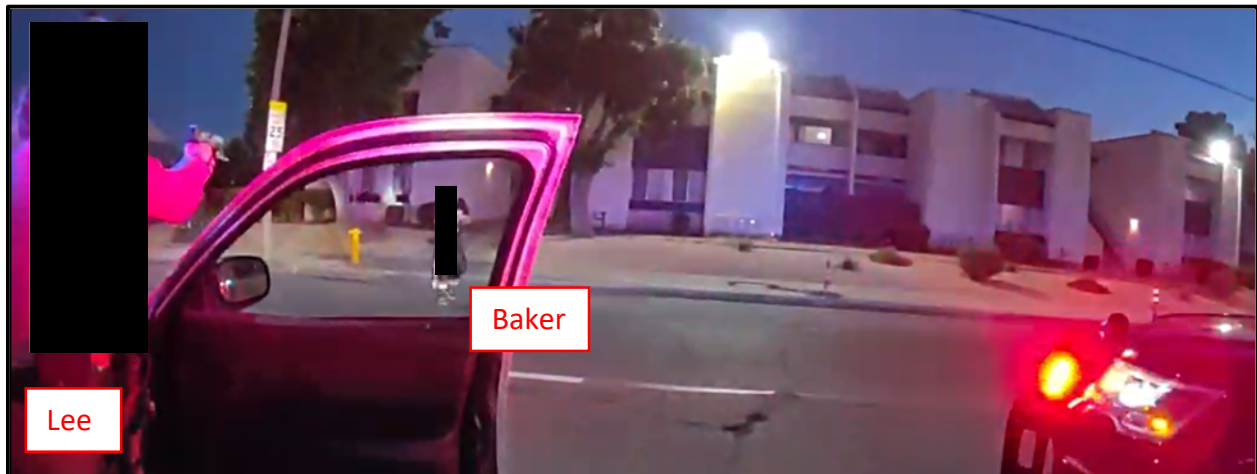


Figure 1: BWV still; Lee points service weapon at Baker just before firing.

Statement of Deputy Lee

Lee said she responded to the scene as a backup unit after receiving a call for service for an “attempted car jacking.” At the scene, Lee saw Baker holding “knives” and ignoring deputy commands. Lee estimated she and other deputies spent the next 40 minutes ordering Baker to disarm and surrender. At some point, Baker “made eye contact” with her and “zeroed in on” her. Suddenly leaving his position behind the tree, Baker walked “really fast” in her direction, ignoring several commands to stop. Believing Baker would “stab” her, Lee discharged two rounds from her service weapon when Baker was “ten to 12 feet” away. Asked whether Baker said anything during the standoff, Lee said she could not hear him due to a helicopter circling overhead.

Baker Interview

Baker said he was under the influence of methamphetamine at the time of the incident. He walked toward deputies holding the knives because he wanted to die.

Physical Evidence

Investigators recovered two knives in the street near where Baker fell after being shot.



Figure 2: Two open pocket knives found on the street near Baker.

Medical Records

Baker suffered a gunshot wound to the left upper abdomen and to the left flank.¹

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).

¹ Investigators opined they were likely the respective entry and exit of the same bullet, based on the location of each wound.

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.

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 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). Moreover, “[a] peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or desist from their efforts by reason of the resistance or threatened resistance of the person being arrested.” Penal Code section 835a(d).

ANALYSIS

BWV depicts Baker, after a 30-minute standoff with deputies, walk at a quick pace toward deputy Lee, ignoring repeated commands to stop. According to Lee, and Baker himself, he did so while armed with a knife in each hand. Baker told investigators he wanted deputies to shoot him.

As Baker walked toward Lee, she shouted “stop” three times, and deputies fired three less-lethal projectiles at him. Neither halted his advance. Lee said she fired two rounds at Baker because she feared he would stab her.

Although Lee stood behind a car door and approximately twenty feet from Baker when she fired her weapon, her stated fear cannot be proven unreasonable given Baker’s actions, which forced Lee to make quick judgments under the stress of a dangerous and unpredictable situation.

CONCLUSION

Considering the totality of the circumstances, because Baker advanced to within 20 feet of Lee while armed with two knives, intent on forcing deputies to shoot him, there is insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Lee’s decision to use deadly force was not reasonable and necessary to defend herself against a imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.